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Table of Contents

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Runners-up

A New Role for the Primary Sources in Anglo-Saxon History

Introduction

For centuries historians have debated the nature of the Anglo-Saxon invasion into Britain and the nature of the subsequent culture. Recent developments in genetics and archaeology suggest that invaders were able to come into Britain and establish dominance with relatively small numbers. In light of these new discoveries the accounts of the primary sources from that era, particularly *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, essentially have been relegated to a secondary level of importance. Their story of a massive invasion which wiped out or completely expelled the Romano-British population does not fit with the large amounts of evidence for a continued biologically British population.

As a result, historians have turned to biological and archaeological studies to shed light on the situation. These processes have revealed a world in which the British and the Anglo-Saxons, also known as the English, lived together in the same communities. However, these studies have raised many new questions for historians concerning the nature of the relationship between the two groups. Many ideas have been put forward and virtually all have met heavy criticism. Each vision of the Anglo-Saxon period proposed to date contains a large amount of conjecture and opinion due to the limited knowledge available at present. Consequently, any consensus in the near future is unlikely.

Interestingly, the original sources may hold many of these answers or at least hints to the answers for the current disputes. The Law codes of Ine, King of Wessex and later Alfred the Great, King of all the Anglo-Saxons, offer some helpful insights into the legal standings of Britons compared to that of their Anglo-Saxon overlords. Even the *Chronicle* and the *Ecclesiastical History* which have been shown to be less than perfect in terms of their accuracy could have something to offer. Rather than wholly accepting or rejecting the accounts in the sources, historians may have much to gain from reexamining them in light of

recent discoveries. These sources may hold some keys to discerning the new objective evidence. Therefore, there is a need for a renewed effort to involve the primary sources in developing any future theories.

Past Debate

Despite their fall from prominence in recent years, an understanding of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and the Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* is foundational to any discussion of the Anglo-Saxons. Though not truly contemporary sources, the two works were compiled far closer to the events in question than most others. Bede most likely finished his *History* around the year AD 731, drawing on written and verbal accounts from parishes across the south of Britain as well older mentions of the events in sources like the Sermons of Gildas.[1] The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* was first compiled under Alfred the Great who reigned from AD 871 to 899. The record drew on many sources, including Bede's *History*, and was updated annually through the twelfth century.[2] Using the *Chronicle* can be difficult as the copies available differ greatly in the included information, undoubtedly a result of the many transcriptions and additions made over the years.

With this relationship, it comes as no surprise then to find that the two sources portray a very similar series of events concerning the Anglo-Saxons and their arrival. Unfortunately the events preceding that arrival are not well recorded. Though both mention the departure of the Romans, the sources differ greatly on the precise dates and even the circumstances of that departure and no other histories exist from the period after Roman withdrawal to provide the missing information. However, both are in agreement that the Romans had effectively abandoned the Britons before the Saxons arrived. In either AD 448 or 449, one of the British chieftains, Vortigern, sent to the tribes in northern Europe for help warding off the attacks of

[1] Bede the Venerable, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People: With Bede's Letter to Egbert and Cuthbert's Letter on the Death of Bede*, Penguin UK. Kindle Edition, 19.
[2] Swanton, Michael James, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, (New York: Routledge, 1998), xviii.

the Picts after the Romans withdrew from the island sometime around AD 410.[3] Two brothers named Hengest and Horsa arrived with their comrades in arms and did just that. They had several successes against the Celts before turning on their hosts. Seeing them as easier targets than the Celts, the brothers sent word back to their homeland between what is now Denmark and Germany. Over the subsequent decades, various groups began arriving on the island, driving out different groups of Britons and forming various petty kingdoms.[4] The total effect of these accounts gives the reader the sense that the Anglo-Saxons came to Britain en masse, transplanting their society onto the British landscape after driving out the native inhabitants.

For nearly a millennium, those facts constituted the foundation for any discussion of the Anglo-Saxon invasion. The persistence of this line of reasoning can be seen in Sir Frank Merry Stenton's acclaimed book, entitled simply *Anglo-Saxon England*. First printed in 1943, it provides the best researched and most nuanced argument for the traditional model of total Anglo-Saxon conquest. Stenton forms a very specific and believable world referring back to sources even older than Bede or the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Sources like the sermons of Gildas are at least two century closer to the Anglo-Saxon invasion, but are often cryptic and lacking detail.[5] Procopius only touches on the British Isles, but Gildas includes some important details that were taken as fact by both Bede and the compilers of *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

Gildas wrote his work, De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae, translated On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain, as a homily to decry some of the abuses by local leaders and general moral crisis that he saw around him.6 As part of this message, Gildas included a brief history of the British-English interactions up to the current time. It was Gildas who first recorded

[3] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 62. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 12-13.
[4] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 63. *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 12-13.
[5] Stenton, F. M., *Anglo-Saxon England*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1943), 2.
[6] Johnson, Stephen, *Later Roman Britain*, (New York: Scribner, 1980), 111.

that a tyrant, the one later identified as Vortigern by Bede, invited the Anglo-Saxons, who then started to conquer the very people who they were called to protect.7 Gildas' tale continues through a battle at a place he identified as Badon Hill which halted the Saxons until the time of the writing.[8] The difficulty with this source is that it was not meant to be used as a historical account as we know them today. It was meant to address the nation's moral failings, simply using history to provide examples. Moreover, there is no indication that Gildas was drawing from any source other than his own knowledge on the subject.[9] Due to the early date of his writing, Gildas was considered to be the best source for historians prior to the mid-twentieth century.

Based on these earlier sources and the linguistic history of Western Europe, Stenton postulates that Anglo-Saxons did indeed carve out a Kingdom separate from the other peoples of Britain. However, this kingdom was limited to the south of Britain, and did not spread into the central areas as earlier scholars believed.[10] He argues that, after their short burst of conquest in the latter half of the fifth century, the advance of the English had been checked by the middle of sixth century. Stenton cites evidence of Angle-Saxon migration after this period as evidence that the population of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom had begun to outgrow its limited area, forcing some inhabitants to take to the sea in search of a new home.[11]

In this regard, Stenton did an admirable job as a historian. Proximity to the events is a very important factor in a source's value in interpreting the past. Stenton goes to great lengths to dissect several difficult sources to find their value as works of history. From these nuggets of truth, he produces several rational and believable conclusions about the period, as

[7] Ibid, 112.
[8] Ibid, 112.
[9] Johnson, *Later Roman Britain*, 111.
[10] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England*, 6.
[11] Ibid, 6.

had countless numbers of predecessors before him. However, Stenton, as well as all the rest, suffers from the same restriction, namely a lack of evidence. Despite his admirable evaluation of the written sources, he admits at the start of his argument that the circumstances leading to the Anglo-Saxons' first arrival in Britain represent "a long period of which the history cannot be written."[12] Though he most likely did not fully realize it, this statement stands as a direct result of another statement that Stenton makes on the same page, namely that at the time of his writing in 1943, "archaeological evidence is an unsatisfactory basis for an absolute chronology."[13] Remedying this would bring about a new set of revelations and controversies concerning the Anglo-Saxons.

The use of archaeology for interpreting the nature of the Anglo-Saxon presence first rose to prominence in the early decades of the twentieth century. This is not to say that Anglo-Saxon sites had not been excavated before that time. However, these earlier excavations were collecting artifacts en masse to present a general impression of the types of artifacts dating to the period. Researchers paid little attention to more subtle trends of artifact distribution, grave orientation, and kin groups.[14] The studies of the first half of the century focused on trends like these, utilizing new techniques to provide ever more detailed theories of the nature of Anglo-Saxon society. For all this innovation, the theories all sought to further illuminate the world described by men like Stenton, a world of homogenous ethnic groups with the social strata within them. The use of historical documents continued to dominate the field, with archaeology occupying a secondary role of providing visual examples of the historical accounts.

Though the early twentieth century saw great advances in the technology and techniques of archaeology, the study of the Anglo-Saxons was still slow to progress. To a

[12] Ibid, 1.
[13] Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon* England, 1.
[14] Arnold, C. J., *An Archaeology of the Early Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, (London: Routledge, 1988), 3-6.

large extent, this slow rate of innovation came from the fact that these years saw not one but two world wars and the rise of Nazism.[15] Because of this climate, theories of the English impact were more than a purely academic issue. They carried implications for the relative places of Great Britain and Germany in a time when the two were opponents in great wars. English scholars were no longer comfortable with the notion that the first truly unified English nation was made up of German invaders.[16] Feelings like this did much to reopen the debate on early British history, and even produced theories postulating an extremely limited Anglo-Saxon.[17] While the 1940s and 50s sparked great controversy over the place of the Anglo-Saxons, little new scholarship emerged during the height of the Cold War. The disputes raised during the 1940s and 50s would be largely put on hold until the 1980s when research resumed with a vengeance.

In the meantime, scholars began reassessing the conclusions of earlier studies in various arenas. One of the most influential for understanding the Anglo-Saxon past was the conclusions being drawn from studying place-names. In 1849, John Mitchell Kimble had actually been one of the first to critique the events described by Bede and the other ancient sources. In place of their grand narrative of invasion, he asserted that the variety of place-names with unique suffixes, such as –wick, –ham, –stead, and –tun, portrayed a landscape shaped by individual "tribal groups."[18] By the early twentieth century, scholars began to view place-names as indicating both the "social and administrative" history of the country.[19]

For instance, it was believed that sites whose name ended in either –ingas or –ingaham represented the areas of earliest occupation by the Anglo-Saxon, and, therefore,

[15] Arnold, C. J., *An Archaeology of the Early Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1997), 22.
[16] Ibid, 22.
[17] Arnold, *Archaeology*, 2nd ed. 22.
[18] Ryan, Martin J., "Place-Names, Language and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape," in *Place-names, Language and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape* / edited by Nicholas J. Higham and Martin J. Ryan. n.p.: (Woodbridge ; Rochester, NY : Boydell, 2011) 6.
[19] Ibid, 7.

could be used to trace the areas of the earliest centers of English control.[20] In 1966, however, John Dodgson published a study that paired the –ingas sights with the earliest known Anglo-Saxon cemeteries and found no positive correlation. Instead, they seemed to follow the areas which retained paganism the longest.[21] In the 1970s, new research began to suggest that sites ending simply in –ham, but not –ingaham, represented areas where Anglo-Saxons had renamed Romano-British sites.[22] This correlation provided some measure of evidence for the nature of the Anglo-Saxon arrival, but the radical shifts in theories pertaining to place names convinced many scholars, including archaeologists, that it was not a helpful data set for determining the society of the past.[23]

This doubt almost certainly helped to fuel a new wave archaeological study in the late 1970s and 80s. This new archaeology of social identity focused on the goods placed in graves to follow the movement of materials across Britain. These considerations helped to form a picture of the political structure of the Anglo-Saxons which drove the movement of these goods. Such studies concluded that the world of early Anglo-Saxon England was one of small polities, each dealing with the other through exchange.[24] Noticeably missing from these evaluations is any discussion of the ethnic composition of these small enclaves. Instead, the researchers focused on grave deposits showing evidence of certain essential goods arriving in multiple areas by means of trade. These discoveries implied that the Anglo-Saxons came to Britain in small groups and remained separate for the opening years of occupation.[25] Despite not intending to address the ethnic compositions of the resulting society, these studies helped to define the structure of English society and therefore a

[20] Ibid, 8.
[21] Ibid, 8.
[22] Ryan, *Place-names, Language and the Anglo-Saxon Landscape*, 9.
[23] Ibid, 10.
[24] Bassett, Steven, *The Origins of Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, (London: Leicester University Press, 1989), 22-23.
[25] Ibid, 22-23.

framework for sequent studies of the people living within that framework. Moreover, these studies would eventually provide valuable data for further study.

Archaeologists focused on the grave deposits because of a sever lack of settlement data. By 1980 only two Anglo-Saxon settlements had been excavated entirely. These two settlements, Mucking and West Stowe, show a loosely arranged settlement of exclusively Anglo-Saxon structures, located near but separated from the Roman site.[26] The excavations at West Stow did yield one substantial discovery. Archaeologists at the site uncovered large quantities of Roman style pottery and coins.[27] Though only one site, this discovery opened the possibility that in some instances the Anglo-Saxons settled alongside the native Britons. This was even more direct evidence in opposition to the sources' narrative of conquest and further support for a model of cultural coexistence.

Drawing on this and other discoveries, Richard Hodges produced a book entitled *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement*, in which he attempted to find the origins of the Medieval English identity in the Anglo-Saxon society rather than in the later Norman period.[28] In the portion devoted the earliest stages of Anglo-Saxon settlement, Hodges cites the unorganized arrangement of buildings at sites like Mucking as evidence that Anglo-Saxons arrived without a formal power structure in place despite the fact that such structures were already in place in the English homelands around Denmark.[29] Consequently, he concludes that the build-up of Anglo-Saxons was a gradual, spontaneous one in which the two populations, Anglo-Saxon and Romano British, grew beside one another. As a part of this model, he claims that many of the new timber settlements around the older Roman sites were actually founded by Britons not Anglo-Saxons.[30] Though he proposes a new sequence for the

[26] Johnson, *Later Roman Britain*, 128-129.
[27] Ibid, 129.
[28] Hodges, Richard. *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement: Archaeology & the Beginnings of English Society* /. n.p.:(London : Duckworth, 1989) 3.
[29] Ibid, 25.
[30] Ibid, 30-32.

invasion, Hodges still acknowledges that by its end the English had subjugated all the native peoples.[31]

Though very influential at the time of its publishing, *The Anglo-Saxon Achievement* offered only one possible explanation of the available evidence. While archaeology certainly was offering challenges to primary narratives, it also was providing support for the idea that the Britons were essentially eliminated from their Roman era settlements. The settlement remains in Roman sites were found to virtually disappear by the middle of the fifth century, precisely during the years when the English were arriving in the south of the island, and the new structures were in a distinctly Anglo-Saxon style.[32] Moreover, because of unclear stratigraphy, archaeologists were not able to find any kind of substantial evidence of continued occupation in the Roman sites by the native British inhabitants. If Hodges' model is correct, then why would the Britons abandon the Roman settlements so quickly? For this, Hodges does not have a meaningful answer, and this casts doubt on his vision of this period of history. So like so many innovations, this wave brought some answers about the past, but did not resolve the debate.

Hodge's vision, however, was only a prolog to a new era of academic inquiry which occupied the 1990s and centered on the emergence of migration theory. More scholars became increasingly interested in telling the story of Anglo-Saxon's arrival, not simply finding as many facts as possible.[33] The direction of Anglo-Saxon studies shifted so dramatically that new editions appeared of books published only a few years before. C.J. Arnold republished his book, *An Archaeology of the Early Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms*, after only nine years. Arnold says that the choice to publish the new edition was an attempt to update its information to reflect the reality that "research has greatly advanced some topics and in a

[31] Ibid, 34.
[32] Johnson, *Later Roman Britain*, 129.
[33] Arnold, *Archaeology*, 2nd ed. 7-9.

few areas there has been substantial rethinking."[34] It is no coincidence that the largest alteration to the book was a new chapter, "Migration Theory."

These two coinciding innovations in archaeology, both theoretical and technological, helped to bring the debate over the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons into the modern era. Archaeologists began to change the way that graves were analyzed, not so much in how the data was collected but in how it was used. Where preceding scholars had used grave goods to trace the relationships within the British Isles, researchers at the end of the 1990s were able to use that data, coupled with that found on the European continent, to link individual communities in Britain to their areas of origin. The most commonly used techniques included noting the types of pottery and metal work found in the graves along with the burial rites evidenced.[35]

From Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, historians knew that the invaders eventually known as Anglo-Saxons were a mixture of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes.[36] Increased data from improved excavation techniques began to show researchers more precisely when and whence these invaders came to southern Britain. Scholars found that Angles from the area is today Schleswig-Holstein and the island of Fyn were some of the earliest Germanic immigrants to arrive. They settled across what would become England early in the fifth century.[37] They were followed closely by the Saxons, who came during the same century from northern Germany around the River Elbe, eventually concentrated in what is today Wessex and Sussex.[38] The Jutes, unsurprising from Jutland, were the last to arrive, coming late in the fifth century.[39] For some reason, after settling in Kent, this last group

[34] Ibid, xvi.
[35] Arnold *Archaeology*, 2nd ed. 23.
[36] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, 62.
[37] Arnold *Archaeology*, 2nd ed. 23.
[38] Ibid. 23.
[39] Ibid. 23.

assimilated relatively quickly into the broader Frankish culture.[40] This certainly had something to do with the Jutes being ignored in the naming of the immerging Germanic culture.

Current Disputes

Such were the momentous advancements made in understanding the Anglo-Saxon invasion during the twentieth century. At its beginning, most historians took the word of men like Gildas, Bede, and the Anglo-Saxon chroniclers as the primary source of knowledge, with all other information fitting beneath them. Their story of nearly total expulsion of the Britons to the fringes of the island through bursts of intense Anglo-Saxon conquest continued to be the accepted narrative. By the century's close, the focus had largely shifted away from textual analysis to the examination of material evidence. Analyzing cemeteries and settlement areas both in England and on the European continent provided a new wealth of information about the precise places of origin and times of immigration of individual Germanic peoples. The result was a view of the "invasion" as a more disjointed and piecemeal affair than the near constant warfare portrayed in the primary sources.

Improved analysis techniques developed in the middle of the twentieth century led to a tighter relationship between the work of archaeologists and historians and ultimately proved to be the key to unlocking the nature of the arrivals of the Anglo-Saxon groups and their patterns of settlement. The question facing scholars of the twenty-first century became discovering the sociopolitical relationships between the new Anglo-Saxon population and the native Romano British. To unravel this even more complex and nuanced subject matter would require incorporating an entirely new field of study, genetics.

As strange as it may sound, during these first two decades of the new millennium, some of the greatest strides in the study of the Anglo-Saxon society have come from the

[40] Ibid. 23.

study of human genetics. By determining the amounts of Anglo-Saxon and native British DNA in the modern population of England, researchers believe it is possible to see how much of a biological impact the English had on southern Britain.[41] The success or failure of a people to reproduce can inform scholars on issues such as relative social standing, with the upper class having more surviving children, and cultural mixing, evidenced through the relative amounts of DNA. By comparing the genetic impact of the Anglo-Saxons with the number of Anglo-Saxon immigrants and British natives, scholars hope see the nature and extent of intermarriage, concubinage, and other such relationships between the two groups.

To date there have been two extensive studies conducted in this new field. One was performed by a team headed by Michael Weale along with Deborah Weiss, Rolf Jager, Neil Bradman, and Mark Thomas in 2002.[42] The other was conducted a year later by Christian Capelli heading a team of 15 researchers.[43] Both groups studied Y-chromosome DNA, meaning that study only reflected the male lineage of the English people, since Y-chromosomes only pass from one man to another. The first study found a significant Anglo-Saxon footprint in central England with results that suggest that Anglo-Saxons may have contributed between 50-100% of the gene pool in the years following the invasion.[44] The Capelli study produced less dramatic but still significant results, showing an impact of 20-60%, after using a model for comparison which contained a greater number of variables.[45] (For a full discussion of these two studies see Appendix A.) In either case, it appears the Anglo-Saxons were quite successful in their attempts to produce offspring.

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[41] Härke, Heinrich. "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis." Medieval Archaeology 55, no. 1 (November 2011): 1-28. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed September 19, 2012).
[42] Weale, ME, DA Weiss, RF Jager, N Bradman, and MG Thomas, "Y Chromosome Evidence for Anglo-Saxon Mass Migration," Molecular Biology And Evolution 19, no. 7 (n.d.): 1008-1021. Science Citation Index, EBSCOhost(accessed November 4, 2012).
[43] Capelli, Cristian, Nicola Redhead, Julia K. Abernethy, Fiona Gratrix, James F. Wilson, Torolf Moen, and David B. Goldstein, et al, "A Y Chromosome Census of the British Isles," Current Biology 13, no. 11 (May 27, 2003): 979. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed November 4, 2012).
[44] Weale et al, "Y Chromosome Evidence", 1018.
[45] Capelli er al, "A Y Chromosome Census", 983.

The most important figures for both producing and interpreting the markers in the study are the populations of the Anglo-Saxons and native Britons.[46] Estimates for the British population interpolated from Roman sources and the Domesday Book point to a population between 1 and 2 million Britons at the time of the Anglo-Saxon arrival.[47] It would take between 250,000 and 500,000 male immigrants to have the impact observed in the Weale and Capelli studies.[48] This number is the total number of native Anglo-Saxons to arrive during the first century of immigration. This means that, even by the end of substantial migration, the Anglo-Saxon immigrants were probably less than half the population, but contributing more than half of the genetic material. The challenge for today's scholars is to somehow take these numerical results and translate them into a model which represents the social realities which produced them.

The opinions on Weale's and Capelli's studies have sparked a new and vigorous debate on the society created by the Anglo-Saxon invaders. One of the first and perhaps boldest claims came in 2006 from a team led Mark Thomas in an article entitled, "Evidence for an Apartheid-like Social Structure in Early Anglo-Saxon England."[49] Thomas and his colleagues believe that the genetics suggest a society where sex and marriage were tightly controlled across racial lines with the Anglo-Saxons having an advantage because of their position atop the social structure.[50] Higher status usually leads to more wealth which, in turn, brings more leisure time and higher standards of health. All these together contribute to a higher rate of reproduction. In this way, the modest numbers of English settlers were able to have a large impact on the British gene pool over only a century of immigration.

[46] Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis", 8.
[47] Härke, "Anglo-Saxon Immigration and Ethnogenesis", 8.
[48] Ibid, 8.
[49] Thomas, Mark G., Michael P. H. Stumpf, and Heinrich Härke, "Evidence for an Apartheid-Like Social Structure in Early Anglo-Saxon England,"Proceedings: Biological Sciences 273, no. 1601 (2006): 2651-2657.JSTOR Life Sciences, EBSCOhost (accessed September 19, 2012).
[50] Thomas et al, "Apartheid", 2651.

However plausible the model presented by Thomas and his colleagues might be, it is not the only model for explaining the results of the DNA studies. One of the other prominent models is the one put forward by John Pattison. His model is one of more gradual integration without the strict regulation postulated by Thomas and his associates.[51] If the Saxons were intermarrying more steadily, however, it would require a longer period of time to produce the 50% seen by Weale and Capelli. To account for this Pattison believes that the German DNA seen could have come from the Belgae *foederati* (allied conscripts) who came with the Roman legions.[52] This would mean another entire century of intermarriage, bringing in more German DNA.[53] (For a full discussion of the Thomas and Pattison models see Appendix B).

Reapplying the Sources: An Example

Like the other contentions over the Anglo-Saxons, the visions of Thomas and Pattison rest on suppositions of the nature of Anglo-Saxon society. The only method of judging the accuracy of these models rests in determining whether the Anglo-Saxons willfully tried to preserve their identity or if they formed a new composite identity that becomes "Anglo-Saxon". At present there is not sufficient physical evidence to offer a definitive answer to this question. This is not to say that such evidence might not available in the future, but since it is not available today, other methods must be employed by today's researchers if our understanding is to move forward. In this capacity, it is time to turn again to the marginalized primary sources, despite their disagreements with the archaeological evidence. They put forward a domineering Anglo-Saxon culture that would not seem to be open to amalgamation except completely on its own terms.

The written sources for the Anglo-Saxon invasion have been criticized for their bias in favor of the Anglo-Saxon monarchs in power at the time. Recall, that it was on the basis

[51] Pattison, John E. "Integration Versus Apartheid in Post-Roman Britain: A Response to Thomas et al. (2008)," Human Biology 83, no. 6 (December 2011): 715-733. Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost(accessed September 19, 2012) 716.
[52] Pattison, "Integration Versus Apartheid" 717.
[53] Ibid.

of these sources that historians formulated the theory of a nearly complete removal of the native British population. When archaeology and other scientific studies showed that this was not the case, Bede and the other early sources largely fell from prominence. Simply because scholars relied too heavily on the sources in the past, ought not to cause them to under value these works today. If approached with the proper skepticism and discernment, these sources might prove valuable for the very biases which have pushed them to the periphery of modern scholarship. They could even be applied to the current arguments over the relationship between the Britons and Saxons.

It might seem that Gildas' *On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain* does not offer much for determining the nature of the Saxon society because the author focuses his attention on the native British population. Moreover, the work is a series of lessons, not a dedicated historic account, filled with metaphors that can obscure the message at times. Nonetheless, it mentions several important facts about British relations with the Saxons. First, it is quickly evident that the Saxons were noticeably pagan in comparison to the Christian Britons.[54] Though Gildas was a priest and more sensitive to this, it certainly would be a factor that would noticeable divide the two groups. Second, Gildas, writing in the middle of the sixth century, still recognizes that the Briton population was conquered by an invading Anglo-Saxon force which still exists as a ruling class.[55] This consciousness of the two groups would seem to hint at some measure of a divided society, but it does not provide much to indicate whether that society was divided along ethnic lines and not only socioeconomic ones. It is not only difficult but most likely unhelpful to look for greater clarity in Gildas since he wrote his work not so much to record history but to teach a lesson.

[54] "Strategies of Identity Construction: the Writings of Gildas, Aneirin and Bede." (2012):OAIster, EBSCOhost (accessed November 4, 2012) 105.
[55] "Strategies of Identity", 105.

Bede and the compilers of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* did seek to write a dedicated history of the British Isles. Even if the result is not completely accurate, Bede claims in the introduction to his *History* to have expended great effort to reconstruct the history of the church in Britain as accurately as possible.[56] Assuming this is true, the story that follows was at least the one believed by the people of the time and therefore instructive for determining popular opinions of the relationship between the native Britons and the Saxon invaders. With this in mind, several of Bede's statements take upon themselves an added measure of significance.

Bede's account is undoubtedly biased toward finding an unified Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the past, as there was one at the time of his writing. When addressing the invasion of the Anglo-Saxons, he writes that after the initial arrival of King Vortigern and his three long-ships, the king sent back to his homeland for "a great body of warriors, which, when joined to the original forces, constituted an invincible army."[57] In Bede's mind, even though the invaders came from different parts of Germany, they were unified in their desire to subdue the Britons.[58]

Their attitude toward the Romano British inhabitants was one of complete destruction, either of the individual inhabitants or at least of their culture. Bede recounts how the Angles, in particular, eventually "established a stranglehold over all the doomed island…bishops and people alike, regardless of rank, were destroyed with fire and sword, and none remained to bury those who had suffered a cruel death."[59] According to Bede, the prospects for the survivors were grim. Those Britons who remained alive after the initial attacks faced a choice between a life in slavery, fleeing to the continent or a hard life up in the mountains on

[56] Bede, "Ecclesiastic History", 41.
[57] Bede, "Ecclesiastic History", 62.
[58] Ibid, 62.
[59] Ibid, 64.

the marginal parts of the land.[60] Despite their later victory at Badon Hill, an account Bede most likely borrowed from Gildas, this state remained mostly unchanged according to his account.[61]

Where the Venerable Bede depicts the primary invasion of the English came in two stages, the initial party under Vortigern followed by a larger party of reinforcements. The story in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* more closely mirrors the model of piecemeal immigration currently postulated by today's scholars. The text tells of many different groups under various leaders arriving in groups of around three to four long-ships. Despite this difference, the situation is portrayed in much the same way. In the year AD 457, for instance, the *Chronicle* records that after losing 4,000 men at the battle of Crayford, "the Britons then abandoned the land of Kent."[62] Later, in 491, "Ella and Cissa besieged the city of Anderitum, and killed all who lived in there; there was not even one Briton left there."[63] As in Bede, the *Chronicle* portrays the Anglo-Saxons' primary policy towards the inhabitants as one of either annihilation or removal.

Even with their biases and flaws, these sources align with the archaeological evidence in several key areas. Recall that the limited archaeological evidence for settlement patterns seem to indicate that the Roman village are mostly abandoned during the Anglo-Saxon period with settlement shifting to nearby sites where the structure are all of Germanic style.[64] Additionally, the grave distributions in Anglo-Saxon cemeteries point to mixed households.[65] Both of these would be consistent with a population in which the Romano British were removed from their original way of life and integrated in some manner into that of the Anglo-Saxon invaders.

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[60] Ibid, 64.
[61] Ibid, 64.
[62] *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 12.
[63] *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 15.
[64] Johnson, *Later Roman Britain*, 131-133.
[65] Härke, *Anglo-Saxon Immigration*, 13.

Because of this agreement, it is possible to conclude that while *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* might have been overly simple in their description and chronology of the past events, the authors were well aware of the situation around them at that time. Both of these sources depict an English population which holds the native Britons in very low esteem and do not indicate that the invaders felt any remorse for the slaughter they inflicted upon the native population. Regardless of whether or not the slaughter of these populations was on the order described in these sources, it is clear that new rulers saw no place for Britons in the official narrative. If this is true, it most likely indicates a similar contempt for the remaining population as well. This would mean that even if there were not the formal proscriptions against intermarriage postulated by Thomas et al., there was most like a significant social divide between the two groups, which would seem to contradict Pattison's hypothesis.

This view is further borne out in another type of primary source. These are the Anglo-Saxon law codes, including the Laws of Ine, King of Wessex and the Laws of Alfred, King of the Anglo-Saxons. Dating to between AD 688 and 694, the Laws of Ine created a system in which most crimes were punished through the payment of fines.[66] Each fine was relative to the monetary value of an individual's life or his wergeld. This amount was set based on his place in society.[67] In the laws of Ine, one law states that "if a Welshman possesses a hide of land, his wergeld shall be 120 shillings'. If, however, he possesses half a hide, his wergeld shall be 80 shillings; if he possesses no land- 60 shillings."[68] In contrast, the wergelds of Saxons seem to have ranged between 200 and 1200 shillings even for vassals.[69] The only time that any Welshman is shown to have a wergeld of even 200 shillings

[66] Attenborough, F. L. *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings, ed. and tr. by F. L. Attenborough.* n.p.: Cambridge, University press, 1922., 1922. UNIV OF OKLAHOMA LIBRARIES's Catalog, EBSCOhost (accessed November 4, 2012).
[67] Ibid, 41.
[68] Ibid, 47.
[69] Ibid, 59

is if he is a trusted messenger of the king.[70] From these laws it is possible to see that not only were the native Britons, also known as the Welsh, a separate class, they were considered of lesser value than their Saxon neighbors.

Alfred the Great was another king of Wessex some two centuries later who united the various Anglo-Saxon petty kingdoms against the Danes.[71] He also produced a law code for his subjects, though it is unknown whether it was written while his was still on King of Wessex or after he became King of the Anglo-Saxons. As his title on the oldest copies only mentions Wessex, it is speculated that the laws date before his elevation sometime around AD 871 to 892, but there is evidence that he may have continued to use his old title later in life.[72] In this later law code, there is no mention of any distinction between subjects of different race. In fact the world Welsh does not appear at all.[73] It would seem by that time the culture had become more or less homogenous. Coupled with Alfred taking the title of King of the Anglo-Saxons, it seems that the Germanic invaders had succeeded in eliminating all discernible markers of Romano British identity from their society.

Considering this evidence, Thomas et al.'s model of racial interaction between the English and British appears far more likely than that of Pattison and his team. It is difficult to envision how a culture which holds such a high opinion of itself and such a low opinion of its neighbors would not have some measure of restriction regarding intermarriage. Though this judgment is not definitive, this reevaluation of the primary sources helps to at least prompt historians in one direction. In a broader sense, the reintroduction of sources like the Gildas' *On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain*, Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, and the Laws of Ine and Alfred, even with their biases and inaccuracies could serve to direct further study and provide historians with a measure for

[70] Ibid, 47.
[71] Ibid, 34-35.
[72] Attenborough, *The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, 35.
[73] Ibid, 62-93.

their findings. In fact these very biases, in their own way, are yet another type of asset, giving today's scholars a look at the mindset of the times, and as investigations into the past move forward and hypotheses become ever more nuanced, this perspective will become even more helpful.

Conclusion

The nature of early Anglo-Saxon civilization has persisted as one of the divisive topics within European history. Because of its implications for England's place within the ethnic tapestry of Europe, this debate has only intensified since World War II. Corresponding advancements in technology and theory have allowed scholars to view of the early Anglo-Saxon period more clearly than ever before. In the past century, the academic community has moved away from relying completely on the word of sources like Gildas' *On the Ruin and Conquest of Britain*, the Venerable Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, and *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. Over the years, scholars have brought new methods of investigation to bear on this issue, including archaeology and genetic studies. Each of these has brought new revelations and insights into the nature of the society. It has also brought new areas of debate as well.

The most recent of these debates has arisen over the results of genetic studies of the British populace conducted by the teams of Weale and Capelli. Scholars are currently divided over just what type of marriage interactions occurred between the English and the Britons. These new debates have opened a new role for the written sources, bringing them back into relevance after having been rarely utilized in recent scholarship. In the current debate over the relationship between the Anglo-Saxon invaders and the British natives, the sources offer crucial insights, if not a definitive answer. Their persistence in upholding the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon culture would seem to indicate that relationship of the invaders to those they conquered was one of forced submission, whenever possible. This resulted in the Britons

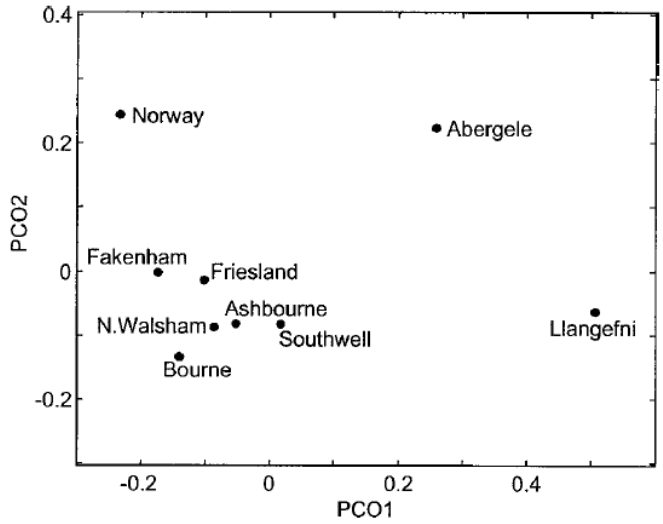
being treated as lesser subjects under earlier kings such as Ine until they were finally amalgamated into the English culture by the time of Alfred the Great.

This contribution serves to demonstrate just how bright a future the original sources of Anglo-Saxon England have in historical scholarship. With many scientific tests still waiting to be carried out, the coming years promise much more complex scientific data that will require discussion and evaluation. As that material becomes available, our image of the past will have the opportunity to become increasingly clear. As a result, it is important that scholars continue to look to the writings of the past as a guide for interpreting all future scholarship.

Appendix A

The first substantial study to use genetic markers in Anglo-Saxon studies was completed by the team of Michael E. Weale, Deborah A. Weiss, Rolf F. Jager, Neil Bradman, and Mark G. Thomas. This team was drawn from the faculty of University College London, University of California, Davis, and Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam.[74] The team was attempting to resolve the debate between large scale and small scale migration models for the Anglo-Saxon migration.[75] The researchers compared samples taken from males in each community. The comparison of the Y Chromosomal DNA analysis only pertains to the male lineage. They compared samples from small towns across a transection of England and Wales chosen because of their isolation from recent immigrations to samples taken from Norway, to represent Norse invasions, and Friesland in the northern Netherlands, to represent the Anglo-Saxon homeland.[76]

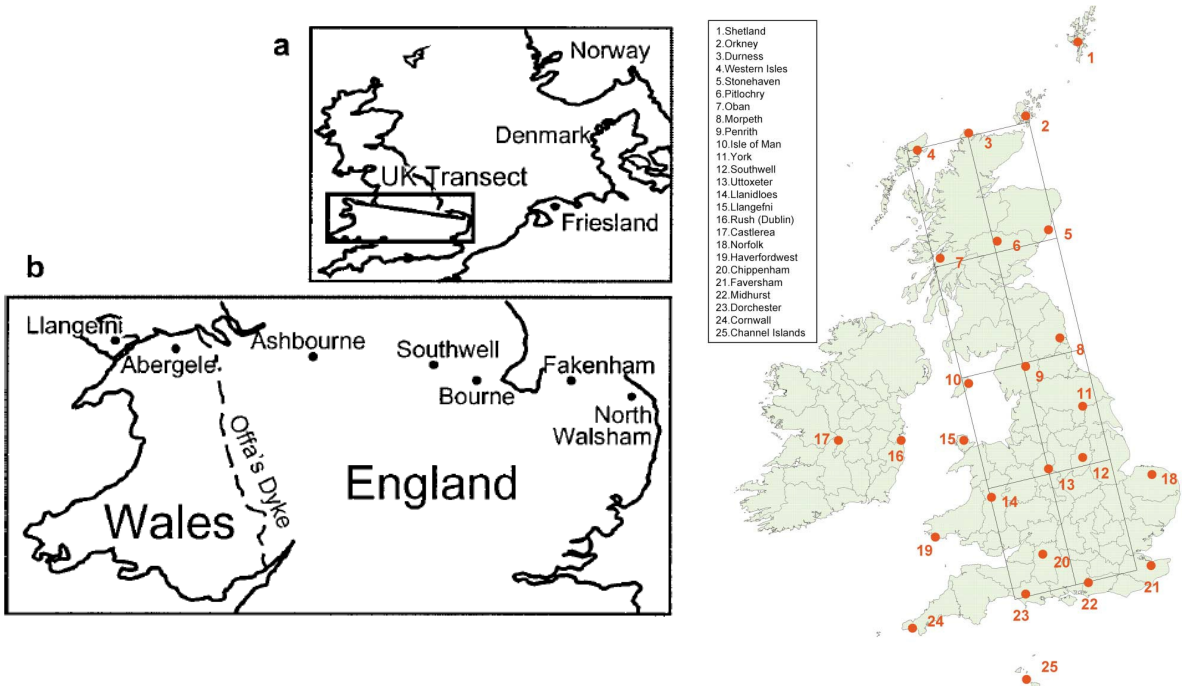
Several key genetic markers for each group were then identified from previous work on these populations and the percentages in the DNA samples were compared. Assuming that before the migration age each population area was mostly unique, the researchers theorized that higher levels of another group's markers would indicate a larger influx into that region. The results (see figure 1) show that, as expected, the villages in



(Weale et al, 1017) The two axes represent the values of two key genetic markers. Note the cluster of locations around Friesland.

[74] Weale et al, "Y Chromosome Evidence", 1008.
[75] Ibid, 1008-1009.
[76] Ibid, 1009-1010.

northern Wales retained a unique genetic makeup, but that the villages in England were virtually identical to the Friesland sample.[77] The research team's models for interpretation concluded that these levels would either require a large scale migration event or impossibly high levels of annual migration over the subsequent generations.[78] As a result, the team concluded that there must have been a large influx of males into the area of northern England. However, they could not tell whether this change was a significant addition to the native population or a replacement of the existing population.[79]



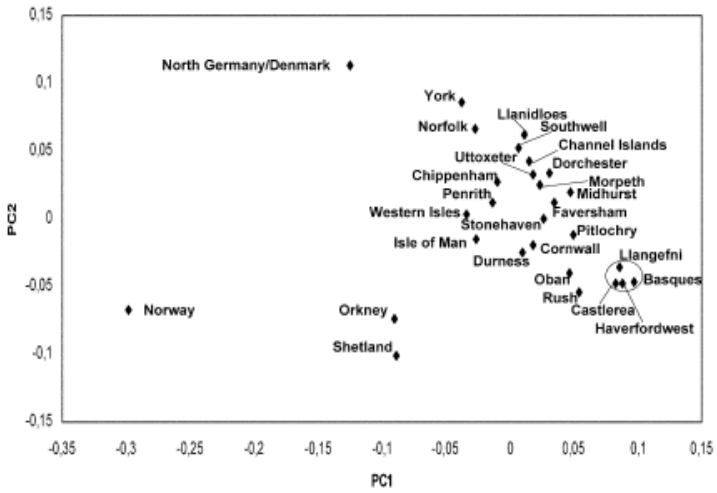
(Weale et al. 1010 & Capelli et al. 980) The 2002 Weale study (left) focused on a line of cities across center of England into Wales, while the 2003 Capelli study took samples from across Britain.

The following year, an even larger team consisting of Cristian Capelli, Nicola Redhead, Julia K. Abernethy, Fiona Gratrix, James F. Wilson, Torolf Moen, Tor Hervig, Martin Richards, Michael P.H. Stumpf, Peter A. Underhill, Paul Bradshaw, Alom Shaha, Mark G. Thomas, Neal Bradman, and David B. Goldstein addressed the issue. This team represented not only University College London, but Trondheim University, Norway,

[77] Weale et al, "Y Chromosome Evidence", 1018.
[78] Ibid, 1018.
[79] Ibid, 1019.

Haukeland University, Denmark, University of Huddersfield, London, Universita Cattolica di Roma, and Oxford University.[80] This study greatly expanded the amount of data collected, taking samples from multiple sources in Denmark and Northern Germany to represent the Anglo-Saxons and extending the study with samples across all of the British Isles (see Figure 2) including setting the communities of rural Ireland as the new baseline for native British DNA.[81]

With these additions, the studies did still show a significant percentage of continental influence, both from Scandinavia and from northern Germany, but only on the order of 20%-60% replacement, not the 50%-100% found by the Weale et al. study.[82] (See figure 3). Moreover, by expanding the study to cover more of Great Britain, the results show that the Anglo-Saxon immigration, and Norse immigration for that matter, was not a uniform affair. Different regions experienced different numbers of invaders. The numbers show a percentage of replacement that might not require the large-scale migration required by for the Weale et al. results.[83] Despite the larger sample size of this study, it left many issues open for debate. Both studies had to set a benchmark for what they considered a native population. In the case of the Weale study, the researchers took towns in Wales, while Capelli and his associates used



(Capelli et al 982) By adding more data points, the Capelli study showed a range of both Anglo-Saxon and Norse influences.

[80] Capelli et al, "A Y Chromosome Census", 979.
[81] Ibid, 979-980.
[82] Ibid, 983.
[83] Ibid, 983.

populations in Ireland.[84] With records of immigration often scarce throughout history even more recently than the Anglo-Saxon invasion, it is difficult to determine all the genetic contributions to a population. As a result, the choice is still only an educated guess. Similar choices had to be made for determining the Anglo-Saxon homeland. Choices and assumptions like this have left space for continued debate.

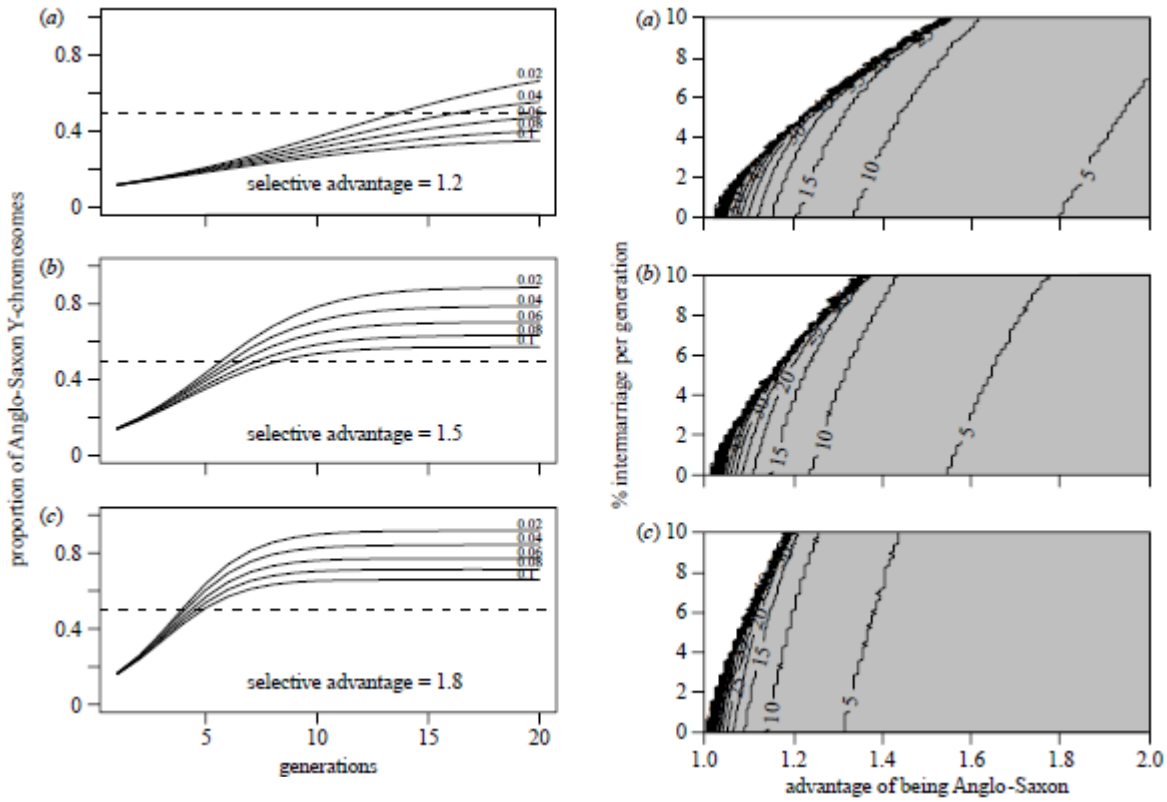
[84] Weale et al, "Y Chromosome Evidence", 1009. Capelli et al, "A Y Chromosome Census", 979.

Appendix B

The results of the Weale and Capelli studies have sparked serious debates about the intermarriage situation between the arriving Anglo-Saxons and the native Britons. The studies' results point to a significant genetic impact on the British population, one that seemed to require too large a population influx given the means of transportation in place at the time.[85] In response to this, scholars have had to develop models to reconcile these two facts.

The most influential model was proposed in a paper by Mark G. Thomas of University College London, Michael P. H. Stumpf from Imperial College London, and Heinrich Härke from the University of Reading.[86] The team believed that the abnormally high results could be explained if the Anglo-Saxons established conditions which gave them a reproductive advantage.[87] As the incoming invaders, the Anglo-Saxons would control the wealth and political power in the communities where they lived. If they established a set of restrictions prohibiting marriage with the British women, this advantage in resources would remain concentrated, giving the Anglo-Saxons a sustained reproductive advantage and therefore a magnified genetic impact.[88] The team modeled this by creating an equation with the variables of economic advantage and intermarriage rates. Basing their models of racial segregation on the Apartheid situation present in South Africa, the researchers found that certain values would produce sufficient levels of genetic impact. (See Figure 4).

[85] Thomas et al, "Apartheid", 2651.
[86] Ibid, 2651.
[87] Ibid, 2651-2652.
[88] Ibid 2652.



(Thomas et al 2653) These two graphs show that even with moderate percentages of intermarriage, the Anglo-Saxon percentage of the population rises quickly because of the advantage of belonging to that class.

This interpretation of the genetic data however, has its opponents, perhaps none more influential than John Pattison. Pattison argues that Thomas and his colleagues are neglecting a significant source of Germanic DNA, namely, the Belgae immigrants who came to Britain before the Roman occupation.[89] Under Pattison's model, the people encountered by the Anglo-Saxons were not in fact purely British in their genetic code. If this is true, neither an implausibly massive Anglo-Saxon invasion nor an Apartheid-like society would be required to yield the DNA replacement observed in the studies. Rather than having only around a century of Anglo-Saxon immigration to bring in the DNA, Pattison claims that the models should span at least another 500 years. This would mean that there was more than sufficient

[89] Pattison, "Integration Versus Apartheid" 717.

time for the slower process of assimilation to produce the observed results.[90] To see if Pattison could be correct will require studies of the Belgian and German populations and there genetic signature, adding even more cost and complexity to this already complicated issue. Issues like this make it clear that not only is the current evidence in dispute, but that all the necessary evidence needed for a definitive answer has yet to be assembled.

[90] Pattison, "Integration Versus Apartheid" 720-721.

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Katy Shannahan
OUHJ 2013 Submission

The Impact of Failed Lesbian Feminist Ideology and Rhetoric

Lesbian feminism was a radical feminist separatist movement that developed during the early 1970s with the advent of the second wave of feminism. The politics of this movement called for feminist women to extract themselves from the oppressive system of male supremacy by means of severing all personal and economic relationships with men. Unlike other feminist separatist movements, the politics of lesbian feminism are unique in that their arguments for separatism are linked fundamentally to lesbian identification. Lesbian feminist theory intended to represent the most radical form of the idea that the personal is political by conceptualizing lesbianism as a political choice open to all women.[1] At the heart of this solution was a fundamental critique of the institution of heterosexuality as a mechanism for maintaining masculine power. In choosing lesbianism, lesbian feminists asserted that a woman was able to both extricate herself entirely from the system of male supremacy and to fundamentally challenge the patriarchal organization of society.[2] In this way they privileged lesbianism as the ultimate expression of feminist political identity because it served as a means of avoiding any personal collaboration with men, who were analyzed as solely male oppressors within the lesbian feminist framework.

Political lesbianism as an organized movement within the larger history of mainstream feminism was somewhat short lived, although within its limited lifetime it did produce a large body of impassioned rhetoric to achieve a significant theoretical

[1] Radicalesbians, "The Woman-Identified Woman," (1971).
[2] Charlotte Bunch, "Lesbians In Revolt," *The Furies* (1972): 8.

presence. The lesbian feminist movement emerged amidst a liberalizing and revolutionary political climate in the wake of the tumultuous 1960s, an era characterized by widespread social change and the rise of radical political reform movements. Dormant feminist thinking was reinvigorated through works such as Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*[3] and women's rights activists began organizing around women's issues as a means of breaking down gender barriers. These feminists began advocating for a radical restructuring of patriarchal society towards a system free of male supremacy in which women's social status was equal to that of men.

The lesbian feminist movement also emerged within the context of existing gay and lesbian movements. The 1960s saw increased mobilization and advocacy within the gay community with the development of homophile organizations such as the Daughters of Bilitis and the Mattachine Society.[4] Dominant theorizing within these organizations conceptualized sexuality as a predetermined biological state as a means of rejecting the popular characterization of homosexuality as a mental illness or perversion.[5] Lesbian feminism therefore asserted itself in the early 1970s in stark contrast to previous and existing lesbian groups working to achieve an equal status in the feminist movement. Homophile groups had attempted to gain acceptance in the women's movement primarily in promoting lesbianism as an innate sexual orientation determined by nature and other biological factors. This construction of lesbianism sought to eliminate homosexuality as a potential point of discrimination by posing lesbianism as a natural state of being rather

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[3] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1963).
[4] Annamarie Jagose, *Queer Theory* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 22-29.
[5] Ibid., 24.

than as a choice, allowing lesbians to seek access to the women's movement by portraying themselves as being primarily like other women with fundamentally similar interests. Political lesbians confronted and challenged this ideology. They asserted that lesbians were in fact radically different than heterosexual feminists in their relationship to patriarchy and male supremacy.[6] Unlike other lesbian essentialist groups who at the time were arguing for gay rights under the construction of homosexuals as a biological minority, lesbian feminists viewed lesbianism as a choice open to all women and as the ultimate weapon against a male-dominated society.[7] Rather than blending into the feminist movement, lesbian feminists were standing out in a radical way.

These tactics were in part motivated by the tenuous position of lesbians in the political landscape of the 1970s. Although a burgeoning gay rights movement was breaking away from homophile thinking and rapidly developing across the country in the wake of the Stonewall riots June of 1969,[8] it was primarily homosexual men who dominated this movement. As a result, this movement did little to integrate lesbian interests or feminist analysis into its rhetoric and goals.[9] Lesbians were also frequently met with hesitation and hostility within the larger women's movement. Betty Friedan infamously described the lesbian community as the "lavender menace" of the feminist movement, referring to the perceived danger lesbians posed to the women's movement at a time when they were seeking a popular acceptance of feminism and its goals.[10] Feminists had spent decades tirelessly defending themselves against accusations of

[6] Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls and Twilight Lovers: A History of Lesbian Life in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 206.
[7] Ibid., 214.
[8] Jagose, *Queer Theory*, 30.
[9] Faderman, *Odd Girls*, 211.
[10] Ibid., 212.

lesbianism as a means of delegitimizing their demands, and were therefore reticent to publicly admit openly lesbian women into their community.[11]

The beginning of the lesbian feminist movement is often marked by the presentation of the Radicalesbian's "The Woman-Identified Woman"[12] manifesto at the Second Congress to Unite Women in 1970, challenging participants to confront discrimination against lesbians within the feminist movement and asserting the political nature of lesbianism.[13] Their manifesto was the first to openly conceive of a lesbian as being defined primarily by a woman's feminist consciousness, stating that, "a lesbian is the rage of all women condensed to the point of explosion. She is a woman who… acts in accordance with her inner compulsion to be a more complete and free human being than her society… cares to allow her."[14] Lesbian feminist collectives such as The Furies, who published a widely distributed lesbian feminist newsletter of the same name in the first few years of the 1970s, further expounded upon lesbian feminist politics. However, the movement never developed much beyond the realm of grassroots organizing, consciousness-raising and conference presentations. By the mid- to late 1970s, the movement had begun to lose momentum and had all but evaporated by the 1980s with the removal of "self-defined sexuality" as a site of feminist intervention during the 1978 National Conference.[15]

In a contemporary climate hostile to essentialisms and choice-based approaches to sexuality, the radical lesbian feminist movement of the early 1970s holds an uncertain

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[11] Hilary Allen, "Political Lesbianism and Feminism – space for sexual politics?" *M/F* 7(1982): 17.
[12] Radicalesbians.
[13] Carolyn Dever, "Obstructive Behavior: Dykes in the Mainstream of Feminist Theory," in *Cross Purposes: Lesbians, Feminists, and the Limits of Alliance*, ed. Dana Heller (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 21.
[14] Radicalesbians.
[15] Allen, "Political Lesbianism,"16.

position. Its legacy amongst feminists today is generally a negative one, as a result of its politicized approach to lesbianism at odds with current understandings of sexuality. With the separatist ideals of lesbian feminism and its conceptualization of lesbianism as a political choice, the movement is frequently perceived as alternately laughable and outdated. The movement's embrace of lesbian chauvinism and the "man-hating dyke" persona has left it open to caricaturized portrayals by modern feminist thinkers.[16] However, these caricatures do not offer an accurate or contextualized understanding of lesbian feminism's history, intentions or arguments. Although most contemporary feminist theorists are critical of the essentializing moves within lesbian feminist rhetoric and some view it as a failed feminist movement, others continue to analyze the impact that the presence of lesbian feminism has had on the mainstream feminist movement. Overall, what these scholars are attempting to do is understand the complex relationship between political lesbianism and feminism. The debates over this question are contentious and multi-faceted, revealing the uncertain position that lesbians held in the advent of second-wave feminism during the early 1970s.

Some authors today have theorized the lesbian feminist movement as a rhetorical failure to establish an alternative feminist identity within the developing women's movement. The Radicalesbians first used the term "woman-identified woman" to describe their construction of the lesbian as the most authentic expression of feminist identity by renouncing the hypocrisy of maintaining heterosexual relationships while pursuing feminist goals and enacting the ultimate resistance to the patriarchal social system. Tate argues, however, that this conceptualization proved itself to be a non-viable

[16] Bonnie Zimmerman, "'Confessions' of a Lesbian Feminist," in *Cross Purposes: Lesbians, Feminists, and the Limits of Alliance*, ed. Dana Heller (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 157-58; 163.

term of feminist identity.[17] The movement sought to unify lesbians and heterosexual feminists by establishing political lesbianism as an alternative feminist identity available to every woman. However, it ultimately failed when heterosexual women, other lesbians and women of color rejected the lesbian feminist separatist ideology for not fully addressing the issues significant to their lives. Tate asserts that rather than establishing a viable feminist identity, the rhetoric of the lesbian feminist movement instead cultivated the enduring stereotype of the man-hating feminist. Poirot later expounds upon this argument by asserting that, "woman-identification's ultimate rhetorical failure might not be its expulsion of certain kinds of women (i.e., heterosexual) from feminism, but its commitment to the liberation that *necessarily* entailed a rhetoric of confinement and containment, domesticating women and feminism."[18] The arguments of Tate and Poirot work together to position lesbian feminism as a failed and exclusionary attempt at constituting a radical new feminist identity.

Other authors are critical of lesbian feminism's strategy of utilizing a lesbian identity as a privileged signifier within the larger feminist movement. King argues that lesbian feminist rhetoric positioned lesbianism as a political choice, thereby opening up sexuality to critical examination as a potential tool of feminist revolution.[19] Operating as a tangible life change, a lesbian identity became a symbol for the possibility of radical social revolution through the lesbian feminist movement. King asserts that lesbianism was adopted as a "magical sign" within the lesbian feminist movement, meant to signify

[17] Helen Tate, "The ideological effects of a failed constitutive rhetoric: The co-option of the rhetoric of white lesbian feminism," *Women's Studies in Communication* 28 (2005): 1.
[18] Kristen Poirot, "Domesticating the Liberated Woman: Containment Rhetorics of Second Wave Radical/Lesbian Feminism," *Gender Studies in Communications* 32 (2009): 263.
[19] Katie King, *Theory in Its Feminist Travels* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 1994) 134.

knowledge of heterosexism and homophobia by simple association.[20] She frames this as a limiting rhetorical strategy serving to silence diverse perspectives and eliminate the potential for a complex understanding of historically and politically situated lesbian identities.[21] Proposing that a lesbian identity inherently gives an individual access to a thorough understanding of class oppression and sexual discrimination erases the diverse reality of lesbian identities throughout social history and in relation to the complex history of the feminist movement.

Although some authors have leveled critiques against the role played by lesbian feminism within the mainstream feminist movement, many analyses present their relationship as a productive one despite evident critiques in which lesbian feminism has acted as a facilitative shaping force. Despite her critique of political lesbianism's appropriation of lesbian identity as a privileged signifier within the feminist movement, King herself asserts the importance of recognizing that the history of the feminist movement exists as a shifting series of discussions, debates and political actions rather than as a clearly defined taxonomy.[22] She argues that American feminist theory has been produced by a series of ongoing conversations within the community, defining conversations as "units of political agency and action in theoretical discourse. They often overlap several debates, or may be found in layers over each other within a single debate."[23] These discourses and challenges, such as those that took place between political lesbians and heterosexual feminists, are what help to construct identities and define movements. Given this understanding of feminism's historical development, the

[20] Ibid., 124.
[21] Ibid., 136.
[22] Ibid., 56.
[23] Ibid.

relationship between lesbian feminism and mainstream feminism can be understood as a process of fragmenting, creating and re-shaping both lesbian and feminist identities.

In her historical overview of American lesbian life in the twentieth century, Lillian Faderman portrays lesbian feminism as a movement ultimately ending in failure as a result of its idealism and extremism.[24] However, she argues that despite its failure to achieve its published goals, the lesbian feminist movement was the source of a variety of benefits for the mainstream feminist movement. Political lesbianism introduced the politics of sexuality into the feminist movement through its process of weaving together the messages of the gay movement and the women's movement.[25] Additionally, lesbian feminism served to identify homophobia in the women's movement and sexism in the gay movement, forcing these groups to become receptive to lesbian and feminist ideas respectively.[26] Faderman also argue that lesbian feminism played another nuanced role in the development of the mainstream feminist movement. "They [radical lesbian feminists] played a kind of 'bad cop' in a social drama, which then permitted more modern activists lesbians to play the 'good cop'… Functioning as foils, lesbian-feminists made agitation for simple justice (which was considered outrageously radical at other times) seem tame."[27] Faderman's perspective here is that while the movement was not a success in its own right, its presence served to facilitate the development of other mainstream feminist and gay rights movements.

[24] Lillian Faderman, *Odd Girls*, 115-145.
[25] Ibid., 244.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., 244-245.

Dever also argues that the existence of political lesbianism ultimately benefitted the feminist movement, although her theoretical approach is somewhat more nuanced.[28] She theorizes that lesbian feminism acted as a critical obstruction, helping to shape and define mainstream thought through a process of impeding and redirecting the general flow of feminist thought. Dever argues that while lesbian feminists were not of the mainstream, the mainstream necessarily shaped itself in response to their existence and presence in the feminist consciousness.[29] These arguments affirm the idea that while lesbian feminism did not achieve its prescribed goals, it would be inappropriate to simply dismiss or ignore the movement as a failure. Their assertion of sexual politics, and their critique of the institution of heterosexuality were issues that the mainstream was forced to address.

Overall, the existing literature on the relationship between political lesbianism and the feminist movement seems to fall into two camps despite a ubiquitous critique of the actual politics of lesbian feminism. There are those who emphasize the overall failure of the lesbian feminist movement to establish a viable feminist identity while perpetuating exclusionary and chauvinistic attitudes. However, there are other critics who attempt to move beyond the movement's failure to examine the ramifications of lesbian feminism's historical existence. The remainder of this paper will closely examine the ideas and rhetoric of the lesbian feminist movement in order to accomplish two goals. The first will be to reveal and acknowledge the flaws of the lesbian feminist platform as a means of understanding why political lesbianism was not adopted as prevailing tool of feminist intervention. The second will be to assert the significance of political lesbianism

[28] Dever, "Obstructive Behavior,"19-41.
[29] Ibid., 19; 39.

to the mainstream women's movement in examining the valid critiques of heterosexuality and the dominant feminist movement leveled by lesbian feminist theorists. This approach will integrate the divergent bodies of existing literature by affirming the flaws and failures of the lesbian feminist movement, while at the same time pointing towards the relevance of political lesbianism to mainstream feminism. Political lesbianism's indictment of the institution of heterosexuality as being complicit with patriarchy called for the mainstream feminist movement to reexamine the socially constructed and political nature of sexuality and prompted the incorporation of sexuality into feminist dialogues. Lesbian feminism exists not simply as an isolated and outdated form of feminism, but rather as a dynamic movement with influential critiques whose presence helped to shape the direction of the mainstream feminist movement.

While the mainstream feminist movement during the early 1970s was mostly reformist in nature, lesbian feminists set their sights on a radical full-scale revolution of social organization. Lesbian feminists were most frequently women who came to identify as lesbians after their involvement with the women's movement rather than lesbians who became involved with feminist politics as a consequence of their marginalized sexual identity.[30] They asserted that personal sexuality was not only a site of political involvement but also a means of political change. Lesbianism was conceptualized as a tool for combating male supremacy and enacting equalized power relationships between the sexes.[31] This position opened up lesbianism as a political choice available to any woman who wished to harmonize the contradictions between her feminist politics and a

[30] Celia Kitzinger, *The Social Construction of Lesbianism* (Bristol, Great Britain: Sage Publications, 1987): 112-13.
[31] Charlotte Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt," 8.

heterosexual lifestyle.[32] It was conceived of not as a personal choice of sexual orientation but rather as a political decision intending to further the progress of the feminist movement towards a society free of sexual power differentials.

Within the framework of political lesbianism, a lesbian is therefore not defined solely as a woman who pursues sexual and romantic relationships with other women. Instead, a lesbian is conceptualized as a woman who rejects any form of womanhood defined in relation to men and alternately aligns herself entirely with women. The Radicalesbians collective coined the term "woman-identified woman" to summarize this lesbian feminist understanding of the lesbian woman. In their lesbian feminist manifesto they asserted that lesbians are those who, "finally realize that the essence of being a 'woman' is to get fucked by men."[33] Many political lesbians asserted that a fundamental aspect of the definition of womanhood in a society dominated by male supremacy and normative heterosexuality is her social and economic oppression. Political lesbians offered lesbianism as a solution to the outrage felt by many feminists in the face of male supremacy and a patriarchal culture. The Radicalesbians asserted that, "we must be available and supportive to one another, give our commitment and our love, give the emotional support necessary to sustain this movement. Our energies must flow toward our sisters, not backward towards our oppressors."[34] This understanding of the lesbian as a fundamentally political entity serves to differentiate political lesbianism of the 1970s from other lesbian and feminist identities, while at the same time providing the basis for the valuable critiques produced within this theoretical framework.

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[32] Radicalesbians.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.

Within a lesbian feminist understanding of a patriarchal society, the feminist decision to become a lesbian does not solely impact the woman who chooses to pursue this lifestyle change. Instead, the lesbian becomes the ultimate tool for undermining male supremacy and eliminating a patriarchal social structure. In "Lesbians In Revolt", a 1972 essay outlining the politics and ideology of lesbian feminists, Charlotte Bunch asserts that, "lesbianism is a threat to the ideological, political, personal and economic basis of male supremacy."[35] Carlotta Reid, a fellow member of the Washington D.C.-based lesbian feminist collective known as The Furies, elaborated by saying that, "lesbianism is threatening to male social power because it represents the spectre of women united in their own interests. It is threatening to individual male power because it represents the loss of a personal servant, plus an always available sperm receptacle."[36] Throughout lesbian feminist newsletters, manifestos and speeches, these impassioned assertions were elaborated upon to create a more nuanced understanding of the potentially destructive impact of lesbianism on male supremacy. In the lesbian feminist analysis of society, male supremacy is made possible through the social institution of heterosexuality, the adoption of which allots women a variety of privileges while denying them true social power.[37] In this understanding, heterosexuality is less of a sexual relationship and more of a mechanism for the maintenance of female oppression.

Underlying these assertions is the idea that lesbianism is not simply an alternative feminist path but rather the ultimate expression of feminist beliefs and an absolute necessity for the continuing progress of the women's movement. The lesbian feminist

[35] Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt," 9.
[36] Coletta Reid, "Coming Out in the Women's Movement," in *Lesbianism and the Women's Movement*, ed. Nancy Myron and Charlotte Bunch (Baltimore: Diana Press, 1975), 94-95.
[37] Rita Mae Brown, "Roxanne Dunbar: how the female heterosexual serves the interests of male supremacy," *The Furies* (1972) 5.

perspective asserts that feminists who continue to engage in heterosexual relationships not only undermine the work done by feminists to combat male supremacy and to improve the status of women, but are also fundamentally incapable of fully actualizing the vision of an ideal feminist society characterized by equalized power relations between the sexes. The Leeds Revolutionary Feminists collective, a lesbian feminist group based in England, penned a paper arguing for the rejection of heterosexuality by all feminists in which they asserted that, "Men are the enemy. Heterosexual women are the collaborators with the enemy. All good work that our heterosexual feminist sisters do for women is undermined by the counter-revolutionary activity they engage in with men."[38] With men positioned as the architects and perpetrators of male supremacy, political lesbians believed that heterosexual women were limited in their abilities to further the feminist cause. Charlotte Bunch illustrates this point in saying that,

> "Those who remain tied to men, individually or in political theory, cannot always put women first. It is not that heterosexual women are evil or do not care about their sisters. It is because the very essence, definition, and nature of heterosexuality is men first… As long as women still benefit from heterosexuality, receive its privileges and security, they will at some point have to betray their sisters."[39]

Lesbian feminists truly viewed themselves as the being in the vanguard of the development of the feminist movement. The widespread adoption of lesbian feminism by women represented the next step in the fight for a society free of male supremacy.

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[38] Leeds Revolutionary Feminist Group, *Love Your Enemy? The Debate Between Heterosexual Feminism and Political Lesbianism* (London: Onlywomen Press, 1981), 66.
[39] Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt," 9.

Perhaps one of the most disturbing aspects of the politics of lesbian feminism to the modern reader is what is often interpreted as an attitude of lesbian chauvinism. "Feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice," was an often-utilized slogan, which now serves to epitomize the lesbian feminist attitude privileging lesbianism as the fully developed embodiment of feminist theory.[40] This statement points quite concretely to the ways in which lesbian feminist theory privileged a lesbian identity within the feminist community. By regarding a lesbian lifestyle as the full implementation of feminist ideology, lesbians were elevated within this framework as politically and historically more advanced than heterosexual feminists. Although lesbian feminists established their politics as a means of eliminating social stratification, the nature of their politics necessarily established a feminist hierarchy with their own politics inherently established at the head.

This suggestion that lesbians were at the frontline of the feminist movement struck those outside the movement as being alternately superior and dismissive. Letters written in response to the Leeds Revolutionary Feminists' paper on political lesbianism highlight this attitude as an alienating aspect of the lesbian feminist platform. One woman wrote that the principles of political lesbianism assumed that, "women *ought* to experience sexual penetration by a man as a humiliation, an act of counter-revolutionary class-collaboration etc; and if they don't experience that, they are deluded."[41] In claiming that lesbian feminists represented the next step in the development of the feminist movement, they inherently limited the extent to which they could even potentially be criticized. Those women who did not share their feelings or disagreed with their politics

[40] King, *Theory*, 125.
[41] Leeds Revolutionary Feminist Group, 14.

were positioned as still existing under patriarchal control and being in need of liberation through an embrace of lesbian feminist politics.

These attitudes of lesbian chauvinism and superiority ultimately contributed to the failure of the movement by actively excluding potential allies and devotees. In an article written for the *Furies* newsletter, Sharon Deevy proclaims that, "there is no middle ground and no individual solution. If you, or I, choose not to change, we choose against a women's revolution and against ourselves."[42] The movement rejected women who wished to maintain heterosexual relationships and offered no compromise; even bisexuality was discouraged within the movement.[43] The woman-identified woman ideology of the lesbian feminist movement sought to fully appreciate women's value without the degradation seen to naturally occur with the involvement of male oppressors. However, this approach to elevating the status of women is contingent not only on a primary valuation of women, but also a necessary devaluation of men. The movement did not appeal to the interests of women of color in offering lesbianism as a means of understanding all forms of racial and class oppression and eliminating the avenues for a contextualized analysis of these experiences. Although some lesbians did choose to include themselves in the lesbian feminist movement, many were disturbed by the methods of political lesbianism and were alienated by the primarily political definition of their sexual orientation.[44]

The fundamentally political conceptualization of lesbian identity was another contributing factor to the ultimate failure of lesbian feminism. The lesbian feminist

[42] Sharon Deevy, "Such a Nice Girl…," *The Furies* (1972): 2.
[43] Loretta Ulmschneider, "Bisexuality," in *Lesbianism and the Women's Movement*, ed. Nancy Myron and Charlotte Bunch (Baltimore: Diana Press, 1975), 94-95.
[44] Faderman, *Odd Girls*, 213.

perspective understood lesbianism as both a political stance and a tool of feminist intervention, but sexual relations were addressed only as a secondary issue. Ti-Grace Atkinson theorized lesbians as existing in a liminal space between the male and female classes, offering a buffer between these groups in the struggle for sexual equality.[45] She argues that, "lesbianism is to feminism what the Communist Party was to the trade-union movement. Tactically, any feminist should fight to the death for lesbianism because of its strategic importance."[46] Lesbianism here is approached not as a sexual identity but as a political tactic to be utilized in order to achieve feminist goals. Political lesbians therefore made no reference to sexual desire in their understanding of lesbianism. In her comprehensive study of the social construction of a variety of lesbian identities, Celia Kitzinger asserts that, "the great achievement of the radical feminist lesbian account of lesbian identity is to alienate and disturb proponents of all other lesbian identities. This hostility is derived from the fact that this account of lesbian identity fails to explain and justify lesbianism in terms familiar and acceptable to the dominant order."[47] The movement had developed a definition of sexual politics that failed to incorporate actual sex or sexual relationships, and in many ways this definition was simply unpalatable to those outside of the movement.

Ultimately, it is important to understand the exact nature of the flaws that emerged within lesbian feminist politics in order to more firmly grasp its historical impact within the movement. The lesbian chauvinism inherent in the construction of a principle of universal lesbian separatism as the only means of feminist progress operated as an exclusionary mechanism, while the political definition of lesbianism failed to

[45] Ti-Grace Atkinson, *Amazon Odyssey* (New York: Link Books, 1974), 138-139.
[46] Ibid., 134.
[47] Kitzinger, *The Social Construction of Lesbianism*, 118-19.

appeal to the larger feminist population. The critiques leveled against political lesbianism hold purchase under scrutiny, but equally point towards sites where successes within the lesbian feminist movement might be revealed. While the methods and chosen tools of intervention in the lesbian feminist movement contributed to its failure, the social critiques motivating these interventions remain sound. The lesbian feminist movement's indictment of heterosexuality as a normative social institution complicit with the maintenance of male supremacy called for the mainstream feminist movement to reexamine the political nature of sexuality and prompted the incorporation of sexuality into feminist dialogues. Although the methods of the lesbian feminist movement were ultimately unsuccessful, lesbian feminism exists not simply as an isolated and outdated form of feminism, but rather as a dynamic movement with influential critiques helping to shape the flow of the larger women's movement.

Lesbian feminist assertions of the political nature of sexuality took place within the context of the historical alienation of lesbians by both the gay rights movement and the women's movement. Where other lesbian groups sought acceptance into existing movements by highlighting commonalities and emphasizing lesbian normalcy, lesbian feminism asserted lesbians as a distinct group with valuable interests, perspectives and purposes within the feminist movement. Charlotte Bunch acknowledged that, "One week of pretending will show you why the life of a lesbian is not the same as that of a straight woman. This does not necessarily make lesbians better or worse than feminists, but it does make our perspective on male society different."[48] Furthermore, their politics and rhetoric demanded an acknowledgement of the unique oppressions and needs of lesbians. While previous lesbian groups had countered accusations of lesbianism as a mental

[48] Charlotte Bunch, "Learning from Lesbian Separatism," *Ms.* (1976), 100.

illness or social maladjustment by emphasizing ways in which they were "just like" other feminist women, lesbian feminist discussion sought to reveal the ways in which lesbians were prevented from accessing the class and economic benefits inherent in a heterosexual lifestyle. Coletta Reid writes that,

> "As I tried to live as an open lesbian I began to see the privileges I had taken for granted when married. My husband had been able to make more money than my lover and I together… My husband had taken the car; I was unable to get a loan for another one. I had no credit as it was all in my husband's name. Landlords wanted to rent houses to families; I had to pretend I was straight to get a job."[49]

Lesbian feminists such as Reid began calling attention to the tangible economic, social and class benefits denied to women who did not enter into a sexual relationship with a man in the early 1970s. By renouncing heterosexuality, lesbians were indeed renouncing a great number of systemic benefits. In analyzing the unique social position and perspective of lesbian women, they addressed sexuality as an institution bestowing privileges upon heterosexual women and denying them to all others.

Additionally, lesbian feminist women became the harshest critics of the homophobic attitudes within the mainstream feminist movement. These women wrote of the negative reception they received as lesbian women among their heterosexual feminist peers, coming to feel excluded and unwelcome within the women's movement. In her essay "Coming Out in the Women's Movement", Coletta Reid writes that after becoming a lesbian in the early 1970s, "one woman expressed misgivings about me or my friends being around her daughter since I had become a lesbian. She evidently thought I would

[49] Reid, "Coming Out in the Women's Movement," 96.

molest her precious little [child]; she had no similar qualms about my being around her son when I was heterosexual."[50] This offers one small example of the existence of homophobia within the feminist movement during the rise of lesbian feminism, outside of feminism's general anxiety over the public perception of visible lesbians within the movement. By challenging the idea that lesbians needed to persuade heterosexual feminists to grant them entrance into their movement, lesbian feminists challenged the heterosexual privilege that permitted the exercise of open homophobia within the women's movement.

Within the second wave's reinvigoration of the women's movement in the early 1970s, sexuality was often treated as a personal matter irrelevant to larger feminist goals. Lesbians were understood simply as a subgroup of women who were uniting with other women under a common female identity to fight for women's rights. However, many of the causes deemed to be the important women's issues by the feminist movement were uniquely heterosexual in character. Lesbians were seen as having little to offer to a women's movement fighting for abortion rights, access to birth control, and affordable childcare.[51] Political lesbians subverted these effacing attitudes by asserting lesbians as having access to a distinct feminist identity with it own political significance and purposes. In an article responding to a published critique of lesbian feminist ideology, a writer for the Furies newsletter says that the critic, "attempts to smash Lesbianism by treating it as a personal luxury rather than dealing with it as a political ideology… Her thesis that lesbianism is a simple personal choice is a cover to avoid recognizing the

[50] Ibid., 94-95.
[51] Allen, "Political Lesbianism,"18.

political implications of lesbianism."[52] By constructing lesbianism as a fundamentally political identity, the lesbian feminist movement asserted the relevance of a lesbian identity within the feminist movement and proposed a dynamic of mutual interests between the two groups.

In addition to establishing the political relevance of lesbian identity within the feminist movement, lesbian feminist rhetoric also served to provide an enduring critique of heterosexuality as a social institution serving to perpetuate a patriarchal social system. Charlotte Bunch asserts that, "the heart of the woman-identified-woman statement and of all lesbian-feminist politics is the recognition that, in a male-supremacist society, heterosexuality is a political institution," and that, "Heterosexism depends on the idea that heterosexuality is both the only natural and the superior form of human sexuality, thus providing the ideological support to male supremacy."[53] Lesbian feminist politics therefore did not simply critique heterosexual relations, but rather the status of heterosexuality as a normative and compulsive social institution. They argued that a heterosexual orientation was laden with various privileges, such as social acceptance and economic benefits, in order encourage women to choose heterosexuality despite its function as a social institution stripping them of power and fueling the system of patriarchy.[54] However, heterosexuality was conceived not only as a means of exploitation for heterosexual women but also as a point of oppression for lesbian women. Charlotte Bunch writes that, "we [lesbian separatists] were less concerned about an individual woman's personal choice than about the institution of heterosexuality; less concerned

[52] Brown, "Roxanne Dunbar," 5.
[53] Bunch, "Learning from Lesbian Separatism," 99.
[54] The Purple November Staff, "The Normative Status of Heterosexuality," in *Lesbianism and the Women's Movement*, ed. Nancy Myron and Charlotte Bunch (Baltimore: Diana Press, 1975), 79-83.

with sex-roles than with sex-power."[55] The underlying ideology of lesbian feminism was therefore less concerned with inflating the status of lesbians than deconstructing heterosexuality as a normative institution enforced for all women. By choosing lesbianism, they were breaking down barriers and challenging heterosexual power in the feminist movement as well as in society in general.

The publication of the Leeds Revolutionary Feminists paper outlining lesbian feminist ideology incited such dramatic discussion and public input that the letters written in response to the paper were gathered into a volume published by the OnlyWomen Press in the early 1980s. These letters offer insight into the discussion prompted by the dissemination of lesbian feminist ideas throughout the women's movement. Some women offered challenges to the idea that participation in heterosexual relationships renders women unable to participate in a feminist reshaping of society. One woman writes that, "I understand perfectly why I *should* feel angry about women "collaborating" with men and therefore shoring up patriarchy; but I don't feel I can turn round and tell my heterosexual friends they're "wrong"… I feel that a lot of heterosexual feminists have spent – and are spending – a lot of energy trying to work out their situation."[56] Others critiqued the idea of lesbianism as the only means of gaining insight into the oppressive nature of the institution of heterosexuality, such as another woman who wrote,

> "I know a bit about heterosexual privilege and the advantages I have as a heterosexual woman… I've seen how insensitive heterosexual women can be to lesbians – the constant pressure to see who a woman sleeps with as her own business private, the ways in which many of us refuse to truly consider whether

[55] Bunch, "Learning from Lesbian Separatism," 61.
[56] Leeds Revolutionary Feminist Group, 17.

> all men are potential rapists, the ways in which we crawl and conciliate, not just with 'our' men but with many others."[57]

She also elaborates on the feeling of alienation cultivated within the lesbian feminist rhetoric by saying that there is, "a feeling that I'm not a proper feminist and don't deserve liberating because I'm not behaving properly."[58] Some women sought to defend lesbian feminist rhetoric and argue for its position within feminist discussion, such as one lesbian feminist who wrote that, "we must be able to support each other in working out our ideas, and these change. We need a balance between being clear and being allowed to say what we believe, and being tolerant and patient. There is a fine line between saying things strongly, and imposing beliefs on others."[59]

Overall, these letters reveal that the politics of lesbian feminism were not simply ignored or baldly rejected by the mainstream feminist movement, even if ultimately lesbian feminist politics were not incorporated into dominant feminist interventions. The letters express a desire to respond to the assertions of lesbian feminism in a way that indicates a shaping of the future direction of the feminist movement. One woman writes that the response of feminist women to the paper published by the Leeds Revolutionary Feminist Group, "seems to raise some crucial questions on the direction the WLM [Women's Liberation Movement] is taking."[60] Another feminist woman used her critiques of lesbian feminism to address what she would like to see instead from the feminist movement in saying that, "I want a feeling of pulling together – not pulling each other to pieces. I want to understand better how we as women can support each other, but

[57] Leeds Revolutionary Feminist Group, 19.
[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., 18.
[60] Ibid., 15.

also how we as women oppress each other."[61] These responses provide a concrete example of the discussion that was taking place among feminist women in the early 1970s. These discussions addressed and critiqued the central tenets of lesbian feminism, thereby shaping dominant feminist thinking in response to political lesbianism without necessarily adopting it as a primary feminist intervention.

The passionate voices on either side of the issues raised by political lesbianism demonstrate that their movement was neither wholly condemned nor revered, representing the existence of an ongoing and unresolved discussion amongst heterosexual feminists, lesbians, and lesbian feminists. In the foreword to the collection, the Leeds Revolutionary Feminists write:

> "[W]e were asked to put the paper in WIRES [England-based WLM newsletter] because it sparked off discussion, and women at the conference wanted other women to join in with the original paper available to them. If it had sunk like a stone, it wouldn't have received any wider distribution… Because it appeared in WIRES, it was seen as a finished product, which was never intended. We were moving towards an analysis of how heterosexuality is central to women's oppression. The debate that followed made us look back at the paper again and again, and our own discussions benefitted from the feedback."[62]

Similarly, a member of the Furies collective reflects on the impact of her time spent as a lesbian feminist by saying that, "most women in that group have continued to be involved in the development of feminist theory, communications, economics and cultural strategies… It was a time that allowed us to develop both political insights and concrete

[61] Ibid., 16.
[62] Ibid., 66.

projects that now aid women's survival and strength."[63] These voices from lesbian feminists at the outset of their movement illustrate political lesbianism as being something more significant than an isolated or failed social movement. Instead, they reveal lesbian feminism as being an important point of discussion and a developing force for those who subscribed to their politics as well as for those who challenged their ideology.

The lesbian feminist movement certainly did not achieve the lesbian utopia its founding members prescribed in the early writings of the Radicalesbians or within the Furies newsletters. However, the existence of this radical strategy served as a force reshaping how the feminist movement addressed lesbianism while at the same time sparking vital discussion surrounding the institution of patriarchy. The legacy of this discourse can be found in later theorists such as bell hooks and Adrienne Rich. Critiques of lesbian feminist politics are echoed in hooks's analysis of the feminist movement of the early 1980s, which is launched from an examination of the man-as-enemy politics of radical feminism[64]. Conversely, Rich's theories of compulsory heterosexuality and of a lesbian continuum incorporate politicized approaches to lesbian identity and heterosexuality[65]. Ultimately, it is important to recognize that, as Allen notes, "political lesbianism can be read simply as a *stance*: it is a posture that intends to be noticed, that intends to challenge, that will inevitably have certain effects both for those who adopt it and those who attempt to work 'around' it."[66] Radical lesbian feminist rhetoric challenged the direction of the dominant feminist movement, forcing it to address

[63] Charlotte Bunch, "Learning From Lesbian Separatism," 101.
[64] bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Brooklyn, New York: South End Press, 1984).
[65] Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 5(1980).
[66] Allen, "Political Lesbianism," 32.

unexpected questions and engage with unanticipated discussions. While a critical understanding of lesbian feminism and its failures is important, it is equally as important to appreciate the role played by the very presence of lesbian feminism in the overall development of the feminist movement.

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A Church Divided: American Catholics and the Equal Rights Amendment

The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was a contentious feminist issue that divided the people of the United States of America for a century. The fight over whether equal rights for women should be incorporated in the Constitution was bitter. Religious institutions were not exempt from this strife, and perhaps one of the most intensely divided establishments during the debate was the Catholic Church. Few social issues have created such a severe rift between individuals of the same religious institution than the ERA did within the Catholic Church. The extreme contention within the Catholic Church regarding the ERA merits academic inquiry for a number of reasons. It demonstrates the extent to which poignant socio-political debates can lead to extreme polarization of individuals and institutions that have a significant amount of common belief. The division of the Catholic Church over the ERA is also important because it illustrates the degree to which feminist issues divided segments of the American population that generally agree on other political and social issues. Furthermore, the battle over the ERA throughout the nineteenth century shows that the social and political views of both people and institutions can change considerably over time.

A fair amount of scholarly research has been done on the history of the Equal Rights Amendment. Most of this research focuses on the events that took place in the process of the attempt to pass the ERA, and its ultimate defeat.[1] In addition, much of the academic literature that examines the history of the ERA movement views it as part of a whole: there are few books

[1] Leslie K. Gladstone, "The Equal Rights Amendment: A Chronology." CRS Report for Congress. November 15, 1999.

that focus solely on the ERA. Rather, most research materials address a broad range of feminist social issues in a single volume of work, making the ERA one of many foci.[2] What's more, relatively little research that focuses primarily on the Catholic Church's relationship to the ERA has been carried out at this point. The secondary source literature available on this topic is disparate and somewhat unconnected. The books and articles that address Catholicism and the ERA are not in active dialogue with one another. Furthermore, the literature rarely concentrates on the division within the Catholic Church that resulted from the debates regarding the attempted passage of the ERA. Rather, available secondary sources tend to take one of two approaches. They either embark on an overly broad approach that encompasses feminist issues in the aggregate while addressing the ERA in addition to other issues, or they narrowly focus on a highly specific populace related to the Catholic Church.

In fact, in her article titled "Feminist Consciousness among American Nuns: Patterns of Ideological Diffusion," Patricia Wittbert asserts that "one topic that has been relatively ignored in the focus on non-mainstream groups is the extent and configuration of feminist beliefs among the women in Roman Catholic religious congregations in the United States."[3] She argues that American Catholic nuns and their attitudes toward feminist issues such as the Equal Rights Amendment have been largely left out of scholarly efforts to analyze feminist movements throughout history. Although Wittbert focuses on the attitudes of nuns as opposed to the entirety of the Catholic Church, her research is relevant as it demonstrates the fact that groups that one would not necessarily expect to be in support of the ERA—Catholic nuns—did in fact side with the feminist movement in defiance of much of the church hierarchy.

[2] See works by Freeman, Hirsch and Keller, MacLean, and Schwarzenbach and Smith.
[3] Patricia Wittbert, "Feminist Consciousness amongst American Nuns: Patterns of Ideological Diffusion," *Women's Studies International Forum* 12, no. 5 (1989): 529.

Wittbert's focus on American nuns is complemented by the writings of Antoinette Iadarola. Iadarola's article, "The American Catholic Bishops and Woman: From the Nineteenth Amendment to the ERA," addresses the positions of prominent Catholic clergy on a variety of feminists issues. This scholar contributes greatly to the background history of the Catholic Church and the ERA by outlining Catholic teachings and attitudes toward women, thus providing context for the debate.[4] Iadarola approaches her subject through the lens of a social historian. She focuses on Catholic theology, describing various doctrines and events that shaped religious interpretations of women and women's issues. Thus her work contextualizes other secondary sources on the matter by expounding on the teachings of the Church that are inextricably linked to many Catholics' strong opposition to the ERA.

"The 'Old Right' in Action: Mormon and Catholic Involvement in the Equal Rights Amendment Referendum" by James Richardson takes the broader approach of examining the actions and attitudes of not just Catholics but also another religious group that played a major role in the fight over the ERA: Mormons. However, though Richardson includes two religious groups in his study, the scope of the overall article is actually relatively narrow, as he limits his discussion of the ERA to a particular election year in the state of Nevada when a referendum on a state-wide ERA was one of the most hotly debated issues. Like a political historian, Richardson places the article in the context of social and political movements. More specifically, the book concerns the unexpected phenomenon of conservative religious groups' increasing involvement in American politics: a phenomenon that is contrary to the assumed "functional equivalence hypothesis" that claims that "if people are involved in more 'emotional' religions

[4] Antoinette Iadarola, "The American Catholic Bishops and Woman: From the Nineteenth Amendment to the ERA," *Women, Religion, and Social Change* (January 1985): 457.

groups such as evangelical Protestantism, then they are not interested in politics and vice versa."[5] Interestingly, the paper concludes with a question about the constitutional rights of religious organizations to lobby on political issues, emphasizing the political nature of Richardson's historical research.

Daniel Williams' *God's Own Party: The Making of the Christian Right* is principally political in nature. He examines the growth of the conservative religious movement within American politics: a movement that included many Catholics.[6] Though broad in its approach to feminist issues related to the family, part of this work does adequately address Catholic division over the ERA. In particular, it gives insight into the activism of Phyllis Schlafly, a conservative Catholic politician who vehemently opposed the passage of the ERA.

Perhaps the most relevant and in-depth analysis of the Catholic struggle over the ERA movement is James Kenneally's "Women Divided: The Catholic Struggle for an Equal Rights Amendment, 1923-1945." A work of social history, this article—unlike much of the secondary source literature available—addresses the issue of Catholic division over the ERA with neither an overly broad nor overly narrow purview. However, the timeframe of the article does limit the focus to some extent since it examines a time period prior to the 1970s. Kenneally does provide useful context for the period on which he focuses, including a brief history of the women's suffrage movement that set the stage for the push for an ERA. This article likewise gives insight into the earliest stages of the feminist attempts to pass a constitutional amendment providing for de jure equal rights for the sexes. Kenneally's article includes a valuable social history of the

[5] James T. Richardson, "The 'Old Right' in Action: Mormon and Catholic Involvement in the Equal Rights Amendment Referendum," *New Christian Politics* (January 1984): 213.
[6] A chapter in the book titled "The Grassroots Campaign to Save the Family" is the most relevant segment of the work.

various Catholic groups that sprung up in reaction to the ERA, including the National Council of Catholic Women.[7]

In lieu of existing sources that do so effectively, this paper will present a codified history of Catholic views on the Equal Rights Amendment throughout the twentieth century. This paper seeks to rectify the fact that leading secondary sources on the subject fail to adequately address the issue. Current scholarly research either fails to sufficiently address the Catholic Church's involvement in the ERA movement or focuses solely on a highly specific population associated within the Catholic Church. As such, this research is valuable because it will provide both an overview of the events surrounding the conflict over the ERA as well as outlining the division within the Catholic Church that resulted from the debate over the legislation. Thus, this paper will expand upon the fairly limited degree to which current scholarly literature explores the manner in which the Catholic Church was divided over the Equal Rights Amendment. Furthermore, this paper will demonstrate that Catholic views on the ERA—including those of official theology, bishops, nuns, and lay people—changed significantly throughout the twentieth century.

The push for an Equal Rights Amendment has a long history. The movement advocating a constitutional amendment requiring equal rights for men and women dates to 1914, when the National Women's Party set forth the first such proposal.[8] Various groups advocated for—and opposed—several different iterations of the ERA during the 1920s. Most placed the primary focus on economic independence, but did not necessarily agree on what economic independence entailed. This debate over the meaning and purpose of an ERA resulted in strife within the

[7] James Kenneally, "Women Divided: The Catholic Struggle for an Equal Rights Amendment, 1923-1945," *The Catholic Historical Review* 75, no. 2 (April 1989): 250.
[8] Nancy F. Cott, "Historical Perspectives: The Equal Rights Amendment Conflict in the 1920s," in *Conflicts in Feminism*, ed. Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller (New York: Routledge, 1990), 45.

women's movement as groups struggled to determine whether they should support a single-issue platform or attempt to cooperate with other groups for more encompassing efforts at broad social change.[9] In essence, "the initial conflict between women over the ERA set the goal of enabling women to have the same opportunities and situation as men *against* the goal of enabling women freely to be different from men without adverse consequences."[10]

In essence, the clash over the Equal Rights Amendment at the beginning of the nineteenth century largely centered on the question of "what next?" After the passage of the nineteenth amendment, many feminists held opposing viewpoints regarding what the next step should be in improving the condition of women in the United States.[11] While many women believed that the nineteenth amendment adequately addressed the need for women to have the opportunity to engage in the public sphere, many other feminists believed their work was far from complete. These feminists were not satisfied with mere suffrage, but rather sought to ensure better treatment of women in society in all arenas. As a result, the primary concern of the day quickly became protective legislation for women. Protective legislation was essentially the passage of labor laws that regulated the work of women in an effort to improve their economic position.[12] Groups such as the League of Women Voters, the Women's Joint Congressional Committee, and the National Women's Trade Union League sought to secure state regulation of labor issues such as working conditions and worker's hours in hopes that they would ensure women were able to establish themselves as an economic force without being taken advantage of or abused by the capitalist wage economy system.[13]

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[9] Ibid, 44.
[10] Ibid, 44.
[11] Antoinette Iadarola, "American Catholic Bishops and Woman: From the Nineteenth Amendment to ERA" Women, Religion, and Social Change (January 1985): 463.
[12] Freeman, 66.
[13] Cott, 47.

Reformers who believed that the granting of suffrage ended the need for a women's movement tended to support protective legislation. Believing that women and men had important inherent physical differences that separated them, supporters of protective legislation argued that women needed special accommodation in the workforce because they could never naturally compete with men.[14] On the other hand, feminists who supported the ERA believed that protective legislation was discriminatory against women. They argued that it limited the ability of women to gain equality with men in all aspects of the law by perpetuating the idea that men and women were fundamentally different and thus should be treated in dissimilar manners.[15] These women disagreed with the often religiously-based assertion that men and women were profoundly unalike to the extent that women must always be sheltered from the world by protective legislation.[16] Pro-ERA women argued that by creating different work standards for the sexes, protective legislation would perpetuate the idea that women were inferior to and less capable than their male counterparts. As such, supporters of the ERA asserted that a constitutional amendment requiring legal equality for men and women was the best way to achieve real parity between the sexes because it would put men and women on an equal playing field in all arenas of life, including the workforce.[17]

Despite the controversy over the precise meaning of "equal rights" and what the next step following the nineteenth amendment should be, the idea of an ERA began to gain popularity in America. In 1923 Congressional hearings on an ERA took place after Senator Charles Curtis and Representative Daniel Anthony, Jr. submitted legislation requesting such an amendment. This primordial version of the ERA read: "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout

[14] Iadarola, 464.
[15] Ibid, 464.
[16] Ibid, 464.
[17] Ibid, 464.

the United States and in every place subject to its jurisdiction."[18] The legislation did not progress past the hearing process, however, and slowly the topic of the ERA became less and less discussed on the national level[19] despite its reintroduction to congress each year.[20] Nevertheless, during the 1940s the ERA reemerged as a central political issue in America. Support for an ERA was incorporated into the two major national party platforms during this decade: in 1940 for the Republican Party and 1944 for the Democratic Party.[21] In 1946 the ERA was again brought before the Senate for consideration but failed to pass by 11 votes.[22] Over the course of the next thirty years the ERA was slowly phased out as a major political topic as other social issues—such as the Cold War and the Civil Rights Movement—came to the forefront of the American political sphere and the ERA was no longer considered a priority.[23] These events in the early to mid-nineteenth century contextualize the official Catholic theology regarding women's rights generally and the ERA specifically.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the official stance of the Catholic Church toward feminism and the Equal Rights Amendment was less than favorable. The theology, history, and leadership of the Church opposed many feminist issues of the time, including the ERA, abortion, and female employment. For American Catholics in the early 1900s there was little doubt about the Church's beliefs regarding the nature and proper place of women. With a focus on the importance of piety, purity, submissive-ness, and domesticity, women were believed to be innately religious and positive moral influences on men. Women were expected to be

[18] Sibyl A. Schwarzenbach and Patricia Smith, ed., *Women and the United States Constitution: History, Interpretation, and Practice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 361.
[19] Leslie K. Gladstone, "The Equal Rights Amendment: A Chronology." CRS Report for Congress. November 15, 1999.
[20] Schwarzenbach, 350.
[21] Jo Freeman, *We Will Be Heard: Women's Struggles for Political Power in the United States* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2008), 122.
[22] Gladstone, 4.
[23] Freeman, 122.

subordinate to their spouse and have firm but gentle control over the domestic matters of the household.[24] In addition, official Catholic doctrine held that women and men were to occupy separate spheres based upon fundamental biological differences.[25] Furthermore, Catholic teachings indicated that women received salvation through the act of motherhood, providing added emphasis on the importance of remaining in the home instead of being involved in public affairs.[26]

Because traditional social expectations for women were rooted in the theology and tradition of the Catholic Church, "to many American Catholics this was not only an acceptable model but a familiar one, resting in part on a Christian tradition that held such a pattern was designed by God, exemplified by the Virgin Mary, and revealed by a Pauline interpretation of scripture and natural law."[27] Since the customary role of women as submissive wives and mothers was so deeply important to Catholic theology it is no surprise that the perceived consequences of violating these traditional roles was catastrophic on a grand scale. In fact, Catholic beliefs indicated that if women moved outside their God-created roles, they were sinning like Eve, going against the natural order of the universe, and risking bringing about the destruction of human society.[28] It is clear that "these perceptions of women were antagonistic to the feminist movement and to the equal rights amendment first introduced in 1923."[29]

In addition, many years of Papal teachings directly addressed the issue of women's rights and equality, further rooting anti-feminism in the beliefs of Catholicism. Prior to Vatican II, the pontiffs "assumed and explicitly taught women's inequality and subordination to men, as well as

[24] Kenneally, 187.
[25] Ibid, 188.
[26] Christine E. Gudorf, "Encountering the Other: The Modern Papacy on Women," *Social Compass* 36 no. 3 (1989): 298.
[27] Kenneally, 187.
[28] Ibid, 188.
[29] Ibid, 199.

condemned advocates of both women's equality and public roles for women."[30] As a result of these papal instructions, most Catholic higher-ups believed that success of the feminist movement would result in blurred gender lines, less stable homes and families, the undermining of the God-designed superiority of men over women, and the endangerment of women's natural moral leadership. As such, according to Catholic doctrine the Equal Rights Amendment was a dangerous social reform that could cause upheaval in society.[31] Thus, in the early 1900s Catholic theology was in strong opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment, as well as other feminist issues of the day.

Due in large part to such Catholic theology on women's rights, one of the groups that most strongly argued against the ERA was American Catholic bishops. In the 1920s the vast majority of these Church leaders opposed the women's suffrage movement: thus, the bishops' opposition to the ERA was hardly unexpected.[32] Alarmed by the increasing number of mothers entering the work force in the 1940s during World War II, Catholic bishops in the US expressed concern about the perceived conflict between employment and effective child care. In 1946 the bishops cautioned that society must not allow the turning of "the mind and heart of [woman] away from the home, thereby depriving the family, State, and Church of her proper contributions to the common welfare."[33] Thus it is evident that during the early nineteenth century the majority of Catholic bishops adhered to the Church's official doctrines against women's equality and opposed the Equal Rights Amendment.

Nuns are another intriguing element of the Catholic Church that was divided over the ERA. Like most groups in the Catholic Church, nuns were far from united in their views. After

[30] Gudorf, 296.
[31] Ibid, 199.
[32] Iadarola, 460.
[33] Ibid, 465.

all, "categorizing women simply as pro or antifeminist fails to do justice to the many and varied permutations of gender-affirming beliefs and values which arise among them."[34] Nonetheless, scholars have demonstrated that nuns have a rich feminist heritage that traces back to the early 1900s. Regarded as being "in some ways the most liberated women in nineteenth-century America," members of female Catholic religious orders had many opportunities not widely available to lay women at the time. For example, nuns had increased access to education, work, and economic self-sufficiency, in part because they were not expected to marry and have children. As a result, a number of Catholic nuns identified as feminists even in the first few decades of the nineteenth century. However, not all women religious supported women's movements such as the ERA.

The same increased opportunity that empowered many women religious also limited many nuns' exposure to sex discrimination, on the other hand. Because they were both sheltered from the world around them and frequently had unusually ample opportunities for personal growth and access to resources, many nuns did not relate to the struggles of the average woman.[35] Having generally experienced less discrimination in the workplace and the public sector than the average American woman, many nuns were initially not particularly sympathetic to feminist causes during the early twentieth century. However, as the Catholic Church reduced restrictions on the lives of nuns throughout the century, these sisters became increasingly aware of and committed to combating gender inequalities.[36] As a result, while women religious have always been divided on feminist issues, it is clear that in the early 1900s nuns were not overwhelming in support of the ERA. As time progressed, however, more and more nuns became supportive of the legislation.

[34] Wittbert, 529.
[35] Ibid, 529.
[36] Ibid, 530.

The American Catholic laity was another vital part of the nineteenth century conflict over the ERA. Several studies have been performed in order to ascertain the degree to which average Catholics in the early 1900s supported and opposed the Equal Rights Amendment. One such study revealed that only a very small fraction of the leadership in the pro-ERA movement had a Catholic background. While this could be in part due to the fact that the survey only examined top leadership positions—which were overwhelmingly occupied by wealthier women—it "still appears as if there is a direct relationship between religion and women's rights."[37] A number of studies regarding everyday Catholics—laypeople who were not directly affiliated with the Catholic hierarchy or religious orders—suggests that average Catholics were deeply divided over the ERA. However, it does seem clear that most Catholics in the beginning of the century aligned with official Church teachings on women's roles and thus opposed the ERA.[38]

In fact, many Catholics were strongly in favor of protective legislation—considered by many feminists of the day to be antithetical to the premise of the ERA—because it allowed women who needed to join the work force to do so while still promoting the Catholic doctrine of the difference between the sexes.[39] Indeed, scholars assert that

> Catholic anti-ERA forces argued that women, forced into the job market against their will and nature, viewed their occupations as only temporary and, therefore, had no desire to organize themselves in labor unions. If women, then, were transient members of the working force not interested in organizing themselves, they would need protective legislation.

In addition, Catholic opponents of the ERA believed that its adoption would harm disadvantaged women by removing what small gains had been made in workers' protection and economic

[37] Kenneally, 201.
[38] Ibid, 201.
[39] Iadarola, 464.

security.[40] This desire to protect populations with less privilege aligned with Catholic social teachings on the value of life, making is an appealing argument to many Catholics in the early nineteenth century.

Due to the strong lay opposition to the ERA that was founded on Catholic teachings, a number of major laity-led Catholic-based organizations sprung up in the early years of the conflict surrounding the ERA. Perhaps the most important and influential of these groups was the National Council of Catholic Women (NCCW). This "united Catholic womanhood" desired a return to normalcy after the conclusion of the Second World War, and a vital part of that status quo was the role of women traditionally supported by the Catholic Church. The Equal Rights Amendment was perceived as a threat to the social order that had already been disrupted by war, and the NCCW took a strong stance against it. In 1924 the NCCW issued an official statement condemning the proposed legislation "because of the jeopardy in which it places the interests of women."[41] The NCCW issued a number of other statements regarding the perceived dangers of the ERA. A statement by Dr. Elizabeth Morrissey, the Chairman of the Council's Social Action Committee, emphasized the previously discussed reasons for opposition to the ERA: the desire for protective legislation, the natural distinction between men and women, and the need for women in the home.[42]

In the latter half of the nineteenth century, however, Catholic views on the Equal Rights Amendment began to change dramatically. This shift in support for feminist causes is necessarily contextualized by the historical events amongst which it developed. Although the ERA was discussed to some extent in the 1950s and 1960s it did not achieve the support

[40] Nancy MacLean, *The American Women's Movement, 1945-2000: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009), 5.
[41] Iadarola, 463.
[42] Morrissey, Elizabeth. "Testimony Given the Senate Judiciary Committee's Equal Rights Sub-committee. Congressional Digest. September, 1945.

necessary to pass.[43] However, in the 1970s the ERA re-emerged as a high-profile issue as the push for women's liberation resumed. In fact, in 1972 the Equal Rights Amendment passed in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.[44] This proposed alteration to the constitution of the United States of America read: "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."[45] Despite passing in both houses of Congress and gaining a voting extension until 1982, the ERA failed to gain the approval of the requisite number of state legislatures necessary for ratification by the deadline set forth by Congress. As a result, the proposed amendment never became incorporated into the Constitution of the United States of America.

Late nineteenth century opponents of the ERA relied upon a number of arguments for amending the U.S. Constitution. They frequently argued that an amendment to the constitution was unnecessary because protective legislation and court rulings were already creating a large measure of gender equality. In fact, the beginning of the 1970s was a period of unprecedented growth of women's rights as many pieces of legislation addressing gender equality were enacted by Congress. In addition to the congressional approval of the ERA, the 1970s saw the creation of tax breaks for workers with children, the passage of the Higher Education Act's Title IX, and the enforcement of existing sex discrimination laws regarding employment opportunities among other improvements. [46] However, supporters of the ERA responded by stating that an ERA would go further than piecemeal legislation and court rulings in clarifying the exact extent to which equality was to be guaranteed. Furthermore, it would finally permit "the kind of first-

[43] Freeman, 4.
[44] Ibid, 4.
[45] U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on the Judiciary. *The "Equal Rights" Amendment: Hearings before the Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments of the Committee of the Judiciary*. 91st Cong., 2nd sess., May 5-7, 1970.
[46] MacLean, 24.

class citizenship which will permit [women] early in life to make career choices that are not now available."[47] Thus the desire for an amendment establishing equal rights for the sexes was not only about gaining privileges historically reserved for men but rather about gaining full legal equality.

As previously mentioned, many years of Papal teachings indicated that official Catholic doctrine was inherently anti-feminist and opposed to the passage of an ERA. However, the harsh realities and experiences of World War II demonstrated that women were capable of participating in the work force and public life while also caring for home and family. Greater numbers of women than ever entered the work force in order to compensate for the fact that a major segment of the male population was overseas engaged in a war. These women not only effectively carried out work traditionally reserved for men, but they did so without noticeably neglecting their responsibilities in the home.[48] As it became more and more evident that female employment did not, in fact, spell the doom of American society, Pope Pius XII revamped previous Catholic teachings to some extent. The pontiff perceived that in order for women to participate effectively in the public forum they might indeed require particular rights once believed to be in opposition to Catholic teaching, although he still hoped that women would not exercise some of those rights "for the good of the family."[49] Thus, while papal teachings on women and their place in society had progressed to some extent since the early nineteenth century segment of the ERA debate, it is clear that during the early to mid-nineteenth century official Catholic doctrine was still antithetical to the demand for equal rights for the sexes.

However, in the second half of the nineteenth century American Catholic bishops became markedly less opposed to demands for equal rights for women, although the church hierarchy was still divided on the issue of the ERA. For example, the Bishop's Committee on Women in Society and in the Church is believed to have wanted to endorse the ERA in the 1970s. This six-

[47] Schwarzenbach, 353.
[48] MacLean, 5.
[49] Gudorf, 296.

member group of Catholic bishops tasked with evaluating the position of women in American society and the Catholicism concluded that the ERA was in the best interests of women. However, the move to sanction the legislation was squashed by their superiors in the Church hierarchy "on grounds that the passage of the Amendment would somehow have further legalized abortion, an issue of preeminent concern to the American bishops."[50] Essentially, Catholic leaders were still fearful that increasing the rights of women in the world of politics and economics would lead to increasing the rights of women in other realms, especially the world of reproductive choice. From this time forward, American bishops tended to vocalize support for the ERA while heavily stressing their opposition to increased abortion rights, thus separating the issue of women's equality from the issue of women's health.[51] In 1982 the first joint statement of support for the ERA from a group of twenty-three Catholic bishops supplemented the support of individual bishops in their own dioceses that advocated for ratification of the proposed amendment.[52] Thus, the views of bishops regarding the ERA evolved over time: while most originally strongly opposed the ERA it later became regarded as "common sense" that women should be granted equal rights under the law.[53]

Like the American Catholic bishops, nuns' views on the ERA also shifted between the early and late 1900s. A newspaper article from 1980 titled "Nun Slams Anti-ERA Bishops" relates Sister Margaret Ellen Traxler's opinions on the subject. Traxler argued that "mere economics of the ERA makes its passage a moral imperative."[54] She argues that it is logical to pass the ERA so that women have increased economic opportunity and are empowered to care for themselves. This nun also directly defies and confronts the bishops of the Catholic Church,

[50] Iadarola, 470.
[51] Ibid, 470.
[52] Ibid, 471.
[53] Ibid, 471.
[54] Traxler. 1.

saying they have "lacked vision in their support or non-support of social legislation" in recent history.[55] Furthermore, respondents to a 1989 interview of a number of nuns were much more united in their support of the ERA than in previous decades. In fact, many of the nuns who were asked about their opinions on the matter seemed confused that the ERA would be a contentious topic, stating that it was obvious that women should have complete de jure equality with men.[56] While certainly not all nuns in the twentieth century conformed to the opinions expressed by these nuns, a large portion of women religious defied the upper echelons of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and strongly supported the passage of the ERA.[57] In fact, statistics indicate that in the 1980s—the period immediately after the attempted passage of the ERA—nuns overwhelmingly identified as feminists and would have been wholly in line with contemporary mainstream feminist movements were it not for their almost universal pro-life stance on abortion.[58]

Like their bishops and nuns, Catholic lay people in the United States also experienced a stark change in views on the ERA as the nineteenth century progressed. It is certain that many individuals and groups associated with the Catholic Church continued to oppose the ERA. For example, a statement put forth by the National Council of Catholic Women in June of 1977 appealed to the same Catholic teachings about the nature and proper treatment of the sexes that had been utilized to argue against the ERA nearly half a century earlier.[59] However, popular opinion amongst lay Catholics had turned in favor of the ERA by the 1970s. In fact, a study of pro-ERA and anti-ERA women activists conducted in 1975 indicated that 3.2% of women

[55] Ibid, 1.
[56] Wittbert, 532.
[57] MacLean, 38.
[58] Wittbert, 529.
[59] National Council of Catholic Women. "From a Statement of Position recently published by the NCCW." June-July 1977.

involved in the fight against the ERA were Catholic, while 6.4% of women involved in the fight for the ERA were Catholic.[60] Further data collected in 1978 revealed that Catholic women were more likely to support the ERA than their Protestant counterparts.[61] What's more, in 1980 a study of 1,205 people yielded results that showed 64.3% of Catholic women supported the ERA and 54.5% of Catholic men supported the ERA.[62] Thus, it is clear that although some significant minority segments of the Catholic laity continued to oppose the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment well into the late 1900s, a majority of average American Catholics in fact supported the legislation by the turn of the century.

Essentially, though limited amounts of academic research address the topic, it is evident that the debate over the Equal Rights Amendment in the nineteenth century deeply divided the Catholic Church. Official Church theology and doctrine of the time was strongly antifeminist and naturally pre-disposed against women's demands for equal rights. In addition, most of the Church hierarchy was strongly opposed to the ERA initially, including the pope and most American bishops. Catholic nuns likewise did not begin the nineteenth century in support of the ERA, despite their feminist leanings. The lay people of the church likewise did not support the ERA on a broad scale during the early 1900s, but rather fell in line with Catholic teachings and the Catholic hierarchy in their opposition to ERA legislation. However, as time went on the views of all three of these Catholic sub-groups changed dramatically. Although Catholic doctrine only slightly modified its stance on women's rights, beginning in the 1960s Catholic bishops, nuns, and lay people began to support the ERA in unprecedented numbers. While many

[60] Tedin, Kent L. "Religious Preference and Pro/Anti Activism on the Equal Rights Amendment Issue." *The Pacific Sociological Review* 21, no. 1 (January 1978): 55-66.
[61] Critchlow, Donald T. and Cynthia L. Stachecki. "The Equal Rights Amendment Reconsidered: Politics, Policy, and Social Mobilization in a Democracy." *The Journal of Policy History* 20, no. 1 (2008): 157-176.
[62] Burris, Val. "Who Opposed the ERA? An Analysis of the Social Bases of Antifeminism." *Social Science Quarterly* 64 no. 2 (June 1983): 305-317.

Catholics at all levels of leadership continued to oppose the legislation on doctrinal grounds, by the end of the nineteenth century a relatively clear majority of Catholics advocated for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. Thus, it is evident that American Catholic views on the Equal Rights Amendment changed greatly over time throughout the nineteenth century as church doctrine, bishops, nuns, and laity re-evaluated the feminist movement's demands for fully equal legal rights.

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The post-conflict transformation of gender norms in Nicaragua

Following a half-century of political repression and violence in Nicaragua culminating in a decade-long civil war (1979-1990) with massive physical, social, political, and economic costs, the country began a long and at times halting process of political and economic reconstruction. Popular identification with the Sandinista program of social and economic justice along broadly socialist lines during the Sandinista National Liberation Front's (FSLN, or Frente Sandinista de la Liberación Nacional) tenure in government did not end, however, following their electoral defeat in 1990. Women's organizations in particular, including those explicitly tied to the FSLN as well as autonomous feminist organizations that also emerged during the 1980s and 1990s, continued to seek greater gender justice and equality in the post-conflict period. They drew on gains made during the Sandinista era, but also sought to end harmful or regressive practices related to gender during the more stable post-Contra war era.

The possibility of transformation of all aspects of public and private life lies at the heart of post-conflict reconstruction efforts, and gender relations are no exception. In Nicaragua, the wartime use of gendered images of mothers and fighters, despite reimagining the capacities and roles of women, nonetheless had the effect of constructing women with a narrow range of attributes and political views; this limited their efficacy. Moreover, women's issues were frequently downplayed or sidelined as the Contra war dragged on, causing the Sandinista government to instead prioritize the war effort and war economy. The post-conflict period thus seemed to offer a renewed possibility for women's political organizing free of the FSLN's structures, but autonomous feminist organizations increasingly found their social and economic

demands overlooked or actively ignored by the neoliberal policies of the new government. There was a certain consistency between the conflict and post-conflict periods then, in that although feminist activists enjoyed many successes, they more often found their demands sidelined in deference to the larger political exigencies of the day. Women's daily lives and health have been especially negatively impacted by this failure to deeply transform essential understandings of gender norms and relations.

War and gender norms

War and conflict are fundamentally gendered phenomena[1] that severely disrupt not only daily life for those affected by them, but also norms related to social performance, including gender norms and gender roles. This disruption of gender norms and performance throughout the many gendered phases of war has been widely recognized in the feminist IR literature in particular as opening a space for the renegotiation and transformation of social understandings of gender in the post-conflict period.[2] It has been suggested that a new post-conflict "political settlement, constitution, and political regime may provide opportunities to enshrine the principles and promote the practices of gender equality and women's rights and empowerment" in political, social, and economic arenas, "and also to strengthen women's citizenship."[3] Other commentators further argue that in order to truly achieve gender justice in the wake of war and conflict, "the gender biases underpinning ideas of nationalism, war/peace/security, human rights, liberalism,

[1] C.f. Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making feminist sense of international politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990; Cynthia Cockburn and Dubravka Žarkov (eds.), *The Postwar Moment: Militaries, masculinities, and international peacekeeping*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 2002; Joshua Goldstein, *War and Gender: How gender shapes the war system and vice versa*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
[2] C.f. Cynthia Enloe, *Nimo's War, Emma's War: Making feminist sense of the Iraq War*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010, 5; Cynthia Cockburn and Dubravka Žarkov (eds.), *The Postwar Moment: Militaries, masculinities, and international peacekeeping*.
[3] Helen O'Connell, "What are the opportunities to promote gender equity and equality in conflict-affected and fragile states? Insights from a review of evidence," *Gender and Development* 19/3 (November 2011): 456.

and so on must also be problematized in the process."[4]

However, this potential reconfiguration of gender roles and expectations post-war is not always realized; rather, developments during and after the war may result in the retrenchment of deeply conservative and oppressive gender norms.[5] Indeed, while women have enjoyed "some success in relation to women's participation in elections and formal politics and engagement in small-scale economic enterprise," the larger workings of gender regimes, including "inequitable gender power relations within the household and wider society," have not been well-considered or understood.[6] This may happen both when "the experiences and needs of women are markedly absent or silenced by the general discourse of accounting for the past" in addressing and redressing legacies of violence and conflict, and when actors seeking social transformation fail to assess "the structures and modalities of change that create and enforce exclusion for women in post-conflict" contexts, and so "fail to effect meaningful political and legal transformation for women in situations where profound social and political change is negotiated."[7]

The question of how to study this retrenchment of oppressive norms, much less explain it, however, has been heavily under-theorized and under-explored in the literature: does gender justice and empowerment mean the establishment of quotas for women in government? Lifting war-affected women from poverty? Lowering rates of sexual and domestic violence? Empowering local women's organizations to be agents of social progress in their communities? Observable and quantifiable measures of women's entrance into and agency in public life can serve as useful proxies for the protection and advancement of women's (human) rights in post-

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[4] Niamh Reilly, *Women's Human Rights: Seeking gender justice in a globalizing age*, Cambridge: Polity, 2009, 97.
[5] Brigitte Sørensen, "Women and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Issues and Sources," *UN Research Institute for Social Development, Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies*, WSP Occasional Paper no. 3 (June 1998), iv.
[6] Ibid, 455.
[7] Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, "Women, Security, and the Patriarchy of Internationalised Transitional Justice," *Human Rights Quarterly*, 31 (2009), 1057.

conflict societies; however, it is unclear whether changes in gathered statistics truly reflect the transformation of gender relations and concepts of gender.

This paper assesses the changes in gender norms, roles, and expectations that took place in Nicaragua between the conflict and post-conflict periods, focusing primarily on changes in the status of women and femininities (excluding, due to space concerns, assessments of masculinities and non-normative gender and sexual identities, preferences, and expressions, though these, too, are critical to a holistic assessment of transformations of gender regimes in post-conflict societies) by examining the work of women activists during this time in their larger political and social context. There is ample literature available on both the successes and failures of women's organizations in advocating for women's rights and gender justice on the national political scene; however, these successes do not necessarily demonstrate or track larger changes in conceptions of and attitudes toward gender in Nicaragua. By contrasting these with national indicators related to women's health, economic empowerment, rates of domestic abuse, and participation (and efficacy) in national organizations, then, I hope to place a lens more broadly on women's daily lived experiences of marginalization and efficacy, oppression and empowerment during this period.

Women's liberation in the context of national liberation

In conflicts characterized as struggles by armed groups for national liberation, especially those that are explicitly Marxist in orientation, women's liberation is often posed as an important (though subordinate) element of the armed group's political platform.[8] These movements often use mixed-gender fighting units, and women have played a crucial role in wars in Vietnam, South

[8] Bridget Byrne, "Towards a Gendered Understanding of Conflict," *IDS Bulletin*, 27:3, 1996: 35.

Africa, Argentina, Cyprus, Iran, Northern Ireland, Lebanon, Israel, and Nicaragua, among others.[9] However, evidence suggests that these groups are no more likely to honor their stated interest in securing women's equality and empowerment in the post-conflict period than other, more conservative groups in other, similar conflicts. Indeed, "to date, no liberation or revolutionary war, no matter how progressive its ideology regarding the emancipation of women," has successfully "empowered women and men to maintain an emancipating atmosphere for women after the military struggle and brief honeymoon are over."[10]

One possible way to study this problem of women's continued subordination in revolutionary states might be to examine the content of these groups' rhetoric and actions during the conflict period and conclude that, despite the presence of female fighters and visibly changed women's roles in conflict and resistance, the larger constructions of women as mothers (of fighters), peacemakers, and victims that persist during these eras reveal that women were still seen as largely separate from the process of warmaking, and their concerns were subordinate to the "high politics" of war and peace. Aaronette White, for instance, argues that the very idea of "revolutionary war" is something of a contradiction in terms, as the militarized logics of warfare that rely on hierarchical commands contradict the revolutionary ideals of egalitarianism and democratic decision-making.[11] Lorraine Bayard de Volo adds that, because the binaries of war and of gender are mutually reinforcing, war necessarily "sustains gender inequality by drawing from and reinforcing the privileged masculine and devalued feminine."[12]

In the case of Nicaragua, this analysis is largely valid; Bayard de Volo finds that because

[9] Joshua Goldstein, *War and Gender: How gender shapes the war system and vice versa*, 78.
[10] Sondra Hale, "Liberated, but Not Free: Women in post-war Eritrea," in S. Meintjes, A. Pillay, and M. Turshen (eds.), *The Aftermath: Women in post-conflict transformation*, London: Zed Books, 2001, 123.
[11] Aaronette M. White, "All the Men Are Fighting for Freedom, All the WomenAre Mourning Their Men, but Some of Us Carried Guns: A Raced-Gendered Analysis of Fanon's Psychological Perspectives on War." Signs 32/4 (2007):875.
[12] Lorraine Bayard de Volo, "A Revolution in the Binary? Gender and the Oxymoron of Revolutionary War in Cuba and Nicaragua," *Signs* 37/2 (Winter 2012): 434.

gendered methods of mobilization for war tend to rely heavily on and reify existing notions of gender, they more often "reproduced many traditional roles for women on a daily basis." Because of this, "war is not necessarily an opportunity for women to take on roles and identities that contradict traditional notions of femininity. In that sense, war is not necessarily a feminist political opportunity."[13]

However, this is still a somewhat unsatisfying analysis in that, whether or not deeper cultural conceptions of women and gender roles were shifted during this time, the conflicts undeniably opened both rhetorical and performative space for women to assume other roles and expressions of agency. The context for this phenomenon was an armed conflict in which the revolutionary government officially viewed them as equals. In Nicaragua, this meant practically that women composed about 30% of FSLN military forces, with many in commanding positions, as well as filling various support roles as messengers, supply managers, and keepers of safe houses.[14] Similarly, it should not be assumed that the mobilization of women as mothers is a disempowering experience for women; even "the daily process of constructing and participating in a community" may improve women's sense of self-worth and political efficacy.[15] The retrenchment of gender roles and norms post-conflict, in other words, must not be assumed to be a necessary consequence of the conduct of the war, as the destabilization of earlier prevailing norms during the conflict and immediate post-conflict period is undeniable.

This tension between the reification of gender inequality through rhetorical and symbolic practice even as women created real political and legislative changes through successful

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[13] Lorraine Bayard de Volo, *Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs: Gender identity politics in Nicaragua, 1979-1999*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, 234.
[14] C.f. Helen Collinson (ed.), *Women and Revolution in Nicaragua*, New Jersey: Zed Books, 1990, 154; Patricia Flynn, "Women Challenge the Myth," in Stanford Central American Network (ed.), *Revolution in Central America*, Boulder: Westview Press, 1983, 416; Linda L. Reif, "Women in Latin American Guerrilla Movements: A comparative perspective," *Comparative Politics* 18/2 (January 1986): 158; Olivia Bennett, Jo Bexley, and Kitty Warnock [eds.] *Arms to Fight, Arms to Protect: Women speak out about conflict*, London: Panos, 1995, 205.
[15] Lorraine Bayard de Volo, *Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs: Gender identity politics in Nicaragua, 1979-1999*, 235.

organizing in Nicaragua is clear both in the conflict and post-conflict periods. Overall, however, the failure to transform broader norms related to gender and the family along with the achievement of legislative quotas and techniques of electoral mobilization since the Sandinista era have left women's health and economic status – major elements of their daily lived experience – vulnerable to both public and private threats.

The revolutionary history of Nicaragua

Since independence in 1821, Nicaragua's has been "a history of US intervention, of political and economic dependency cultivated by Washington, and of sporadic, usually defeated rebellions against imperialism and exploitation."[16] Following a bizarre series of ultimately defeated attempts by US businessman William Walker to install himself as dictator of Nicaragua and reinstate slavery there from 1855-60, the country's next brush with American imperial pretensions was in 1909, when the US encouraged and funded a rebellion against President José Santos Zelaya, who was seeking funding for a Nicaraguan canal to rival the US-held Panama Canal. The US invaded the country three times in the next two decades, acting as an occupying force from 1912-25 and 1926-33. From 1927-33, a peasant army led by general Augusto Sandino waged a guerrilla war against the American occupiers, eventually forcing the exit of the US Marines. However, before leaving the US installed the Guardia Nacional, a national police force, led by Anastasio Somoza García; Somoza installed himself officially as dictator in 1936, and the Somoza family ruled Nicaragua brutally for 45 years with explicit US support.

Sandino was assassinated on Somoza's orders in 1933, but his legacy persisted. Following the post-WWII economic boom, as popular demand for democratic reform grew, Somoza

[16] Roger Lancaster, *Life is Hard: Machismo, danger, and the intimacy of power in Nicaragua*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, 1.

responded with brutal repression, and thousands of Nicaraguans were tortured and killed by the Guardia Nacional in the 1970s.[17] The FSLN (Sandinista National Liberation Front) was established in 1961, its name explicitly invoking Nicaragua's revolutionary past, and it continued to fight and gain popular support throughout the next two decades. The Sandinistas sought national liberation with a program that was informed simultaneously by nationalism, socialism (itself informed by Leninism, Guevarism, and the anti-authoritarian New Left), and liberation theology.[18]

In 1979, the FSLN overthrew Somoza and took power; Daniel Ortega, a member of the FSLN, was democratically elected President in 1980, taking 67% of the vote in a six-person race.[19] However, the United States almost immediately began arming "remnants of the defeated Guardia Nacional," now known as the Contras, and funded their paramilitary insurrection for the next decade.[20] Nicaragua was consumed by civil war until, exhausted and recognizing that the war would not end until a change of government was realized, Nicaraguans voted out Ortega in 1990 with 55% of the vote against the FSLN. The UNO (Unión Nacional Opositora, or National Opposition Union) coalition, created explicitly to challenge the FSLN and led by Violeta Chamorro, was voted into office in 1990. George H.W. Bush promptly cut off funds to the Contras, and for the next sixteen years, neoliberal presidents tried to reverse the revolutionary legacy, with varying degrees of success.[21]

At the close of the decade, the Nicaraguan economy was a shambles, prostrated by years of

[17] Olivia Bennett et. al., *Arms to Fight, Arms to Protect: Women speak out about conflict*, 205.
[18] Roger Lancaster, *Life is Hard: Machismo, danger, and the intimacy of power in Nicaragua*, 4.
[19] Karen Kampwirth, *Latin America's New Left and the Politics of Gender: Lessons from Nicaragua*, New York: SpringerBriefs in Political Science, 2011, 10.
[20] Roger Lancaster, *Life is Hard: Machismo, danger, and the intimacy of power in Nicaragua*, 3.
[21] Karen Kampwirth, *Latin America's New Left and the Politics of Gender: Lessons from Nicaragua*, 10.

civil war and a US embargo, with over 35,000% annual inflation.[22] Direct material costs of the war were estimated at between $1.5 billion and $4b and the costs of the US embargo at $3b; the Sandinista government estimated total direct and indirect losses from the war at $17b.[23] By 1988, real wages had fallen to less than 10 percent of their level in 1980.[24] In this volatile environment, the years from 1990-2006 were ones in which the government cut state services more frequently than they created them, and "in which life for Nicaraguans became more unequal and generally more precarious."[25] Daniel Ortega was reelected in 2006 and the FSLN returned to power, though the political landscape of the Left had changed in the intervening years.

Gender regimes and gendered mobilization in revolutionary Nicaragua

Women played a very significant role during the FSLN's early guerrilla years in the 1960s and '70s, both in the military struggle and in rhetorical mobilization. Maxine Molyneux suggests that many women became politicized following the 1972 earthquake in Managua, as neighborhoods organized themselves to care for victims while the Somoza regime misappropriated relief funds; subsequently, "many of these women experienced their transition from relief workers to participants in the struggle as a natural extension, albeit in combative form, of their protective role in the family as providers and crucially as mothers,"[26] effecting a shift from practical to strategic organizing. Indeed, one of the most iconic images from this period, widely reproduced in many forms during the war, is that of a young woman with a rifle slung across her back, smiling as she nurses an infant; it often carried with it the slogan "Tender in love,

[22] Roger Lancaster, *Life is Hard: Machismo, danger, and the intimacy of power in Nicaragua*, 6.
[23] Michael Conroy, "The Political Economy of the 1990 Nicaraguan Elections," *International Journal of Political Economy*, Fall 1990: 16.
[24] Roger Lancaster, *Life is Hard: Machismo, danger, and the intimacy of power in Nicaragua*, 7.
[25] Karen Kampwirth, *Latin America's New Left and the Politics of Gender: Lessons from Nicaragua*, 10.
[26] Maxine Molyneux, "Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's interests, the state, and revolution in Nicaragua," *Feminist Studies,* 11/2 (1985): 228.

fierce in battle" (see Appendix I).[27]

The image also demonstrated the tensions implicit in women's war participation: although it is an image of "empowered maternity," it is also one of war, and this war would offer thousands of women the opportunity to "break the constraints of their traditional roles," and gain the skills and consciousness to work later as feminist activists.[28] "Without the revolutionary moment," Norma Chincilla avers, "feminism would undoubtedly still be the province of a privileged few."[29]

Particularly during this early period of the war, however, Lorraine Bayard de Volo argues that women and images of motherhood were nonetheless mobilized in ways that often constrained their agency, "restrict[ing] women to political action that appeared deferential and self-abnegating," two hallmarks of conventional images of motherhood.[30] Organized as mothers, Nicaraguan women collectively utilized "a maternal discourse based on compassion, especially in terms of children" to demand an end to the persecution of Nicaraguan youth, the high cost of living, and the US-funded Contra War.[31] Although there were other women's groups during this period not organized around a collective maternal identity, most notably AMNLAE (the Asociación de Mujeres Nicaragüenses "Amanda Luisa Espinosa," the women's arm of the Sandinista political front), even AMNLAE's lack of political independence from the FSLN and primary work organizing with mothers' groups "forced more explicit and controversial feminist issues to the back burner."[32]

Once the Sandinistas took power in 1979, "there was a qualitative leap in women's public roles" as women were mobilized in massive numbers in the service of the revolution. This was

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[27] Lorraine Vayard de Volo, "A Revolution in the Binary? Gender and the Oxymoron of Revolutionary War in Cuba and Nicaragua," 422.
[28] Karen Kampwirth, *Latin America's New Left and the Politics of Gender: Lessons from Nicaragua*, 4.
[29] Norma Chincilla, "Nationalism, Feminism, and Revolution in Central America," in Lois West (ed.), *Feminist Nationalism*, New York: Routledge, 1997, 209.
[30] Lorraine Bayard de Volo, *Mothers of Heroes and Martyrs: Gender identity politics in Nicaragua, 1979-1999*, 4.
[31] Ibid 22.
[32] Ibid.

thanks, in no small part, to Sandinista adherence to "Marxist notions that the road to gender equality was through the integration of women into the public sphere,"[33] and women were mobilized for a variety of purposes, including teaching literacy, immunizing children, harvesting coffee, and guarding their neighborhoods at night.[34]

The differences among members of the Sandinistas' broad anti-Somoza coalition, however, quickly began to show following his deposition; among the points of contention were disagreements about how the revolution was to emancipate women, and in fact what it meant to emancipate women. Kampwirth characterizes these positions broadly as "feminine" and "feminist."[35] The former argued that the revolution offered opportunities for women to better fulfill their traditional roles; the latter asserted that women's emancipation required challenging those traditional roles.[36] Although the two camps' positions on matters of policy (e.g. women's health initiatives) nonetheless often aligned,[37] their reasons for those positions and desired ends were often at odds with each other.

Women's rights came under increasing fire during the 1980s, however, as political tensions caused Sandinista party leaders to sideline women's issues, arguing that "if the Sandinista government were to fall to the Contras then all the gains of the revolution for women, as well as other sectors, would be lost."[38] AMNLAE actively supported this stance, with the understanding

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[33] Karen Kampwirth, *Latin America's New Left and the Politics of Gender: Lessons from Nicaragua*, 5.
[34] Karen Kampwirth, *Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2004, 26.
[35] In her study of the gender dimensions of Daniel Ortega's long political career, Kampwirth presents Ortega as a quintessential proponent of "feminine" emancipation. See Karen Kampwirth, *Gender and Populism in Latin America: Passionate Politics*, University Park: Penn State University Press, 2010, 164.
[36] Karen Kampwirth, *Feminism and the Legacy of Revolution: Nicaragua, El Salvador, Chiapas*, 44.
[37] "Feminine thinkers would support better access to health care because taking care of the family's health is a woman's job. In contrast, feminist thinkers would support better access to health care (especially reproductive health care) because it would free women to live better lives, and to challenge the confines of traditional gender relations." (Kampwirth 2011, 5).
[38] Karen Kampwirth, *Latin America's New Left and the Politics of Gender: Lessons from Nicaragua*, 7.

that "emancipation was to come about as a by-product of making and defending the revolution."[39] Molyneux, acting as an apologist for the Sandinista cause, argues that much of the sidelining of women's concerns that occurred can be explained largely by the exigencies of politics: because "the FSLN attempted to maintain, as far as the situation permitted, a broad multiclass base of support" and maintained an official commitment to pluralism during the 1980s, it had to make some concessions to oppositional groups, in particular the capitalist class. The Catholic Church, too, maintained a strong hold on social and political life, and strongly opposed policies aimed to improve women's rights, including labor laws, education and family reforms, and reproductive rights.[40] This willingness to compromise on these issues is, of course, not entirely comforting.

However, much of the debate over women's rights and participation in public life during this time was framed in terms of "women's proper place in the home (*en la casa*) and not in the street (*en la calle*)."[41] When the FSLN refused to include women in the draft instituted in 1984, and then eliminated the only women's volunteer battalion in 1985, for instance, it justified the move saying that women needed to stay at home and care for their children due to the lack of social services.[42] President Daniel Ortega, who had been consistently more conservative on issues of women's rights, even attempted to control access to contraception, suggesting that, in the face of a US-funded Contra war that constituted "a policy of genocide," "women who were interested in controlling their fertility were guilty of disloyalty, and of undermining the revolution."[43] By the late 1980s, increasingly frustrated by these developments, AMNLAE, though subordinate to the

[39] Maxine Molyneux, "Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's interests, the state, and revolution in Nicaragua," 238.
[40] Ibid 241-243.
[41] Florence Babb, *After Revolution: Mapping gender and cultural politics in neoliberal Nicaragua*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001, 117.
[42] Margaret Randall, *Gathering Rage: The failure of twentieth century revolutions to develop a feminist agenda*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1992, 46.
[43] Ibid. Notably, this does not seem to have been solely an exigency of wartime: in a bid for reelection in 2006, Ortega and the FSLN voted to ban "therapeutic" abortion (to save the life of the mother), and succeeded in passing a total abortion ban in 2008 (see Kampwirth 2011, 11).

FSLN, had begun to exercise a more independent voice, arguing that the revolution was failing to address other basic gender issues including workplace discrimination, women's unpaid labor, and domestic violence.[44]

It was in this environment, as gender justice was being sidelined in the interest of social justice and AMNLAE was coming under fire for acting as the "submissive wife" of the FSLN, that an autonomous feminist organization called the Party of the Erotic Left (PIE) was established to lobby (successfully) for gender equality in the 1987 Constitution.[45] Following the FSLN's electoral defeat in 1990, the PIE and many other women activists, disenchanted with the FSLN's persistent deferral of women's issues and attempts to co-opt AMNLAE's leadership, went on to start a number of independent women's organizations in the post-conflict state.[46]

Women's rights in post-conflict Nicaragua

The Sandinista defeat in 1990 in many ways empowered the feminist movement, freeing them from Sandinista political control and allowing them to use their new experience in activism to focus "on the struggle against violence, for sexual rights, and for an expansion of citizenship rights, especially… but not exclusively for women."[47] The movement still involves hundreds of groups working to reach millions of women through Women's House networks, medical, psychological, and legal advocacy services, lobbying efforts, and outreach in the mass media.[48] One of the women's movement's especially impressive successes was in forcing the FSLN

[44] Jennifer B. Mendez, *From the Revolution to the Maquiladoras: Gender, labor, and globalization in Nicaragua*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2005, 48.
[45] c.f. Maxine Molyneux, "Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's interests, the state, and revolution in Nicaragua"; Karen Kampwirth, *Latin America's New Left and the Politics of Gender: Lessons from Nicaragua*, 8-9.
[46] Ana Criquillón, "The Nicaraguan Women's Movement: Feminist reflections from within," in M. Sinclair (ed.), *The New Politics of Survival: Grassroots movements in Central America*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1995, 224.
[47] Karen Kampwirth, *Latin America's New Left and the Politics of Gender: Lessons from Nicaragua*, 10.
[48] Elvira Cuadra and Juana Jiménez, *El Movimiento de Mujeres y la lucha por sus derechos en Nicaragua: movimientos sociales y ciudadanía en Centroamérica*, Managua: CINCO, 2010, 32–51.

leadership in 1994 to revise party statutes to allocate at least 30 percent of party positions to women; this same quota was also applied to the selection for candidates in the 1996 elections.[49]

Ironically, however, this new latitude for feminist action was in many ways thwarted by larger political and economic changes then taking place in the country; the package of structural adjustment policies and IMF loans in 1990, the "maxi-devaluation" of the Nicaraguan córdoba in 1991, and the subsequent dearth of hoped-for foreign aid and investment, which increased economic insecurity and hardship for wide sectors of the population, were particularly negative for women.[50] State-supported health care and education systems were rolled back and privatized, often placing these services beyond the reach of Nicaragua's poorest citizens.[51] Policies reducing state support for social services, employment opportunities, and wage levels, combined with continuing gender inequality and rising social conservatism, dramatically increased the burden of household duties on women, even as economic necessity pushed many to enter the workforce;[52] the reduction in state-sector jobs, as well, pushed many women into informal sector employment.[53] Indeed, increasing evidence from the last two decades "indicates that women's ability to cushion the blow of economic adjustment is not without limits, and many households are suffering serious consequences from the crises produced by [these] policies."[54]

Moreover, the election of antifeminist candidate Violeta Chamorro vividly highlighted the failure of the revolution to do what some commentators and feminist activists had hoped it would during the 1980s: while women's political participation in the Sandinista government and military gave women greater access to the public sphere, it failed to transform "gender relations in the

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[49] Ilja A. Luciak, *After the Revolution: Gender and democracy in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Guatemala*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001, 198.
[50] Florence Babb, *After Revolution: Mapping gender and cultural politics in neoliberal Nicaragua*, 9.
[51] Ibid 33.
[52] Ibid 2.
[53] Jennifer B. Mendez, *From the Revolution to the Maquiladoras: Gender, labor, and globalization in Nicaragua*, 37.
[54] Florence Babb, *After Revolution: Mapping gender and cultural politics in neoliberal Nicaragua*, 110.

family and society."[55] Roger Lancaster suggests that this can be understood as a failure by the Sandinista government to deconstruct the underlying, gendered oppositions of the political system, leaving privileged masculinity undisturbed in the aftermath.[56] In the run-up to the 1990 elections, the UNO campaign represented Chamorro as "a woman firmly committed to the family as a wife [and widow of the martyr Pedro Joaquín Chamorro], as mother, and… maternal figure;" Chamorro's was a highly successful campaign, especially among women voters,[57] despite the fact that it presented an image of traditional womanhood (in which "women workers and activists [are] 'unnatural'") firmly at odds with the economic and political exigencies of the day.[58]

One illustration of Lancaster's proposed failure to deconstruct gender norms, "le[aving] machismo's driving engine largely untouched," and discourses surrounding women's place in the home (even as economic circumstances demanded that they continue to work outside the home) is the continuing prevalence of domestic violence in the country. A series of surveys during the 1990s suggested some of the highest levels of domestic violence anywhere in the world. Two studies from the 1990s indicated that over a fifth of the women experienced severe physical abuse;[59] one 12-month study in 1995 found that 27 percent of married women reported being abused, and 70 percent of those reported cases were physically violent.[60] "A quarter of rural men in one survey said it was all right to beat a woman if she neglects the children or the house, and 10% thought it acceptable for refusal of sex. Only 17% of victims in one study told the police

[55] Ibid 59.
[56] Roger Lancaster, *Life is Hard: Machismo, danger, and the intimacy of power in Nicaragua*, 274.
[57] Florence Babb, *After Revolution: Mapping gender and cultural politics in neoliberal Nicaragua*, 9.
[58] Ibid 59, 45.
[59] María Eugenia Meza Basaure, "Violence Against Women: A centuries-old plague," *Envío* 215 (June 1999); María López Vigil, "The Silence About Incest Needs to Be Broken," *Envío* 230 (September 2000); Claudia García Moreno et. al. "Prevalence of intimate partner violence: findings from the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence," *The Lancet* 368/9543 (October 2006), 1260-1269.
[60] M.C. Ellsberg et. al, "Wife Abuse Among Women of Childbearing Age in Nicaragua," *American Journal of Public Health*, 89/2 (1999), 242.

about the offence."[61] According to statistics reported by the NGO Women's Network Against Violence, reported rapes also increased dramatically from 1998-2008.[62] Women's health and reproductive care in particular has also been negatively impacted by government policy in particular during the last twenty years, including by the most recent Ortega government.

Despite many nontrivial successes by feminist groups in the 1980s and 1990s, then, the failure to change larger discourses surrounding women and gender equality ensured that political strategies and government policies would continue to discount their needs and, in so doing, preclude important advances and protections for women.

How have ideas and practices surrounding gender been transformed since the revolution?

The Sandinista revolution and the entrance of women into the public sphere (despite conflicting larger discourses about the appropriateness of this), and particularly into government politics, which persisted even after the election of Chamorro and the introduction of a more "traditional" social discourse and neoliberal economic policies, represent an undeniable gain for women. However, the apparent failure to achieve gender equality in a number of meaningful ways that directly impact the everyday lives of Nicaraguan women, including domestic violence, reproductive rights, and healthcare access, for instance, are indicative of a larger failure to transform the overriding discourses surrounding masculinity and femininity.

These difficulties have persisted in, and in many ways are exemplified by, the recent resurgence of the New Left: following Ortega's 2006 reelection, the FSLN-dominated government passed a total abortion ban in 2008, "provid[ing] for lengthy prison sentences for women and girls who seek an abortion and for health professionals who provide abortion services

[61] UN Office on Drugs and Crime. *Crime and Development in Central America: Caught in the Crossfire*. (May 2007), 65-66. Available at: http://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Centralamerica- study-en.pdf
[62] Karen Kampwirth, *Latin America's New Left and the Politics of Gender: Lessons from Nicaragua*, 22.

and life-saving and health-preserving obstetric care,"[63] and activists say that sexual violence in the country is endemic, while women and girls are left without legal recourse.[64]

In her analysis of contemporary Nicaraguan politics, Karen Kampwirth argues that "like the old left, the new left has made significant efforts to improve the lot of women when those efforts coincide with the traditional leftist concerns for class equality."[65] For the FSLN both in the 1980s and today, gender issues that can be fit into a class framework have been easiest to address, and so it has succeeded in passing many measures that are more beneficial to lower-class women, like educational and health reforms (though these were later rolled back). Additionally, appointing women to political positions has been generally uncontroversial and neither politically nor economically costly. Nonetheless, issues like domestic violence and reproductive rights have been more delicate, because "nobody… wants to attack the family."[66] This would seem to indicate that women's interests and demands have neither been substantively integrated into the Sandinista platform, nor have discourses surrounding gender norms that fit less easily into a class framework been included or addressed.

The subordination of women's interests to the wider interests of the revolution during the Sandinista period, which persisted more openly in the 1990s as a socially and economically conservative discourse reasserted itself (and then again in the resurgence of the FSLN in recent years), reveals a certain continuity between the conflict and post-conflict period in Nicaragua. Indeed, despite the successes of women in organizing themselves for political action and entering the legislative arena since the revolutionary era, critical parts of women's lives, including their

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[63] Amnesty International, *The Total Abortion Ban in Nicaragua: Women's lives and health endangered, medical professionals criminalized*, London: Amnesty International Publications, 2009, 7.
[64] Eva Carroll, **"**Daniel Ortega set for Nicaragua election victory but heroic sheen wearing off," *The Guardian*, 3 November 2011 (accessed 30 March 2012), http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/03/daniel-ortega-nicaragua-election.
[65] Karen Kampwirth, *Latin America's New Left and the Politics of Gender: Lessons from Nicaragua*, 3.
[66] Ibid 12, 34.

economic opportunities, health care and reproductive access, and exposure to sexual violence, have gone unaddressed or are being actively undermined on the national stage. The case of Nicaragua thus presents important evidence that both scholars and practitioners interested in the potential feminist opportunities of post-conflict periods or in post-conflict transformations of social and political life must consider carefully; it highlights the importance of not only the legal guarantee of gender equality, but also of changing dominant discourses surrounding gender norms and relations to help secure a truly transformative peace.

Appendix I:

"A Sandinista woman carrying a rifle and feeding her baby painted in La Galería de Héroes y Mártires in Estelí Nicaragua"
(Photo credit: http://www.flickr.com/photos/realworldphotosnet/5659221037/)

Skyler Anderson

Plague and population in early medieval Europe

One of the least studied aspects of the transition to the Early Medieval period is the change in health and illness. This transitional period has been studied from many angles but the study of health is lacking. What is primarily researched is the Justinianic plague, of which we have some documental evidence. Because of its severity the Justinianic plague caused an epidemiological adjustment in developing barbarian states in the post-Roman transitional period responsible for setting the stage for economic development in an environment of low population density. This low population density had a dramatic effect on the nature of rebounding populations, which changed subsistence strategies in the process of adapting to the new population dynamic. The period immediately following the outbreak of the plague has traditionally been viewed as a decline, but recent evidence may require a reevaluation of this historical standard. Research methods have shown that there was indeed a shift in the health of populations in this period, with disease playing a large role in modifying the mortality regimen. However, the evidence is quite contrary to traditional belief that poorer diets and unhealthier populations characterized this period. It is true that populations numerically declined, but this is due to the outbreak of plague and other disease, which masked other improvements in health. Finally, the regional manifestations of the developing demographic dynamics resulting from the plague would result in the decline of the Byzantine Empire concurrent with the rise of western barbarian states.

Narrative of the Plague

Reportedly named after its most infamous victim, the Emperor Justinian, the Justinianic plague swept across Europe and the Near East beginning around the year 540. Procopius, historian of the Byzantine Wars, who lived between the years 500 and 560 AD and accompanied Belisarius on his campaigns in Italy, North Africa, and the East, writes of the plague in his *History of the Wars* stating that "during these times there was a pestilence, by which the whole human race came near to being annihilated."[1] Procopius goes on to say about its origins,

> *It started from the Aegyptians who dwell in Pelusium. Then it divided and moved in one direction towards Alexandria and the rest of Aegypt, and in the other direction it came to Palestine on the borders of Aegypt; and from there it spread*

[1] Procopius. *History of the Wars, Books I and II The Persian War*. Translated by H. B. (Henry Bronson)

> *over the whole world, always moving forward and travelling at times favourable to it. For it seemed to move by fixed arrangement, and to tarry for a specified time in each country, casting its blight slightingly upon none, but spreading in either direction right out to the ends of the world, as if fearing lest some corner of the earth might escape it.*[2]

During the year 542 the disease spread from Egypt across the Byzantine Empire, eventually reaching Constantinople in the spring, where it remained for four months. Procopius notes that during the plague it was difficult to see a person on the streets of Constantinople, and if you did they were usually carrying a dead person. He also mentions that the "disease always took its start from the coast, and from there went up to the interior."[3] Symptomatically, he cites the characteristic "buboes" that appeared on the body after infection and he even talks about an autopsy during which the physicians discovered carbuncles under the bubo, which is a common identifier of plague. Procopius mentions that the disease especially threatened pregnant mothers, causing the death of the baby or mother, and sometimes both.[4]

Procopius is a useful source because he describes the origins of the plague but for investigating the effects of the plague in Western Europe we need to look at sources which originated there. Among these is Gregory of Tours, who writes about the plague in his *History of the Franks*. Gregory mentions a disease that caused "great swellings in the groin" and ravaged parts of Gaul in the time of Saint Gall.[5] According to Gregory, Gall prayed that his district of Clermont-Ferrand would be spared, and the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said his district would be spared as long as he lived, but that he was to live only eight more years. Accordingly Saint Gall died eight years later in the year

[2] Procopius, *History of the Wars,* Book I, Ch. XXII.
[3] Procopius, *History of the Wars,* Book I, Ch. XXII.
[4] Procopius, *History of the Wars,* Book I, Ch. XXII.
[5] Gregory of Tours, *A History of the Franks* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1974). Book IV, Ch. 4, 199.

551, so the estimated date based on Gregory's text for this first outbreak of plague in Gaul was around 543. If this is true, then this event occurred at around the same time as the plague outbreak in Constantinople, implying that the disease had rapidly spread in multiple directions from Egypt. Gregory describes the devastation of a later plague episode in Auvergne during the year 571.

> *When the plague finally began to rage, so many people were killed off throughout the whole region and the dead bodies were so numerous that it was not even possible to count them. There was such a shortage of coffins and tombstones that ten or more bodies were buried in the same grave.*[6]

The characteristic symptom he describes as a sore, "like a snake's bite," appearing near the groin or the armpit.[7] Gregory writes about the outbreak of plague, and deaths of significant persons due to plague *repeatedly*, meaning that the plague occurred over a period of time and travelled around the regions of Gaul acting somewhat endemically for a period of time. When King Guntram is asked to reply to a call to arms from his nephew Childeric against the Lombards in 588, Guntram replies, "I will never send my troops into Italy… for in doing so I should encompass their certain death. A terrible epidemic is raging in that country at this moment."[8] From this we can tell that Gregory knew of the scope of the plague in other regions and if we are to assume his words as true, we can believe that the King of Burgundy knew about it as well. Further, the plague determined the diplomatic course for this king, suggesting that it was such a prominent factor that it could decide the fate of military campaigns or even kingdoms.

In this same year Gregory writes how the plague spread to Marseilles,

> *A ship from Spain put into port with the usual kind of cargo, unfortunately also bringing with it the source of this infection. Quite a few of the townsfolk purchased objects from the cargo and in less than no time a house in which eight*

[6] Gregory of Tours, The History of the Franks, Book VI, Ch. 31, 226.
[7] Gregory of Tours, The History of the Franks, Book VI, Ch. 31, 226.
[8] Gregory of Tours, The History of the Franks, Book IX, Ch. 20, 508.

> *people lived was left completely deserted, all the inhabitants having caught the disease… Some time passed, and then like a cornfield set alight, the entire town was suddenly ablaze with this pestilence… At the end of two months the plague burned itself out. The population returned to Marseilles, thinking themselves safe. Then the disease started again and all who had come back died.*[9]

Gregory goes on to say that "on several occasions later on Marseilles suffered from an epidemic of this sort."[10] Gregory died in 593, suggesting that there were numerous outbreaks of plague in the short five-year span between 588 and 593.[11] The reoccurring nature of infection at Marseilles can be possibly explained in two ways. The higher population density of Marseilles allowed the plague to remain in the city, affecting those who had not already been infected in earlier outbreaks when they returned, or the disease was repeatedly introduced by ship, prompting multiple outbreaks. Ship-based transmission may also account for the early spread of the disease to Gaul from Egypt. Plague outbreaks presumably continued into the seventh century in Gaul, but after the death of Gregory of Tours there is not a clear primary source to confirm continuing outbreaks.

The ability of the plague to spread by ship is also a prerequisite for its spread to the English Isles, which may be accounted for in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*. Bede states in 664,

> *A sudden plague, which first decimated the southern parts of Britain and later spread into the province of the Northumbrians, raged for a long time and brought widespread death to may people… The plague was equally destructive in Ireland.*[12]

This is a later date, but it seems to be the first instance where an outbreak of plague may fit with the typical geographic method of transmission and where Bede mentions it for its

[9] Gregory of Tours, The History of the Franks, Book IX, Ch. 21, 510-511.
[10] Gregory of Tours. The History of the Franks, Book IX, Ch. 21, 510.
[11] That span is even shorter if you consider that the *Historia Francorum* was completed in 591.
[12] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1990), Book III, Ch. 27, 194-195.

own sake. There is an earlier account preceding this one describing an Irish man's recovery from plague due to a relic of King Oswald wherein Bede places the event "at the time of the great plague that swept Britain and Ireland," which may imply that there was some greater outbreak event earlier than 664.[13] It is uncertain if these diseases are episodes of Justinianic plague. Bede usually gives us the word "plague" without describing symptoms, but the breadth of the disease seems to imply something more severe than dysentery, cholera, or malaria. Bede also henceforth mentions plague-related deaths numerously, suggesting some kind of recurring epidemic like that of Gaul.[14] There is an instance where the buboes of Justinianic plague may be diagnosed when Bede tells the story of Queen Etheldreda. While she lay ill, her physician Cynifrid was asked to lance a tumor that was under her jaw.[15] This case is still too vague to clearly diagnose it as bubonic plague but it is tantalizing. If this is the same disease that had been occurring in Gaul and in Constantinople, then the later introduction of this disease into the British Isles may be explained by the distance of these lands from the Mediterranean, which would appear to have been a highway for transmission in the form of interstate commerce and higher population density. Bede seems to mention disease only in passing and usually with religious implications, but from his account we can tell that some significant disease event was happening in the British Isles after 664. Whether this event was Justinianic plague would be more strongly confirmed if we had greater knowledge about the plague cycle in Gaul after the death of Gregory of Tours.

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[13] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History,* Book III, Ch. 13, 163. This plague may have been "the first great plague" mentioned in the Annals of Tigernach. It was likely small pox. See John Maddicott, "Plague in Seventh Century England" in Lester K. Little, ed. *Plague and the End of Antiquity: The Pandemic of 541-750*. 1st ed. Cambridge University Press 2006. ff. 171.

[14] The Latin word "pestilentia" is often translated into plague or pestilence but itself is no more specific than these terms. The death of monks and nuns, whose monasteries were usually isolated, shows that this disease was affecting rural regions.

[15] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History,* Book IV, Ch 19, 237.

Italy, with its long coastlines and central location in the Mediterranean, would have been especially prone to outbreaks and this seems to have been the case. The spread of the plague to northern Italy is mentioned in Paul the Deacon's *Historia Langobardorum.* Paul was a Benedictine monk and the historian of the Lombards living in the eighth century. His perspective is the Lombard perspective. We have already heard some about the Lombards in Gregory's account and Paul provides more detail. Here is Paul's description of an outbreak in Liguria in Northern Italy in A.D. 566.

> *In the times of this man a very great pestilence broke out, particularly in the province of Liguria. For suddenly there appeared certain marks among the dwellings, doors, utensils, and clothes, which, if any one wished to wash away, became more and more apparent. After the lapse of a year indeed there began to appear in the groins of men and in other rather delicate places, a swelling of the glands, after the manner of a nut or a date, presently followed by an unbearable fever, so that upon the third day the man died.*[16]

The description is characteristically that of Bubonic plague. The "date" like swellings could only have been buboes. The same stories found in other sources are repeated in this one. So many died that there was no one to bury them; prosperous towns, villas, and farms were abandoned with no one to tend crops or flocks. Paul claims that "these evils happened to the Romans only and within Italy alone, up to the boundaries of the nations of the Alamanni and the Bavarians."[17] He also mentions that the plague touched Ravenna and places "which were around the shores of the sea," consistent with Procopius' claim that it affected the coast first.[18] Paul also places part of the success of the Lombard invasion on the outbreak of plague among the Byzantine troops.[19] The first outbreaks occurred in Italy before the invasion of the Lombards, therefore clearing the way for the Lombard invasion. From Paul's account we can say that the plague in Italy was as

[16] Paul the Deacon, *History of the Langobards,* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), Book II, Ch. 4.
[17] Paul the Deacon, *History of the Langobards,* Book II, Ch. 4.
[18] Paul the Deacon, *History of the Langobards,* Book IV, Ch. 14.
[19] Paul the Deacon, *History of the Langobards,* Book II, Ch. 26.

infectious and deadly as elsewhere, and that it also had political implications like those mentioned by Gregory of Tours. In total Paul describes four outbreaks of plague in different periods, so as elsewhere we have evidence that the disease was reoccurring.

Paul and Gregory both mention a disease outbreak in the city of Rome itself following a flood. Gregory pinpoints the year to 590 AD and mentions that the presiding Pope, Pope Pelagius, immediately caught the disease and perished.[20] Paul describes the same devastation following the flood, "straightway a very grievous pestilence called inguinal followed this inundation, and it wasted the people with such great destruction of life that out of a countless multitude barely a few remained."[21] The accounts of Gregory and Paul are nearly the same, independently verifying the inundation and following devastation of Rome. The events in Rome show that perhaps the combination of a higher population density, proximity to the coast, and lack of environmental maintenance altogether contributed to the likelihood of an outbreak. In any case the dual infection of Rome and Constantinople meant that even the gems of the civilized world were not immune to infection.

It is not easy to pinpoint the absolute end of the Justinianic plague, or what kind of shape that ending took. Whether the high mortality rate caused the communicability of the disease to decline with population or if people simply adapted to living with the disease until it dissipated is not yet clear. However, the lack of any primary source that specifically mentions a general end to the plague suggests that the disease dissipated over a long period of time rather than suddenly, and therefore its disappearance was not visibly significant to chroniclers.

Identification of the Disease

[20] Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks,* Book X, Ch. 1, 543.
[21] Paul the Deacon, *History of the Langobards,* Book 3, Ch. 24.

Due to the variable amount of evidence we have on disease throughout history, comparison between historical periods or the diachronic study of disease has been the response. The historiography of plague has been especially shaped in this light. When considering the Justinianic plague, historians have compared written evidence of the plague from the sixth century to later reports of the bubonic plague. The identification of bubonic plague as the disease of the Justinianic plague "is as close to certain as is possible on the basis of written sources."[22] Though the connection between these two plagues was established through primary sources, the agent of the disease is only ascertainable through scientific study, which has been unavailable until recently. Modern knowledge of pathology and DNA analysis has reinvigorated the debate with strong evidence supporting *Yersinia pestis* as the causative disease agent of the Black Death.[23] In 2010 an extensive survey showed that data from "widely distributed mass plague pits" dating from the Middle Ages "unambiguously demonstrates that *Y. pestis* was the causative agent of the epidemic plague that devastated Europe during the Middle Ages.[24] Still, others argue that *Y. Pestis* is not sufficient to cause an epidemic like the Black Death and point to a combination of factors, even a combination of diseases, that made up these epidemics. These researchers cite the absence of *Y. Pestis* DNA in some plague victims as well as the dissimilarity between modern plague and historic plague. [25] An

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[22] Peter Sarris, "The Justinianic Plague: Origins and Effects," *Continuity & Change* 17, no. 2 (August 2002): 170.

[23] Michel Drancourt, Michel Signoli, La Vu Dang, Bruno Bizot, Véronique Roux, Stéfan Tzortzis, and Didier Raoult. "Yersinia Pestis Orientalis in Remains of Ancient Plague Patients," *Emerging Infectious Diseases* 13, no. 2 (February 2007): 332–333.

[24] Stephanie Haensch, Raffaella Bianucci, Michel Signoli, Minoarisoa Rajerison, Michael Schultz, Sacha Kacki, Marco Vermunt, et al. "Distinct Clones of Yersinia Pestis Caused the Black Death," *PLoS Pathogens* 6, no. 10 (October 2010), 5.

[25] Gilbert M, Thomas P, Jon Cuccui, William White, Niels Lynnerup, Richard W Titball, Alan Cooper, and Michael B Prentice. "Absence of Yersinia Pestis-specific DNA in Human Teeth from Five European Excavations of Putative Plague Victims," *Microbiology (Reading, England)* 150, no. Pt 2 (February 2004): 341–354; Samuel K Cohn Jr, "Epidemiology of the Black Death and Successive Waves of Plague," *Medical History. Supplement*, no. 27 (2008): 74–100.

alternative theory suggests the disease to be a reoccurring viral haemorrhagic fever, with its precursors taking the form of the Plague of Athens and the Justinianic Plague.[26]

Research on the Justinianic plague itself is lacking, and knowledge we have about the pathology of this disease is based on its tenuous connection to the 14th century plague pandemic known as the Black Death. Lester K. Little comments on this predicament, "What is utterly astonishing is the lack of attention shown to the first pandemic by the numerous experts on the second one."[27] The difficulty in plague study is established in the necessity of interdisciplinary approaches.[28] Typically what is required is specialty in history, archaeology, paleopathology, microbiology, epidemiology, geography, and many other disciplines but rarely does one individual have the necessary expertise on their own, requiring cooperation across fields and disciplines that is not always forth coming. However, some progress has been made and the remains of early medieval skeletons in Bavaria have been found to contain evidence of *Y. Pestis,* indicating that the causative agent of this epidemic was likely the same as that of the later Black Death.[29] If this evidence holds up, what we cannot reveal about the Justinianic Plague through documental evidence and fieldwork, we can suggest indirectly through comparison to the later Bubonic epidemics.

The use of the catch-all term "plague" or "pestilence" in translation of historical sources that mention some kind of disease in the 6th and 7th centuries hinders the identification of the disease in these sources. The best response is to diagnose the disease through symptoms described in primary sources. When diagnosing bubonic plague this

[26] Duncan, C, and S Scott. "What Caused the Black Death?" *Postgraduate Medical Journal* 81, no. 955 (May 2005): 315–320.
[27] Little, *Plague and the End of Antiquity*, 16
[28] Little, *Plague and the End of Antiquity*, 17
[29] Ingrid Wiechmann, and Gisela Grupe, "Detection of Yersinia Pestis DNA in Two Early Medieval Skeletal Finds from Aschheim (Upper Bavaria, 6th Century A.D.)," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 126, no. 1 (January 2005): 48–55.

method mainly relies on identifying the characteristic buboes, which are indeed mentioned in Procopius, Gregory of Tours, and Paul the Deacon, with possible identification of this symptom found in Bede's *Ecclesiastical History.* This symptom is rarely described more than once in these texts, likely because the authors understood later outbreaks of plague to be a continuation of the same disease and therefore saw no need to describe the symptoms again. Often the disease is referred to as inguinal, or of relating to the groin, which is semantically similar to the term bubonic. When primary sources use this term, as Paul the Deacon does, it likely refers to bubonic plague. Robert Sallares summarily believes that "when the constant references to buboes in all our sources for the Justinianic Plague are added to all the other symptoms that are also features of the bubonic plague… there is no doubt that Y. Pestis caused the Justinianic Plague."[30] Even though descriptions of the plague in primary sources strongly indicate bubonic plague, certainty about the identity of the disease is unattainable until scientific evidence confirms the presence of *Y. Pestis* DNA in plague victims from the 6th and 7th centuries.[31]

Etiology of Disease

Modern approaches to disease usually begin by asking, "what was it"? The answers to that question in the 21st century would differ dramatically from those of the contemporary historical period of the disease in question. There is some measure of anachronism introduced when disease is explained in modern etiological terms because past peoples did not think about disease in such terminology.[32] Peoples experiencing the

[30] Little, *Plague and the End of Antiquity*, 237-238.
[31] Though the evidence of *Y. Pestis* in early medieval skeletons from Bavaria is exciting in this regard, one should be careful about making a claim based on a small sample, and therefore broader study will be necessary to confirm bubonic plague as the general cause of the plague epidemics of 6th and 7th centuries.
[32] Little, *Plague and the End of Antiquity*, 43. Here I draw mainly on the discussion invoked by Jo N. Hays in the essay "Historians and Epidemics." The 15th century understanding of syphilis as another pox disease rather than as a disease caused by the microorganism *Treponema pallidum* seems analogous to the situation of plague and its understanding in 6th century.

Justinianic plague did not understand it as a phenomenon caused by the bacterium *Y. Pestis*. Disease in the period between 500 and 750 was still seen as a product of the supernatural. Even humoral medicine could not wholly escape this understanding. Therefore our primary sources tend to explain disease in a way that correlates with a divine etiology. This is often represented through prodigies or by placing disease in a didactic religious context.

Gregory of Tours indicates that often prodigies preceded the plague and he describes the prodigies of the plague outbreak in AD 571 at Auvergne,

> *Three or four great shining lights appeared round the sun, and these the country folk also called suns… Then a star, which some call a comet, appeared over the whole region for a whole year… In one of the churches of Clermont-Ferrand, while early-morning matins were being celebrated on some feast-day or other, a bird called a crested lark flew in, spread its wings over all the lamps which were shining and put them out so quickly you would have thought someone had seized hold of them all at once and dropped them into a pool of water.*[33]

In 580 Gregory mentions another set of prodigies, which included natural disasters such as floods, earthquakes, and fires. "A most serious epidemic followed these prodigies" similar to the event at Auvergne, but this time the disease was dysentery.[34] In this instance Gregory says, "many people maintained that some secret poison must be the cause of this."[35] The symptoms of the disease, vomiting and body aches, may have inclined people to suspect a less supernatural cause compared to the plague, however some kind of natural etiology is overlooked in the mind of Fredegund, who blames the death of her two sons from the disease on the sin of herself and Chilperic. The following account even mentions that King Guntram's wife, suffering from the same disease, ordered the death of her doctors as she was dying because she believed them at fault for

[33] Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks,* Book IV, Ch. 31, 225-226.
[34] Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks,* Book V, Ch. 33-34, 295-296. Gregory labels this disease as dysentery, which could suggest that when he says plague he really does mean plague and not some generic disease or group of diseases.
[35] Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks,* Book V, Ch. 33-34, 296.

her demise.[36] Clearly in the accounts of Gregory the explanations for disease were not based on modern disease theory, and even in the common belief that the dysentery episode was caused by a poison it was "some secret poison" rather than what we would understand as contamination.

Bede mentions one account in a pattern similar to that found in Gregory of Tours. In the year AD 664 there was a lunar eclipse, which was then followed by a "sudden plague" which reportedly affected southern Britain and Northumbria.[37] Like the astral events or natural disasters in Gregory of Tours, the eclipse acts as a prodigy of imminent disease. The largest focus of illness in his text is on miraculous cures that happen as a result of prayers, saints, or relics. Of particular potency is anything related to King Oswald. From this perspective it is clear that Bede believes disease curable by repentance and devotion to God, which can usually be confirmed by the use of relics. Disease plays an initiatory role in edifying Bede's audience about the power of God in both death and recovery.

Paul the Deacon also describes some manner of portents preceding disease, like the "certain marks" which appeared on houses, utensils, and clothes prior to the disease at Liguria in AD 566.[38] There are also the reports of floods preceding plagues in Rome, which mirror the natural disasters found to precede disease in the account of Gregory of Tours. Another outbreak of disease at Rome was preceded by an astral event:

> *In these times during the eighth indiction (A.D. 680) the moon suffered an eclipse; also an eclipse of the sun occurred at almost the same time on the fifth day before the Nones of May about the tenth hour of the day. And presently there followed a very severe pestilence for three months…*[39]

[36] Gregory of Tours, *History of the Franks,* Book V, Ch 35, 298.
[37] Bede, *Ecclesiastical History,* Book III, Ch 27, 194.
[38] Paul the Deacon, *History of the Langobards,* Book II, Ch. 4.
[39] Paul the Deacon, *History of the Langobards,* Book VI, Ch V.

In this account Paul also mentions that "it visibly appeared to many that a good and a bad angel proceeded by night through the city" marking the houses which suffered great death the next day.[40] This manifestation of the supernatural in the form of angels or spirits is not uncommon in the accounts of our authors.

The similarity in the cosmic and divine events that surround disease in the texts of Gregory, Bede, and Paul may be because they are all church figures and as such derive much of their meaning from a shared belief in the supernatural. One would expect different from Procopius, who is merely a scholar, but even what he has to say about the causes of disease refutes the idea that it could be natural and not supernatural.

> *Now in the case of all other scourges sent from Heaven some explanation of a cause might be given by daring men, such as the many theories propounded by those who are clever in these matters; for they love to conjure up causes which are absolutely incomprehensible to man, and to fabricate outlandish theories of natural philosophy, knowing well that they are saying nothing sound, but considering it sufficient for them, if they completely deceive by their argument some of those whom they meet and persuade them to their view. But for this calamity it is quite impossible either to express in words or to conceive in thought any explanation, except indeed to refer it to God.*[41]

Procopius does not stop there:

> *Apparitions of supernatural beings in human guise of every description were seen by many persons, and those who encountered them thought that they were struck by the man they had met in this or that part of the body, as it happened, and immediately upon seeing this apparition they were seized also by the disease. Now at first those who met these creatures tried to turn them aside by uttering the holiest of names and exorcising them in other ways as well as each one could, but they accomplished absolutely nothing, for even in the sanctuaries where the most of them fled for refuge they were dying constantly.*[42]

Even our more secular author does not hesitate to describe supernatural events as though they were real. The tendency for apparitions, demons, and angels, to be pervasive in descriptions of plague is likely heightened by the novelty of the disease. Because the

[40] Paul the Deacon, *History of the Langobards,* Book VI, Ch V.
[41] Procopius, *History of the Wars,* Ch. XXII.
[42] Procopius, *History of the Wars,* Ch. XXII.

plague is unfamiliar and there is less knowledge about it, it is easier to attribute to it supernatural causes. Additionally the wide scale of the disease and its indiscriminate nature meant that logically in the thinking of the time it was a punishment sent by God to the whole of humanity.

The approach to epidemics in modern study has been long informed by disease theory, which rejects any supernatural explanation of disease. But even with a scientific understanding of disease, epidemics of the past remained anomalies to historians. William McNeill claimed in *Plagues and Peoples* that "Epidemic disease, when it did become decisive in peace or in war, ran counter to the effort to make the past intelligible. Historians consequently played such episodes down."[43] McNeill attempted to correct the perceived unpredictability of disease and "bring the history of infectious disease into the realm of historical explanation."[44] His effort renewed interest in ancient epidemics and in due course historians have sought to explain them through historical methodology. This approach is qualitative; the emphasis is not on understanding the spread of disease through numbers but rather through determining social and cultural factors of epidemiology in a historical context. In such a comprehensive way scholars have looked at early medieval Europe as a region that was particularly ripe for disease. Various theories explain the rise of disease in this period. The fall of the Western Roman Empire debilitated Roman baths and drainage networks, reducing sanitation and leaving stagnant water, which bred malaria. Interruption of Roman agriculture left populations with poor nutrition and therefore less ability to resist disease. Migratory peoples could easily transmit diseases as they spread throughout the continent and came into contact with

[43] William H. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, (Garden City: Anchor Press, 1976), 4.
[44] McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples,* 4.

previously unknown diseases. Accordingly the Justinianic plague was the logical outcome of a virgin soil epidemic occurring among weakened populations.

Other diseases, such as malaria, have become the focus of research as historians seek to understand local phenomena of health. These less deadly diseases are chronic factors in lifespan and health, contributing to mortality by increasing vulnerability to other diseases and reducing the impact of good nutrition. Their visibility is not as strong as plague in primary sources, although some references in documental evidence can be inferred to be variations of these less acute diseases rather than plague. Suffice to say, just as the more pressing epidemic diseases have caught the attention of past chroniclers, so have these diseases preoccupied researchers, meaning that the body of evidence and research into less deadly chronic endemic diseases is not as extensive as research into plague.

Presumptions that were founded on primary source evidence and analogies to recent historical epidemics are now being tested through new methodology. DNA, isotope, and skeletal analysis have been particularly influential, allowing researchers to identify pathogens, diet, and the nutritional environment of deceased individuals from their skeletal remains. From this angle of study we can now identify what disease affected an individual during their youth, what they ate when they were young, whether they were anemic, where they grew up, and a host of other factors that let us construct the health and identity of an individual. Not only can this new evidence be used to uncover evidence of Justinianic plague in late antiquity, it can also be used to reveal the living standards of populations in the following period.

The greatest limit on the application of this research is its cost. Archaeological excavation itself is expensive, but the process of analyzing skeletal remains only adds to

that expense. This work is also not as appealing, especially since the results were limited until recently, and therefore less effort has gone into post-excavation analysis. Consequently, most skeletal analysis is performed on already excavated sites where researchers rely on site reports to find data. These reports often already include calculated stature tables or lists of pathological anomalies and the researcher simply extracts this data into a database. On the local scale the data is very reliable; it is possible to identify the diet and pathological afflictions of individuals. It is even possible to identify the general health regimen at a site within a specific period, but to take it further the researcher has to rely on multiple samples to create a statistically significant sample size. This is especially true when trying to build a database of metric data used to compare statistics or demographics from different chronological periods. Any abstraction of data creates potential inaccuracies, but for the most part researchers have tried to limit these by reducing sources of inaccuracy, such as accounting for infant mortality when calculating the mortality rate. Lively debate between historians also shows that usage of this data is open to criticism and there is some limit to what can be interpreted by the data.[45] This is more than can be said for some historical interpretations based on documental evidence.

Applying scientific methods to the study of Justinianic plague and the proceeding demography has yielded interesting results that contrast with the former expectations of historians. The study of stature and nutrition in the 6th and 7th centuries has particularly shown that the previous conceptions of this period as a general decline in terms of health are not wholly accurate.

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[45] Walter Scheidel, "Roman Wellbeing and the Economic Consequences of the 'Antonine Plague'," *SSRN eLibrary* (November 10, 2009). This article is an example of one historian contesting the interpretation of this data by another.

Stature

Though stature is linked to some hereditary genes, it functions as a proxy for the factors of nutrition and health.[46] Access to a better diet encourages growth, and resistance to disease helps to prevent pathological detriments to stature. The study of stature is placed under auxology, the study of human growth, and this study has been used to demonstrate trends in nutrition and health throughout periods of time including recent historical periods. There are various methods of measuring stature based on skeletal remains but the majority of the methods rely on measuring the long bones, typically the femur, and then applying a regression equation based on proportions of bone length to stature.[47] Usually this process is performed in post-excavation analysis and the results are published in the field reports. When multiple samples are combined to create a metric database they can incorporate multiple regression methods but returning to the original bone lengths and recalculating stature with the same formula for all samples can solve this problem.

A few studies are relevant to our period of focus and I begin with Koepke and Baten's article "The Biological Standard of Living in Europe During the Last Two Millennia." This article focuses on the differing impacts of nutrition and population density on stature and growth, but the authors have also undertaken extensive research in order to construct a metric survey of heights throughout the first millennia. Samples are taken from dates throughout the first and second millennia and stature estimates typically

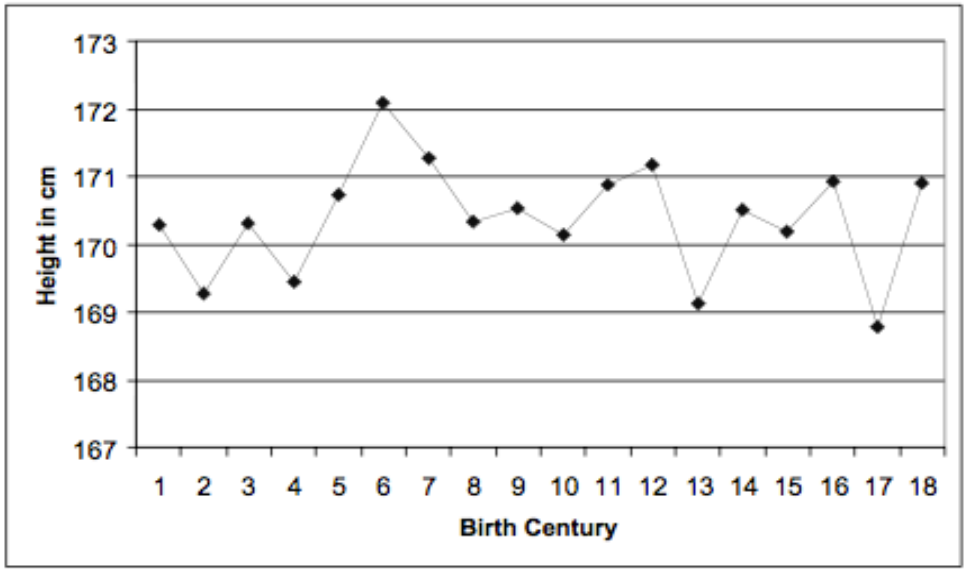
[46] The causal relationship between stature and economic performance is still under investigation, see Walter Scheidel, "Physical Wellbeing in the Roman World." for a discussion of the usefulness of stature as a proxy of wealth.

[47] Monica Giannecchini and Jacopo Moggi-Cecchi, "Stature in Archeological Samples from Central Italy: Methodological Issues and Diachronic Changes," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 135, no. 3 (March 2008): 284–292. Here the various equations and methods available have been tested for accuracy in Italian skeletal samples. This article serves as a decent summary of the methods used in calculating stature.

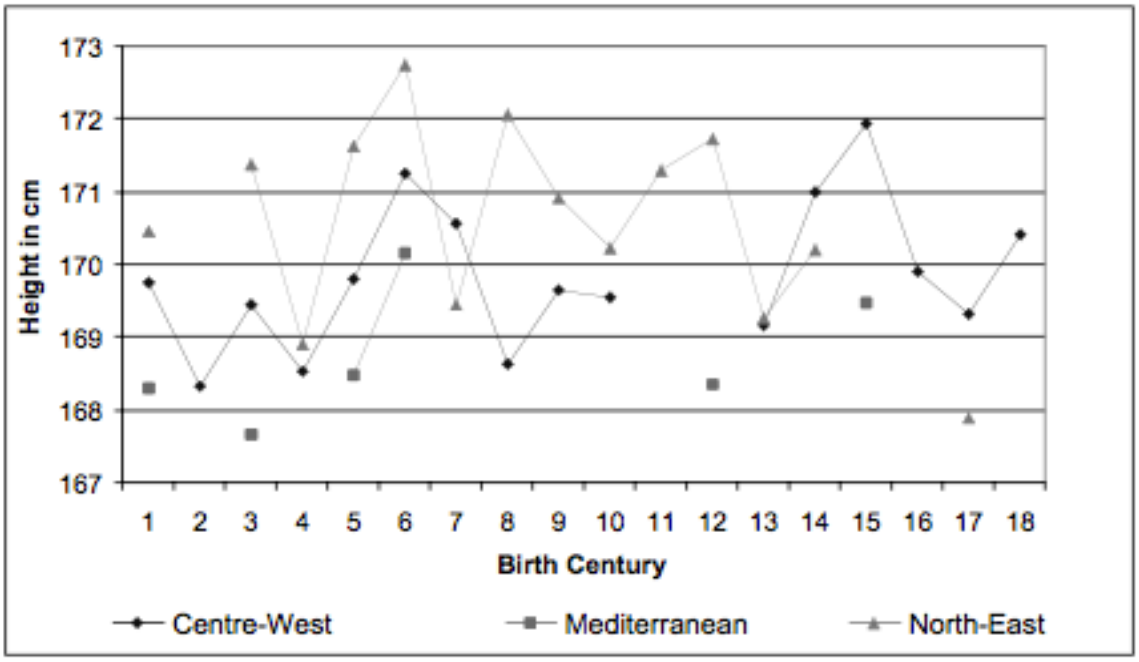
come from long bone measurements of skeletons but later centuries (16th and 17th) incorporate stature estimated from body armor.[48] They favor using the Breitinger/Bach regression formula for estimating stature and have recalculated estimated statures that did not make use of that formula.[49] Their results show that compared to other centuries, there is a definite rise in the average height in the 6th and 7th centuries following the first outbreaks of plague. As exemplified by the second graph, there are some missing links in regional data but trends are still visible even in the Mediterranean plotline. Moreover, the upturn in height is confirmed in Italy through the study of Barbiera et al. "Population Dynamics in Italy in the Middle Ages: New Insights from Archaeological Findings," which discusses population dynamics in Italy around and during this period.[50]

[48] Nikola Koepke and Joerg Baten, "The Biological Standard of Living in Europe During the Last Two Millennia," European Review of Economic History 9, no. 01 (2005): 66-69.
[49] Koepke and Baten, "The Biological Standard of Living," 71.
[50] Irene Barbiera and Gianpiero Dalla-Zuanna, "Population Dynamics in Italy in the Middle Ages: New Insights from Archaeological Findings," Population and Development Review 35, no. 2 (June 1, 2009): 375.

Developing height by century (in cm).[51]

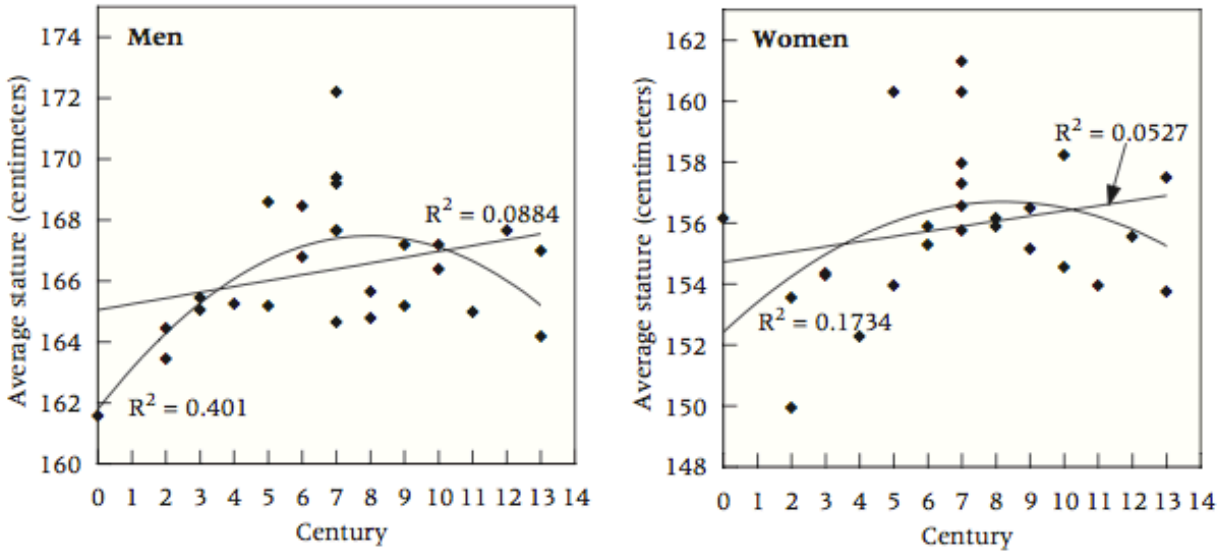


Developing height by century and region (in cm).[52]



[51] Koepke and Baten, "The Biological Standard of Living," 76.
[52] Koepke and Baten, "The Biological Standard of Living," 77.

FIGURE 2 Average stature (in centimeters) as indicated by adult skeletons found in Italian cemeteries from the Classical Roman period and the Middle Ages. Data points fitted by a straight line and a parabola



Apparently people were thriving at least in terms of physical growth in the period following the Justinianic plague even in the disease prone-region of Italy. Of course this data must be taken with a grain of salt because it is based on limited archeological data that can always be improved by more excavation, research, or analysis, but the current available data suggests a positive trend in growth following the Justinianic plague. So why the sudden upsurge in height following a period of death and decay? The best way to answer this question is to investigate factors which affect stature, namely nutrition and population dynamics, as our above authors have done.

Nutrition

The primary sources are silent on the topic of diet except when they describe feasting or the dietary customs of foreign peoples. The diet described in these special circumstances is presumably not representative of the daily diet. Therefore most information on this topic comes from analysis of skeletal remains, specifically isotope

analysis of carbon and nitrogen. By looking at the abundance of certain isotopes of these elements in the preserved remains of skeletons, we can identify the make-up of ancient diets. Diet can also leave certain marks on the skeleton and dentistry. Carbohydrate-heavy diets tend to increase the amount of cavities found in teeth; iron deficient diets increase osteoporosis in skull bones. There are other methods of revealing diet, namely through paleoethnobotany, which studies preserved ecofacts such as seeds and pollen. These things can reveal the cultivation of certain plants. A combination of the above methods gives a solid picture of diet, but usually only one or two of these methods is necessary to obtain a useful idea of what was being consumed.

Diet is the result of adaptive subsistence strategies to a particular environment. Accordingly, nutrition is very dependent on geography, making it difficult to generalize about nutrition in the vastness of the former Western Roman Empire. However, we can approach the subject of nutrition on a micro level, and perhaps draw broader conclusions based on a smaller scale. The typical Roman Italian diet was characterized by high consumption of carbohydrates, as evidenced by high levels of dental cavities and a carbon isotope signature indicating consumption of cereals and grains.[53] This reflects a reliance on agriculture and sedentary subsistence methods. In communities close to the coast, diet was likely complemented by an exploitation of marine resources for protein.[54] Koepke and Baten have indicated that pigs were consumed in the urban areas of the Roman Empire, especially in the Mediterranean, so in these areas of Italy pigs may have contributed protein to the diet as well.[55] The Roman Italian diet was not particularly rich

[53] Tracy Prowse, Henry P. Schwarcz, Shelley Saunders, Roberto Macchiarelli, and Luca Bondioli. "Isotopic Paleodiet Studies of Skeletons from the Imperial Roman-age Cemetery of Isola Sacra, Rome, Italy," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 31, no. 3 (March 2004): 259–272.
[54] Prowse, "Paleodiet Roman-age Cemetary," 270.
[55] Koepke and Baten. "The Biological Standard of Living," 65.

in terrestrially derived proteins, and even the consumption of fish or other marine proteins would have been a luxury.[56] Accordingly statures of Mediterranean and Italian Romans were quite modest.

It appears that later populations did not diverge dramatically from the Roman Italian diet with the exception of terrestrial meat consumption. Belcastro and others suggest that the consumption of pastoral animals, specifically cattle, increased with the movement of Germanic peoples into the area.[57] Barbiera and others argue that the diet of populations in early medieval Italy was actually quite good compared to the Roman period.[58] This argument can be supported on the basis of lower population densities and increased exploitation of cattle.[59] The trauma of Roman political decline in the peninsula, followed by the Gothic Wars beginning in 535 and the Justinianic Plague in 542, could have reduced population sizes across the peninsula, creating a "low-pressure" environment that encouraged the use of land-intensive pastoral resources.

The increased use of cattle in Italy resembles subsistence strategies already found among Germanic peoples. The investigations of Koepke and Baten have shown that beef and milk were heavily exploited by Germanic peoples in northern, eastern, and central Europe prior to the migration of these peoples into the Empire. This is supported by historical references to the Germanic disposition for consuming milk. A passage in Caesar's *The Gallic Wars* states that the Germans "do not live much on corn, but subsist

[56] Prowse "Paleodiet Roman-age Cemetary," 261.
[57] Giovanna Belcastro, Elisa Rastelli, Valentina Mariotti, Chiara Consiglio, Fiorenzo Facchini, and Benedetta Bonfiglioli. "Continuity or Discontinuity of the Life-style in Central Italy During the Roman Imperial Age-Early Middle Ages Transition: Diet, Health, and Behavior," *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 132, no. 3 (March 2007): 381–394.
[58] Barbiera, "Population Dynamics in Italy"
[59] Koepke and Baten, "The Biological Standard of Living," 65; Barbiera, "Population Dynamics in Italy," 375.

for the most part on milk and flesh."[60] Tacitus in *Germania* mentions that the barbarian diet is composed of "wild fruit, fresh game, and curdled milk."[61] Thus there is a working hypothesis that Germanic peoples were milk drinkers, and as they migrated into the empire and eventually into Italy, they brought along with them a preference for milk. Milk likely had a larger impact on protein consumption than meat. Milk was generally available to all social classes because its relative abundance and inability to survive transportation meant that local milk prices were kept low.[62] As far as conditions back at home, the question is not whether Germans made use of milk and beef but whether they made use of agriculture. According to Rosch, the Alemanni during the migration period were using "several cereals as well as oil and fibre plants and pulses."[63] Likely people living in what is today southern Germany continued to cultivate cereals and garden plants introduced into the region by Romans prior to the collapse of Roman authority in the region, although such cultivation would have been simpler than that of the Romans or Celts.[64] The diet of most Germans would have been flexible and adaptable in the Migration Period, of which exploitation of pastoral resources and seasonal crops is one permutation. Such a diet remained relatively more nutritious than its Roman counterpart, explaining perhaps the taller statures of Germanic peoples, and the increasing stature in later periods as the Germanic diet became more common throughout western Europe.

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[60] Ceaser, *Gallic Wars,* Book 4, Ch 1. Internet Classics Archive, Last accessed December 3, 2012, http://classics.mit.edu/Caesar/gallic.4.4.html
[61] Tacitus, Germania, Medieval Sourcebook Online, Last accessed December 3, 2012, http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/tacitus1.html
[62] Nikola Koepke and Joerg Baten, "Agricultural Specialization and Height in Ancient and Medieval Europe," *Explorations in Economic History* 45, no. 2 (April 2008): 129.
[63] Manfred Rösch, "New Aspects of Agriculture and Diet of the Early Medieval Period in Central Europe: Waterlogged Plant Material from Sites in South-western Germany," Vegetation History and Archaeobotany 17, no. 0 (2008), 236.
[64] Rösch, "New Aspects of Agriculture," 236.

From cases in Italy and Germany we can tell that diets were generally adaptive, and the trends in diet often appear counterintuitive to our expectations. But there are cases where diets were not adaptive in the early middle ages. I look mainly to the example of Croatia, which exemplifies the problem that regionalism poses to researching ancient nutrition. Roman Pannonia and Dalmatia, which includes modern day Croatia, was the site of large-scale migrations of Goths, Slavs, Avars, and Croats. Accordingly, Mario Slaus explains that the transition in Croatia is traditionally thought of "as uniformly catastrophic with destruction of major urban centers, depopulation, famine, and the spread of epidemic diseases."[65] In attempting to find if this hypothesis is accurate, Slaus has looked at the skeletal and dental evidence, in the process revealing changes in diet that occurred over the transition to the early medieval period. The skeletons from the Adriatic region of Croatia show a nutritional deficiency compared to their Roman period counterparts, while skeletons in the interior part of Croatia show no significant change in nutrition.[66] Slaus explains this difference through the subsistence strategies of peoples who moved into the region. The Avars and Slavs who moved into interior Croatia were able to exploit resources similar to the regions from which they came, while the Croatians were unable to adapt their skills to exploiting a marine environment like the Adriatic.[67] The case of Early Medieval Croatia shows that even in areas that are near to each other, the difference in environment can require dramatically different subsistence strategies, resulting in the diverse regional diets. Also shown is that migratory peoples can often have maladaptive subsistence strategies resulting in nutritional deficiencies that are not always predictable.

[65] Mario Šlaus, "Osteological and Dental Markers of Health in the Transition from the Late Antique to the Early Medieval Period in Croatia," American Journal of Physical Anthropology 136, no. 4 (2008), 455.
[66] Šlaus, "Osteological and Dental Markers in Croatia," 464.
[67] Šlaus, "Osteological and Dental Markers in Croatia," 465-466.

Regional variation was not the only factor affecting the nutrition of individuals; in many cases social rank determined access to a better diet. In egalitarian societies this was not an issue, but eventually most barbarian groups established some kind of social hierarchy in association with land tenure that developed into nutritional inequality. However, where milk was produced nutritional inequality tended to remain low due to the low price of milk and its high availability.[68] In societies where cow milk was not commonly consumed, such as among Mediterranean Romans, wealth typically correlated with nutrition because wealthier persons could afford a more varied diet with more protein.[69] Poorer strata depended on calorie-dense, nutritionally-poor foods like bread. Therefore when we are trying to extrapolate diet from skeletal evidence, we not only have to take into account the past environment, but also the socioeconomic class of individuals being analyzed.

One thing that could counteract the benefits of good nutrition was exposure to chronic disease, such as malaria. Certain diseases leave visible marks on the skeleton, and malaria is potentially detectable through pathologies known as Cribra Orbitalia or Porotic Hyperostosis, which are usually a sign of anemia.[70] Malaria can cause anemia due to thalassemia, a Mediteranean disease similar to sickle cell, which imparts resistance to malaria in exchange for decreased oxygen capacity in red blood cells. There is also some minor documental evidence that tells us malaria was around certain regions, especially along the coast to Rome. Sidonus Apollinarus in his *Letter to his friend Herenius* writes in 467 AD,

[68] Koepke and Baten, "Agricultural specialization and height in ancient and medieval Europe," 129.
[69] For discussion of dietary differences and inequality see the study by Koepke and Baten "The Biological Standard of Living in Europe During the Last Two Millennia." 86-87.
[70] For a discussion of the causes of these pathologies and their relation to anemia see Phillip L Walker, Rhonda R Bathurst, Rebecca Richman, Thor Gjerdrum, and Valerie A Andrushko. "The Causes of Porotic Hyperostosis and Cribra Orbitalia: a Reappraisal of the Iron-deficiency-anemia Hypothesis." American Journal of Physical Anthropology 139, no. 2 (June 2009): 109–125.

> *I just traversed the other towns of the Flaminian Way----in at one gate, out at the other----leaving the Picenians on the left and the Umbrians on the right; and here my exhausted system succumbed either to Calabrian Atabulus or to air of the insalubrious Tuscan region, charged with poisonous exhalations, and blowing now hot, now cold. Fever and thirst ravaged the very marrow of my being.*[71]

Apollinarus calls Tuscany "insalubrious" or unhealthy and Tuscany is of course a coastal region. There is also archaeological evidence of epidemic diseases that do not fit into the plague model. One example hails from the site of Lugnano at Terevina, which is near the area travelled through by Apollinarus. A so-called "abnormal burial" suggests some kind of local epidemic and evidence of folk remedies for an enlarged spleen, a possible symptom of malaria, are found at the burial site.[72] This site predates the Justinianic plague by nearly a century, indicating that some form of malaria was present in this region prior to the plague.

Malaria becomes endemic in regions and chronically affects the lifespan of the population. Individuals who are survivors of malaria or carriers of thalassemia have much less resistance to other disease. When looking at the effects of this disease on stature we are mainly looking at the diversion of resources required to fight chronic illness rather than spent towards growth. As indicated previously, coastal populations and populations near stagnant water were especially exposed to malaria because of an increase in the number of mosquitos, and as evidenced by "high parasitic loads" found in Slaus' early medieval skeletal sample of coastal Croatia this seems to be the case.[73] While nutrition could have been remarkably good in some regions of post-plague Europe, the incidence of malaria could have increased due to a failure to maintain Roman drainage networks. Yet despite this, stature appears to have increased in this period even in the Italian

[71] Sidonius Apollinaris, Letters. Tr. O.M. Dalton (1915), Book I, 1-33.
[72] David Soren, "Can Archaeologists Excavate Evidence of Malaria?" *World Archaeology* 35, no. 2 (October 1, 2003), 202.
[73] Šlaus, "Osteological and Dental Markers in Croatia," 467.

peninsula where malaria would have likely been endemic. Whether this is because the healthy leave the most visible skeletal remains is a question that is relevant, but too large to be covered in detail here.[74]

Population Density

The 6th and 7th centuries were characterized by a demographic shift occurring in response to an "epidemiological adjustment," meaning that as epidemic diseases moved into a previously unaffected area they acted as a virgin soil epidemics, affecting young and old alike, resulting in rapid population decline.[75] If the population were dense enough the epidemic would become a disease that primarily affected children of survivors, suppressing population recovery until the disease faded. In areas that had low population density, occasional outbreaks would result in major kill-off episodes similar to a virgin soil epidemic, reoccurring in short-term population decline. The lethality of the Justinianic plague meant that it was difficult for it to stay endemic; density-dependent diseases usually work better if they do not kill so efficiently. Therefore, outbreak episodes likely recurred through external introduction, leaving populations to recover in between periods of plague. Endemic instances could only occur in highly populated areas such as Constantinople, where the disease was attested to have remained for four months.[76] The general result was a recurring kill-off of younger sectors of the population across infected regions, encouraging faster reproduction in order to maintain current levels of population.[77]

[74] This problem is known as the "osteological paradox" and it spans the scope of paleopatholigical study. See Lori E Wright, and Cassady J Yoder, "Recent Progress in Bioarchaeology: Approaches to the Osteological Paradox."
[75] McNiell, *Plagues and Peoples,* 116.
[76] Procopius. *History of the Wars,* Book I, Ch. XXII. McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, 115-116.
[77] McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples*, 115-116.

Low population density improves nutrition by allowing land-intensive means of production, such as cattle herding, which generally provide more protein than primarily agricultural systems. As discussed already, this diet would have increased stature. A low population density also reduces transmission of disease because there is less chance of infection between individuals. This had the benefit of improving health, even as Roman sanitation practices began to fade.[78] Koepke and Baten have estimated that low population density, measured in terms of increased land per capita, had a subordinate role in improving stature when compared to increased cattle share.[79] However, the exploitation of cattle requires more land than agriculture, and therefore the two factors are interrelated. In any case it appears that lower population density correlates with higher average stature.

Conclusion

As the population in most parts of Europe declined, or was at least stalled, the low density allowed for the development of economic and political systems that could cope with a shortage of labor. Economically this meant a reduction in interstate trade which, coupled with the Arab conquests of North Africa, left the old Roman Mediterranean trade system abandoned. Subsistence strategies shifted towards more land-intensive practices such as pastoralism. This change in subsistence resulted in better diets for egalitarian societies, and in the wake of population shortages most European societies drifted towards more egalitarian practices that were less likely to alienate needed labor. Even where social inequality existed, the production of milk reduced nutritional inequality, allowing for a reliable source of protein for poorer strata, meaning that populations could

[78] Šlaus, "Osteological and Dental Markers in Croatia," 467.
[79] Koepke and Baten, "Agricultural specialization and height in ancient and medieval Europe," 140.

generally recover except in cases where another plague outbreak occurred, or where the incidence of malaria negated good nutrition.

A general population decline undermined practices that had relied on abundant labor. Militarily this weakened the Byzantine Empire, which was especially devastated by plague. The first outbreaks of Justinianic plague occurred in the midst of the Gothic Wars, complicating an already complicated situation in the Italian peninsula. Armies were of course sitting ducks for plague and thus the military efforts of both sides during the Gothic Wars were greatly impeded. The cost of losing troops and having to hire mercenaries and replacements put extra weight on the Imperial treasury, which was poorly funded by declining tax revenue from a smaller population. Therefore the plague left the Byzantine treasury overextended on two fronts, and when the Lombards invaded Italy there was no real resistance from either the Goths or Byzantines. The same factors left the former Dalmatian and Pannonian provinces in the hands of Slavs and Avars who saw in the depopulated provinces an opportunity for relocation and settlement.[80] On the other hand, the barbarian kingdoms did not suffer as much as Byzantium. Rural areas had less to lose from plague outbreaks and much of the land under barbarians was rural. The typical diet of these peoples also allowed a better exploitation of low-density subsistence strategies. Away from the Mediterranean, populations were less likely to encounter endemic diseases like malaria. Therefore Justinianic Plague acted to level the playing field between the regions of Europe, though western polities would still need to develop in order to take advantage of the demographic disparity.

[80] Arkadiusz Sottysiak, "The plague pandemic and slavic expansion in the 6th-8th centuries," *Archaeologia Polona* 44 (2006): 361.

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Intersections of Anarcho-Feminism: Emma Goldman, *Mujeres Libres*, and the Spanish Civil War

Alexandra Wright

"You have no idea how primitive everything in this direction is. Enlightenment among women is desperately needed. But our comrades are too engrossed in winning the anti-Fascist war to devote much time to this kind of necessary labor. A beginning has been made of course. But one cannot sweep away the ignorance, prejudice and superstition of a people in four months."[1]

This sigh of dissatisfaction found in a letter from Emma Goldman to her niece Stella Ballantine highlights the root of Goldman's frustration with the Spanish women's emancipation movement in the context of the Spanish Civil War—it just was not moving fast enough. Goldman herself was an anomaly within the anarchist movement, but one of its strongest voices. Her involvement in the Spanish Civil War made her aware of the gaps between her vision of women's emancipation, and the wider international—but specifically the Spanish—anarchist movement. The women's anarchist group in Spain, *Mujeres Libres* (Free Women), founded in 1936, had much in common with Goldman. They shared a common goal, women's emancipation, and took similar stances on most issues facing women, but because of the chaos of war from 1936 to 1939, *Mujeres Libres* put "the woman question" on the backburner. Both Emma Goldman and *Mujeres Libres* are considered part of the anarchist feminist canon; but, neither Goldman, nor *Mujeres Libres*, considered themselves feminists. This begs the question—what does being an anarchist feminist mean and is it an anachronistic label that our society has placed upon them?

The short answer to the latter question? Yes. But, the ideological tenets that place both groups under one ideological umbrella are similar if not universal. Margaret S. Marsh, in her article entitled, "The Anarchist-Feminist Response to the 'Woman Question' in Late-Nineteenth Century America," argues that, "Anarchist-feminism…developed directly from the cornerstone of anarchist philosophy—the primacy of complete individual liberty…If women truly intended to achieve equality, the first step must be a declaration of independence from men and from

[1] Emma Goldman, "Letter to Stella, November 18, 1936," in *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, ed. David Porter (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2006), 256.

male-dominated institutions, beginning with marriage."[2] Both subjects of this paper have these goals in common, but ultimately it is their method that is different. For Spanish anarchists, it is their roots in anarcho-syndicalism that guides their path, while Goldman approaches women's emancipation from the anarchist communism perspective.

The groundbreaking analysis of *Mujeres Libres* in Martha Acklesberg's *Free Women of Spain* centers on the ideology, organization, and experience of women in *Mujeres Libres*.[3] More importantly, it focuses on the ideology and its incompatibility with the reality of anarchism in the Spanish Civil War. While her first chapter discusses *Mujeres Libres*'s ideology and the proverbial "game plan" for women's emancipation, the second chapter deals with real-life implementation—a far cry from the ideal. Similarly, Mary Nash analyzes women's sociopolitical reality in *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War*.[4] She looks specifically at women's agency, and *Mujeres Libres*'s role in collectivizing smaller spontaneous women's groups, creating a women's anarchist force that reached over 20,000 members.[5]

Mujeres Libres's intersection with Emma Goldman is mentioned in almost every chronicle about Goldman's life, as well as works analyzing her ideology. Bonnie Haaland has based her work on the ideas of Emma Goldman as revealed by Goldman's writings and speeches.[6] This persona that Emma Goldman consciously created of herself rarely intersected with her actual reality, as Alice Wexler argues in her landmark biographies, *Emma Goldman: An*

[2] Margaret Marsh, "The Anarchist-Feminist Response to the 'Woman Question' in Late-Nineteenth Century America," *American Quarterly* Vol. 30, No. 4 (1978): 536.
[3] Martha Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991).
[4] Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War* (Denver, CO: Arden Press, Inc., 1995).
[5] Ibid.
[6] Bonnie Haaland, *Emma Goldman: Sexuality and the Impurity of the State* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993).

Intimate Life and *Emma Goldman in Exile*.[7] Letters between Goldman and her close personal friends—the historical Emma Goldman—contrasted with her autobiography, *Living My Life*, which depicts the legendary Emma Goldman, forms the basis for Wexler's work.

Historians agree that the Spanish Civil War is one of the most complicated events in history. Antony Beevor writes, "It is perhaps the best example of a subject which becomes more confusing when it is simplified."[8] George Esenwein and Adrian Shubert argue that not only is the war complex, but it is obscured by controversy.[9] General histories of the event are rare because of the event's complexity, but also because of its many protagonists. This paper will focus on the anarchist perspective of the war and its fundamental opposition to the Spanish Nationalists, and their role in the social revolution that transpired in liberated areas of the country. Robert Alexander in his comprehensive work on anarchists in the Spanish Civil War argues that few works focus on the social revolution, but almost all of the works I have consulted go on at some length about the social revolution in Spain, with particular emphasis on the anarchist collectives, the largest of which was in Barcelona, and their short-lived success, but ultimate tragic failure.[10]

In this paper, I will use these sources to construct an image of the intellectual tensions that plagued the relationship between Spanish anarchist women, especially those involved with *Mujeres Libres*, and Emma Goldman during the Spanish Civil War. To accomplish this, I must first attempt to give a brief background of anarchist involvement in the Spanish Civil War, preempting the creation of *Mujeres Libres*, including an introduction to the myriad splinter

[7] Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman: An Intimate Life* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984); Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989).
[8] Antony Beevor, *The Spanish Civil War* (New York: Peter Bedrick Books, 1982), 7.
[9] George Esenwein and Adrian Shubert, *Spain at War: The Spanish Civil War in Context, 1931-1939* (New York: Longman Group Limited, 1995), 1.
[10] Robert Alexander, *The Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War* (London: Janus Publishing Co., 1998), xvii. There are chapters on the Social Revolution in Esenwein and Shubert, Chapters 5 and 7, and James M. Anderson, *The Spanish Civil War: A History and Reference Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), Chapter 4.

anarchist groups in Spain. I will then move onto the ideology behind *Mujeres Libres*, both how this ideology formed, and how successfully or unsuccessfully it was implemented in actuality. Because it is at the implementation stage that Emma Goldman found the most frustration with Spanish women's anarchist movement, it is there that I will introduce her and her ideology, focusing on her public persona. While using some excerpts from Goldman's historical life, I will focus mainly on her ideas, using her writings and Bonnie Haaland's analysis to construct an intellectual profile with which to compare *Mujeres Libres* and examine why Goldman's frustration with Spanish anarchist women was so apparent, despite their relative agreement on most women's issues in the context of the Spanish Civil War. Finally, I will argue that while there were tensions between Emma Goldman and *Mujeres Libres*, their feminist ideology was much the same. They differed in their respective anarchist ideologies, proving that it is not their feminism that is different, but their anarchism that founds the basis of the problem between them.

The root of the problem between Goldman and *Mujeres Libres* begins not with Spain, or with Spaniards, but between two Russians: Mikhail Bakunin and Peter Kropotkin. Bakunin, the foremost proponent of anarchist collectivism, through ties with the International Workers' Association, or the First International, aligned himself with the syndicalist movement, highlighting the importance of trade unions within the anarchist framework. Robert Alexander summarizes:

> Bakunin pictured the progression of organization of the workers as moving from the establishment of a union of workers in a particular 'shop', followed by the joining together of all of the unions in a particular trade or industry in a single country, followed by an international organization of the unions in that particular branch of economic

> activity, and ultimately all of those international organizations joining the International Workingmen's Association.[11]

On the other hand, Peter Kropotkin, the intellectual powerhouse behind anarchist communism, emphasized the importance of the community over worker's unions. He came to this conclusion by the Darwinian principle of mutual aid.[12] Kropotkin argued against the Social Darwinists, Spencer and Huxley specifically, the first of which coined the term "survival of the fittest."[13] Human competition, Spencer argues, is the root of social evolution; Kropotkin disagrees by arguing:

> But it is not love and not even sympathy upon which Society is based in mankind. It is the conscience—be it only at the stage of an instinct—of human solidarity. It is the unconscious recognition of the force that is borrowed by each man from the practice of mutual aid; of the close dependency of every one's happiness upon the happiness of all; and of the sense of justice, or equity, which brings the individual to consider the rights of every other individual as equal to his own.[14]

This mutual aid focused on the community as a whole and not workers in specific trades or industries.

Both anarchist communists and anarchist collectivists saw their actions as a path toward the larger goal of social and political revolution. For Bakunin, this revolution began with 'propaganda by the deed,' the practice of using terrorist acts to spread the word and open discussion for and about the anarchist cause.[15] Small insurrections would eventually build into a mass rebellion. Both viewed the lack of social revolution in France as the reason for the failure of the French Revolution. By pursuing a political revolution without economic and social

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[11] Alexander, *Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War*, 20.
[12] George Crowder, *Classical Anarchism: The Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 162.
[13] Ibid, 161.
[14] Peter Kropotkin, "Introduction" in "Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution, 1902" *Marxists Internet Archive*, accessed October 25, 2012, http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/kropotkin-peter/1902/mutual-aid/introduction.htm.
[15] Crowder, *Classical Anarchism*, 149.

freedom as its central and essential goal, the great uprising "lost its way and became anti-democratic and bourgeois in character."[16] This revolutionary movement required some violence. Bakunin and Kropotkin emphasized the destruction of property and institutions, but recognized some loss of life was inevitable, but necessary to realize an anarchist society.[17] In Spain, the Spanish Civil War would prove to be the perfect revolutionary atmosphere for anarchist development.

Though the dividing line between these two ideologies was thin, in Spain, it opened the doors for an ideological schism in the 1880s.[18] The immediate precursor to anarchist organizations during the later civil war was the *Federación de Trabajadores de la Región Española*, or FTRE.[19] Formed in 1881, the FTRE was the first exclusively anarchist organization with syndicalist leanings in Spain affiliated with the First International.[20] But, with the introduction of anarchist communist thought into Spain in the early 1880s, the support behind the FTRE and its syndicalism quickly splintered into three groups: "those who supported the FTRE, those who were willing to stay within the trade union movement but who did not support the 'legalist' orientation of the syndicalists, and those who were so violently opposed to the programs of the FTRE that they deserted it."[21] In 1888, the FTRE was all but obsolete and dissolved, leaving only Valencia and Catalonia as strong syndicalist bastions until 1910.[22]

Arguably, the most important anarchist organization formed in Spain was the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo*, or the CNT, in 1910. Delegates from most major urban

[16] Crowder, *Classical Anarchism*, 150.
[17] Ibid.
[18] George Esenwein, *Anarchist Ideology and the Working Class Movement in Spain, 1869-1898*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989), 113.
[19] Ibid, 80.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid, 113.
[22] Ibid.

areas came together to form this new national labor organization, including a strong representation from Catalonia.[23] As a syndicalist organization, there was much debate about the role of the strike during the founding congress. The strike was to be 'essentially revolutionary' and nationally based within the various craft unions.[24] There were also arguments on the role of women workers. Women were not required to do work 'superior to their physical powers,' but the CNT did want them to join the labor force and actively recruited them into the organization.[25] Ultimately, the CNT had two basic functions: "the immediate improvement of the economic situation of its members…[and] the longer-term objective of 'revolutionary expropriation of the bourgeoisie."[26] By the 1930s, the CNT had a firmly established hierarchal structure with local, regional, and national organization, but each organization operated according to its own rules to maintain an anarchist ideology.[27]

Two other anarchist groups were officially recognized during the Spanish Civil War, the *Federación Anarquista Iberica*, or FAI, and the *Federación Ibérica de Juventudes Libertarias*, or JJLL. Both organizations, made up of many *grupos de afinidad*, were originally organic, radical, small groups that were political in nature and not only sought the collectivization of private property, but also employed violence to achieve their goals.[28] The FAI, in 1927, unified most of the *grupos* together on both regional and national levels. By 1936, in the face of impending civil war, the CNT had essentially folded the FAI into its larger infrastructure, creating a united, anarcho-syndicalist front.[29] The JJLL, established in 1932, was the principle anarchist youth organization during the war. The Youth encountered much controversy when it

[23] Alexander, *Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War*, 72.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid, 73.
[27] Ibid, 80.
[28] Ibid, 82.
[29] Ibid, 87.

voted to federalize from factions in Catalonia which opposed a national organization. The opposition viewed the local groups as affiliates of each regional syndicate instead of a stand-alone federation.[30] The concept of a youth organization also challenged the perceived unity of the Spanish syndicalist movement, creating divisions between the youth and the older generation.[31] These organizations remained relatively small compared to the CNT, most with membership less than 50,000, but these two groups ballooned to over 100,000 in membership after the start of the civil war.[32]

The Spanish Civil War is far too complex an event to briefly explain here. Instead, focusing on the collectives that sprung up in Republican areas during the military revolution is appropriate. To anarchists, any revolution had to be fought on two fronts—the obvious military/political revolution, but, even more importantly, the social revolution. In Republican areas, whichever trade union or political party was in the majority ruled.[33] Where anarchists were in power, a sweeping reorganization of the social system took place. Universal healthcare, the barter system, and new education programs were all facets of anarchist villages and towns, all led by principles of social equality and local economic control.[34] The JJLL, for example, "carried on an extensive program of propaganda and indoctrination, holding classes, meetings and conferences on a wide variety of subjects."[35] Often anarchists found themselves caught between their platform of decentralized government and their need for outside help. In Catalonia, they

[30] Alexander, *Anarchists in the Spanish Civil* War, 91.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Ibid, 92.
[33] James M. Anderson, *The Spanish Civil War: A History and Reference Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), 67.
[34] Ibid, 70.
[35] Alexander, *Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War*, 92.

cooperated with the Generalitat out of necessity, but the government in turn supported their social programs.[36] It is in this state of organized chaos that *Mujeres Libres* had its beginning.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the feminist movement consisted largely of different answers to problems concerning women collectively referred to as "The Woman Question." These answers more often than not fell along political ideological lines, instead of a concrete feminist ideology. For anarchists, this question was answered by the acceptance of a shared humanity between men and women, rather than the mainstream "separate but equal" argument.[37] The anarchist feminist position stems directly from anarchist ideology itself, specifically "the primacy of complete individual liberty."[38] The emphasis on individualism directly influenced the anarcho-feminist aversion to women's dependence on men, particularly the institution of marriage. "Free love" was not isolated to the feminists within the anarchist movement, but the other anarchists did not see any reason to change the family or household structure.[39] Anarcho-feminists diverged mainly on the topic of children, which split into two groups. On one hand, there were those who believed childcare should be split between the two parents. On the other hand, there were those who believed that the mother should be the sole caretaker. Both groups agreed though, that eventually, in a fully anarchist society, children would be taken care of by people who chose childcare as their profession.[40] While household structure and childcare are inherently feminist issues, neither Emma Goldman, nor *Mujeres*

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[36] Anderson, *The Spanish Civil War*, 70.
[37] Marsh, "The Anarchist-Feminist Response," 535.
The "separate but equal" argument is based on the idea that even though men and women are "naturally" made for different things and occupy different spheres, both sexes are equally important to the society as a whole. See Karen Offen, " Contextualizing the Theory and Practice of Feminism in 19th Century Europe (1789-1914)," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History,* 3rd Edition, ed. Renate Bridenthal et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1998).
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid, 536.
[40] Ibid, 537.

Libres would define themselves as feminists. Neither Emma Goldman, nor *Mujeres Libres* would define themselves as feminists. The latter, "associated feminism with bourgeois middle-class political feminism and thus rejected it for its social limitations."[41] But, "the theory and practice of *Mujeres Libres* can undoubtedly be defined as anarcho-feminism, for the organization recognized the gender specificity of women's oppression and the need for an autonomous female struggle to overcome it."[42] These ideological tenets were near universal for all anarcho-feminists, but not all anarcho-feminists subscribed to one set of anarchist ideas.

In Spain, once the Spanish Civil War started in 1936, revolutionary anarchist thought took a backseat to revolutionary anarchist action. It was during this social tumult that *Mujeres Libres* was formed in 1936.[43] Although women were encouraged to participate in the unions and anarcho-syndicalist organizations, "they found the existing organizations of that movement inadequate to address the specific problems confronting them as women, whether in the movement itself or in the larger society."[44] Women had been organizing for two years previous to the breakout of the war in Barcelona and Madrid, but the war and subsequent social revolution propelled that organizing force forward. They felt that anarchist men within the CNT, FAI, and JJLL did not treat them with the respect of an equal.[45] Many anarchists opposed the organization of a separate women's group. They believed it would emphasize the difference between men and women, ultimately undermining the anarchist movement as a whole.[46] Suceso Portales—a central figure in the organization of *Mujeres Libres* in central Spain—referred to the subordination of women in Spain as a "double struggle," meaning not only were anarchist

[41] Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 84.
[42] Ibid, 84.
[43] Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain*, 87.
[44] Ibid, 87.
[45] Ibid, 88.
[46] Ibid, 91.

women fighting against the State and institutions that socially subjugated all people, but anarchist women also participated in a parallel struggle against male domination and the patriarchy.[47] Three educated women, Mercedes Comaposada, Lucía Sánchez Saornil, and Amparo Poch y Gascón, organized *Mujeres Libres* from the ground-up in Madrid. The three women were also the editors of the group's eponymous journal. Their initial efforts included reaching out to syndicalist-affiliated women's groups that had already been formed. In Barcelona the *Grupo Cultural Femenino* had been active since 1934.[48] Most of these smaller women's organizations were geared toward collectivizing women into their own unions, rather than specifically targeting the subjugation of women. When the war began, *Mujeres Libres* groups sprouted wherever the Republican Front moved. In spite of the widespread membership of *Mujeres Libres*, the group was never given official recognition by the libertarians, and was never seen as equal with the CNT, FAI, or Juventudes.[49] Saornil recognized early the diminutive status they might endure:

> There are a lot of *compañeros* who sincerely desire women's collaboration in the struggle; but this desire does not spring from a modification in their concept of women; they want her collaboration as a constituent who can help achieve victory, as a strategic contribution we could say, but that does not imply for one minute that they think of female autonomy, or renounce considering themselves as the center of the earth.[50]

Women's groups formed previous to *Mujeres Libres* fulfilled this purpose; they acted as branch arms of other anarchist organizations, and not exclusively to elevate the position of women to one of equality.

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[47] Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 84.
[48] Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain*, 92.
[49] Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 87.
[50] Lucía Sánchez Saornil, "La cuestión femenina en nuestros medios," *Solidaridad Obrera*, 2 October 1935, in *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War*, Mary Nash, auth, (Denver, CO: Arden Press, Inc., 1995), 87.

With a war and a revolution happening simultaneously, *Mujeres Libres* developed a statement of purpose rather quickly. Toward the end of 1936, their manifesto proclaimed two goals:

> (a) to create a conscientious and responsible female force that can act as a vanguard of progress; and (b) to this end, to establish schools, institutes, conferences, special courses, etc., designed to empower women and emancipate them from the triple enslavement to which they have been, and continue to be, subject, the enslavement of ignorance, enslavement as a woman, and enslavement as a worker.[51]

This "dual orientation" developed itself in two ways: *capacitacíon*, or empowerment, and *captación*, or incorporation.[52] Both of these goals required an education program. Most women in Spain, especially in the working class, were largely illiterate. The ultimate goal of this education program was creating activists—a goal that *Mujeres Libres* saw as only beneficial for the women's movement as a whole and the best hope for change regarding women's positions within the anarchist movement.[53] What began as a widespread literacy program, by the fall of 1936, became a revolutionary women's education movement. In Barcelona, there were intensive courses in culture, social history, economics, and law.[54] Every course contained discussion on, "what it meant to be a woman," stressing the importance of taking responsibility for their lives and not depending on a man to tell her what to do.[55] In July of 1937, *Mujeres Libres* had developed skills-based education for women to replace men in industry who had left to fight the war.[56] Their programs and messages were being spread via newspaper, journal, pamphlet, and books. In an interview with Martha Acklesberg, Pepita Carpena explained, "We would call the women together and explain to them…that there is a clearly defined role for women, that women

[51] Mujeres Libres, "Statement of Purpose," in *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*, Martha Ackelsberg, auth. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 115.
[52] Ackelsberg, *Free Women of* Spain, 115.
[53] Ibid, 116.
[54] Ibid, 119.
[55] Ibid, 119.
[56] Ibid, 120.

should not lose their independence, but that a woman can be a mother and a *compañera* at the same time."[57] But, as revolutionary as this education was for women in Spain, Mary Nash points out:

> The anarchist women failed to consider such issues as the sexual division of labor and women bearing sole responsibility for child care…most members still tended to exalt motherhood as the primary task of women…*Mujeres Libres* never openly broached the subject of abortion or dealt with such issues as family planning and birth control. Its educational drives related to these subjects were limited to preparation for maternity, childcare, and some elementary knowledge of anatomy.[58]

These issues separate Spanish anarchist women from many European and American anarchist women, where the birth control movement was beginning and woman's curse of the uterus had long been discussed.

Mujeres Libres' shortcomings regarding the more pressing social issues of women and motherhood open the discussion to the introduction of Emma Goldman. Anarchist communists, especially Peter Kropotkin, greatly influenced the anarchist theory of Emma Goldman.[59] They had points of tension, specifically in regards to sexuality and the essential place of women in the anarchist movement, but she referred to him as her greatest teacher throughout her life. Kropotkin's theories on mutual aid and the primacy of human instinct are some of Goldman's greatest influences.[60] Her views about sex come largely from his work, an interesting truth, seeing as he continually harped on her for being too concerned with sex and for being loose.[61] Their collective focus on Darwinist theories of nature clouded their concept of society and its traditions. Bonnie Haaland adds, "Goldman, although greatly aware of the presence of women in

[57] Pepita Carpena, interview, in *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women*, Martha Ackelsberg, auth. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 121.
[58] Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 91.
[59] Haaland, *Emma Goldman*, 8.
[60] Ibid, 13.
[61] Ibid, 14.

'anarchist society,' fails, like Kropotkin, to recognize the 'custom or habit' of patriarchy as being a potential force limiting individual freedom."[62] By ignoring a large part of the historical custom of subjugating women via the patriarchy, it makes sense that she denies the bifurcation of society into "public" and "private" spheres. Instead, she created an essentially new marriage of the two by pushing "private" matters such as sex and reproduction into the "public" theory of anarchism and inextricably linking women's issues as essential to human economic freedom.

Goldman's rejection of traditional gender roles, what some call the nature/culture dichotomy and what Simone de Beauvoir termed immanence and trandscendence in *The Second Sex* nine years after Goldman's death in 1940, was central to her anarchist theory.[63] Historically, desire was a feminine trait, but Emma Goldman speaks universally in terms of desire, no matter the sex of the subject.[64] Woman, mothering, feeling, darkness, and desire were all qualities associated with nature and the "private." Man, thinking, knowledge, science, and light were all associated with culture and the "public." In terms of anarchist thought, the rejection of the public seems almost logical because the public is indirectly linked with the State and repression, and the emphasis of instinct over intellect, desire over reason is the only way to true emancipation—for all people, but especially for women.[65]

The best example of Goldman's rejecting the public and emphasizing the private is her writings on women's suffrage. Emma Goldman viewed suffrage as completely and utterly useless. The bourgeois women participating in suffrage marches and wearing suffragette sashes knew little, and cared little, she thought, about working-class women's issues. As an anarchist, Emma Goldman viewed the State, and all participation in it, as the root of economic oppression.

[62] Haaland, *Emma Goldman*, 13.
[63] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Vintage Books, 2009).
[64] Haaland, *Emma* Goldman, 53.
[65] Ibid, 37.

The prevailing feminist thought of the day saw the vote as a means of purification due to the mothering, pure nature of women. Emma Goldman argues against this:

> I see neither physical, psychological, nor mental reasons why woman should not have the equal right to vote with man. But that can not possibly blind me to the absurd notion that woman will accomplish that wherein man has failed. If she would not make things worse, she certainly could not make them better. To assume, therefore, that should would succeed in purifying something which is not susceptible of purification, is to credit her with supernatural powers. Since woman's greatest misfortune has been that she was looked upon as either angel or devil, her true salvation lies in being placed on earth; namely, in being considered human, and therefore subject to al human follies and mistakes.[66]

She presents two of her core beliefs in this argument: (a) that women are placed in opposed spheres from those of men, and (b) that the State is inherently evil and cannot be reformed or purified.

Women's sexual emancipation represents Emma Goldman's third belief core to her anarchist theory. Goldman viewed the suffrage movement as women's "external emancipation," which was essentially useless without a complementary internal emancipation.[67] If women did not seek an internal emancipation from sexual repression, "woman's future would be one in which her true nature was perverted by social custom and tradition…"[68] In "The Tragedy of Women's Emancipation," Goldman laments the inability of woman to become human without the expression of her true nature:

> Emancipation should make it possible for woman to be human in the truest sense. Everything within her that craves assertion and activity should reach its fullest expression; all artificial barriers should be broken, and the road towards greater freedom cleared of every trace of centuries of submission and slavery….Merely external emancipation has made of the modern woman an artificial being, who reminds one of the

[66] Emma Goldman, "Woman Suffrage," in *Red Emma Speaks*, Alix Kates Shulman, ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 193.
[67] Haaland, *Emma Goldman* 57.
[68] Ibid, 58.

> products of French arboriculture with its arabesque trees and shrubs…anything, except the forms which would be reached by the expression of her own inner qualities.[69]

Only through expression of this natural assertion can women truly become free. She later explains that because of "ethical and social conventions," women are prey to "internal tyrants" that stifle women's freedom.[70]

Whether or not all of these grand ideas rang true in her historical life is the job of Emma Goldman's biographers. Her public persona is what historians are charged with interpreting, and also what women—and men for that matter—who came into contact with her would have been forced to reckon with. Goldman visited Spain for the first time in September of 1936, just a couple of months after the war first broke out, at the peak of the social revolution.[71] She spent most of her time there with agents of the CNT, and only crossed paths with *Mujeres Libres* a few times, though she was very interested in their work. The emancipation of the Spanish woman became one of the reasons Emma Goldman involved herself in the civil war multiple times. In December of 1936 after she had returned to her London exile, she wrote to another anarchist:

> You must remember that the anti-Fascist war and the revolutionary reconstruction our Spanish comrades have before them are not all of their colossal task. There is the education and emancipation of woman, the new approach to the child, to common ordinary questions of health. All that has been sadly neglected by our comrades. Perhaps they had to concentrate all their energies on the economic struggle [so] they could not reach out into many directions. But that does not alter the low status of woman and the depressing ignorance of method of the care of woman and the child…Yes, I will go back to Spain.[72]

That same month, she wrote an impassioned appeal to the women of Spain in the *Mujeres Libres* newspaper. She implored women to recognize the desperation of their situation, writing, "woman

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[69] Emma Goldman, "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation," in *Red Emma Speaks*, Alix Kates Shulman, ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 159.
[70] Goldman, " The Tragedy of Women's Emancipation," 165.
[71] Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman in Exile: From the Russian Revolution to the Spanish Civil War* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 201.
[72] Emma Goldman, "Letter to Harry Kelly, December 5, 1936," in *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, ed. David Porter (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2006), 257.

seems still to be considered very much inferior to man, a mere sex-object for his gratification and child-bearing. This attitude would not be so surprising were it only to be found among the bourgeoisie. But, to find the same antediluvian conception among the workers, even among our comrades, is a very great shock indeed."[73] Even though her overall opinion of women's efforts to emancipate themselves was low, she championed the progress *Mujeres Libres* was attempting to make. In a letter to an anarchist friend in Chicago, she writes, "Our blessed comrades have been the pioneers of a great many things in Spain and they are also in their efforts to emancipate and educate the bulk of Spanish women."[74] Though *Mujeres Libres* affected some change in the Republican zones, the social revolution was not happening fast enough for Emma Goldman.

Perhaps Emma Goldman found frustration in the lack of agreement between Spanish anarchist women. Mary Nash touches on Spanish motherhood as the foundation for Spanish women's identity in the article "Un/Contested Identities: Motherhood, Sex Reform, and the Modernization of Gender Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Spain."[75] She points out that even though there were dissenting voices on Spanish woman's role as Mother, such as Lucia Sánchez Saornil, a founder of *Mujeres Libres*, who wrote, "by the theory of differentiation a woman is no more than a tyrannical womb which exercises obscure influences to the utmost folds of her brain," there were still influential women within the anarchist movement who acknowledged their cultural identity as mothers.[76] Such a woman, Federica Montseny, was one of the foremost

[73] Emma Goldman, "*Mujeres Libres*, December, 1936," in *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, ed. David Porter (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2006), 257.
[74] Emma Goldman, "Letter to Jeanne Levey, March 30, 1937," in *Vision on Fire: Emma Goldman on the Spanish Revolution*, ed. David Porter (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2006), 259.
[75] Mary Nash, "Un/Contested Identities: Motherhood, Sex Reform, and the Modernization of Gender Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Spain," in *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female Identity in Modern Spain* ed. Victoria Lorée Enders and Pamela Beth Radcliff (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 25.
[76] Lucia Sánchez Saornil, "*Solidaridad Obrera* 15, October 1935," in Mary Nash's "Un/Contested Identities: Motherhood, Sex Reform, and the Modernization of Gender Identity in Early Twentieth-Century Spain," in *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female Identity in Modern Spain* ed. Victoria Lorée Enders and Pamela Beth Radcliff (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 41.

leaders of the FAI during the early phase of the war. Nash points out that, "Although motherhood was reframed around a more political reading of social motherhood, which was linked with the notion of differential citizenship in the process of modernization of Spanish society, it still revolved around a traditional, biological notion of motherhood."[77] *Mujeres Libres*, like Emma Goldman, held to the belief that women were people, not just mothers.[78]

Emma Goldman, like most anarchist communists, questioned anarcho-syndicalism as being "anarchist enough". She saw the State as one of the most corrupting forces on the planet and longed for localized, communal life.[79] In Spain, with the Spanish Civil War in full swing, the women of *Mujeres Libres* came from the strong anarcho-syndicalist traditions of their country. The original foundation of *Mujeres Libres* was as expedient as possible during the early stages of the war. The founders of the organization hoped for an organization that would, "[attend to] dissatisfaction with male hostility and indifference to women within the anarchist movement."[80] Much of the activities and goals of *Mujeres Libres* were sidelined by lack of funding.[81] The money they did receive from the CNT and FAI went toward increased incorporation into the political movement and militancy among women, rather than women's empowerment.[82] In truth, *Mujeres Libres* envisioned a Spain much like Emma Goldman, but they lacked the organization and funding to achieve the broad-based reeducation and acculturation it would take to achieve the reordering of women's basic Spanish identity.

[77] Nash, "Un/Contested Identities," 41.
[78] Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain* 129.
[79] Haaland, *Emma Goldman*, 39.
[80] Nash, *Defying Male Civilization*, 81.
[81] Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain*, 116.
[82] Ibid.

One of *Mujeres Libres*'s most successful campaigns was against prostitution, an institution they saw as the direct link between capitalism and women's sexual subordination.[83] Emma Goldman expounded upon this link between capitalism and subordination in her article entitled, "The Traffic in Women." She writes, "What is really the cause of the trade in women? Not merely white women, but yellow and black women as well. Exploitation, of course; the merciless Moloch of capitalism that fattens on underpaid labor, thus driving thousands of women and girls into prostitution."[84] During the Spanish Revolution, *Mujeres Libres* focused on the economic exploitation aspect of prostitution and instead of making prostitutes feel worthless, they created rehabilitation programs to educate them.[85] *Mujeres Libres* trained these women to be productive workers in their reimagined anarchist society.[86]

It is a testament to the sheer wills of the women of *Mujeres Libres* that an independent women's organization could be created against the backdrop of the Spanish Civil War. The tensions between Emma Goldman and Spanish anarchist women were merely on an organizational level that neither party could find common ground on. There had always been tensions between anarchist communists and the anarcho-syndicalists. The feminist aspects of both Emma Goldman's and *Mujeres Libres*'s ideologies were similar in nature. Both parties wanted women to be economic, social, and political equals with men, a hallmark of anarchist thought. Goldman's unique sexually-focused anarchism was too much, too soon for the women of Spain who were dealing with so much more than just their own emancipation. The relatively chaotic atmosphere in Spain during 1936-1939 did not prove to be conducive to many lasting reforms especially at the conclusion of the war, which the anarchists ultimately lost, but it left a

[83] Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain*, 135.
[84] Emma Goldman, "The Traffic in Women," in *Red Emma Speaks*, Alix Kates Shulman, ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1972), 176.
[85] Ackelsberg, *Free Women of* Spain, 135.
[86] Beevor, *The Spanish Civil* War, 89.

legacy of women's empowerment and demonstrated women's agency. The fact that women could recognize their own oppression and do something about it in the 1930s was a true revolution in and of itself.

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