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Welcome, Readers -

We thank you so much for taking the time to read Humphrey Public Affairs Review, Volume 5, Issue 1 for the 2018-19 school year. We were fortunate for many reasons this year in our role as Co-Editors-in-Chief, most importantly for having the opportunity to read all the wonderful student submissions for publication.

This year offered students many exciting opportunities to apply the lessons they have learned in the classrooms into their communities. In the political world, the 2018 midterms allowed our budding policy professionals a chance to flex their organizing skills in a number of local election contests. A budget year at the statehouse and a new governor at the helm set off fruitful debates about the future of the state on a number of fronts: from healthcare, to transportation, to clean energy, to education -- and even some conversation rumblings of legalizing marijuana with interesting intersections of racial equity, criminal justice reform, culture, and economic development.

A number of these issues and more, we’re pleased to say, entered into our publication in the form of thoughtful and critically researched discourse from the writers. Students shed light on issues surrounding climate change, foreign policy, education, disease policy, military policy, to name a few. Depending on their focus, the writers chose to formulate detailed policy briefs, punchy op-eds or critical book reviews to most effectively get their point across. The breadth -- and depth -- of these submissions speak to the fact that Humphrey welcomes interdisciplinary learning and strives to offer a multitude of subject-area courses to feed the passion of our students and complement our core policy coursework.

We would be remiss if we suggested this publication effort were a two-woman-show. Quite the contrary. In the fall we worked with a dedicated staff of student editors who submitted their own pieces and were on the ground working on external submissions to make them shine for publication. And writers who submitted work engaged thoughtfully in the iterative, comprehensive editing process.

We do hope you get as much enjoyment as we have in reading the following works. We are proud to present this to you as a testament to Humphrey’s student engagement.

Warmly,

Carissa Kemp and Hannah Rank
Editors-In-Chief of Humphrey Public Affairs Review
In her book *Love, Money, and HIV: Becoming a Modern African Woman in the Age of AIDS*, Sanyu Mojola examines disproportionately high rates of HIV amongst young women in sub-Saharan Africa through an ethnographic study of Luo women in Kenya. Mojola investigates this disparity by taking a life-course approach, which seeks to better understand the process of reaching adulthood. Consumption, understood as the buying of consumer goods, plays a central role in many of these processes. A key expression of this manifests itself in the attempt to satisfy beauty standards. In order to meet those standards, young women buy make up and trendy clothing; however, many must engage in transactional relationships to have the money to buy such goods. These relationships disproportionately expose young women to HIV. As such, by investigating the connection between HIV rates and the consumption practices of young women, Mojola highlights an important factor contributing to the high rates of HIV that they experience. However, the author could have bolstered her analysis by historically contextualizing consumption practices.

As noted, consumption figured heavily in young women’s transition to adulthood, and Mojola presents a convincing argument that it is a contributing factor to disproportionately high rates of HIV/AIDS in the demographic group. The consumption behaviors of these women reflect a desire to meet beauty standards; however, young women often do not have the money to buy things like clothing or make up. As a result, young women often engage in relationships with men who are able to give them money. The men in these relationships are often older, as older men are more likely to have enough money for transactional relationships. Unfortunately, older men exhibit high rates of HIV. Therefore, women who are in these relationships drastically increase their risk of contracting the virus. In this way, Mojola effectively connects consumption to higher HIV rates amongst young women. Without the resources to consume the products they desire, young women often navigate relationships with older men, which simultaneously satisfies their consumption behavior and disproportionately exposes them to HIV.

However, the author does not thoroughly deconstruct the historical roots of consumption beyond a discussion of the introduction of money during the colonial period. Consumption, particularly consumption as a means of identity formation, should be understood as a legacy of the British colonial regime. The living and beauty standards that fuel young women’s consumption reflect a specific notion of modernity, which has its roots in British colonialism. In pursuit of fulfilling the image of a modern young women, women engage in transactional relationships to receive the money necessary to buy things like fashionable clothing. As these relationships heighten the risk of contracting HIV, a connection exists between colonial legacies of modernity, consumption, and high rates of HIV amongst young women. Furthermore, British colonialism shaped the context in which this consumption is happening. By disrupting local economies and establishing destructive power hierarchies, colonialists set the foundation for underdevelopment and contributed to the resource-poor environment these young women negotiate. The poverty that results from these conditions ultimately leads many young women to have transactional relationships to meet certain needs. In other words, British colonialism contributed to the poor contemporary economic conditions that encourage high-risk transactional relationships. While Mojola expertly charts the relationship between consumption and HIV rates amongst women, she could have added a layer of depth to her analysis by further investigating how colonial history shapes that relationship.

Mojola’s study offers a number of important insights, with the connection between consumption and HIV rates being a central one. For policy practitioners working in this field, such a finding is crucial. Having a more nuanced understanding of these disproportionately high HIV rates will allow policymakers to respond with similarly nuanced approaches.

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1For more information on colonialism and underdevelopment, see Leys (1975) or Fahnbulleh (2007)

Reference


Indicators as Political Creations: *The Seductions of Quantification*


By Alyce Eaton

*The Seductions of Quantification: Measuring Human Rights, Gender Violence, and Sex Trafficking*, published in 2016, is a study of indicators. The central argument in the book is that policymakers present numerical “indicators” as unbiased, while in fact they are flawed composites built through political processes. Th author, Sally Engle Merry, is a Professor of Anthropology at New York University and has edited multiple volumes related to the power that indicators wield in today’s “indicator culture.”

An “indicator” is any man-made attempt to quantify a social phenomenon, generally for decision-making purposes. Indicators have come into power in the nonprofit sector as a result of sectoral professionalization and the corresponding rise of technical, quantitative strategies to consider program impact (Chambers, 1997). Merry, on the other hand, proposes the view of indicators as products of negotiation processes. She shares examples of such processes based on her observations of the United Nations Statistical Commission and interviews with other important players. In the book, she walks readers through the “genealogical” development of three types of indicators: those measuring violence against women, trafficking in persons, and human rights. These examples illuminate Merry’s conceptual gripes by showcasing factors that she identifies as leading to indicators that poorly reflect reality. Two of the most common mistakes in indicator construction are overusing proxies or building indicators in just one context when they are intended to be used across many.

Overall, Merry’s thesis that indicators are flawed attempts to measure the unmeasurable is convincing. Her stories of how particular indicators were developed prove that once a decision is made to measure a certain phenomenon, the resulting indicators are not simply apparent or clear-cut, but rather require their own negotiation. I find the most intriguing and novel part of Merry’s argument to be that indicators necessarily embody theories about how the world works. For example, Merry illustrates how experts with varied backgrounds in gender equality, human rights, or criminal justice work approached the creation of gender-based violence indicators differentially. Their proposed indicators, unsurprisingly, reflected their differing worldviews. I also appreciated that beyond simply diagnosing issues in the indicator space, Merry provided recommendations on how indicators can be created and used more effectively. These included relying more on counts and ratios than on less transparent composites and better communicating the flaws of indicators. These suggestions would leave more interpretive work to the audience, rather than obscuring it within the indicator.

No matter their flaws, indicators are now ubiquitous, so it is integral to understand that they are political creatures that must be examined carefully before use. I would thus recommend at least one of the chronologies in Merry’s book to students beginning graduate studies in international development or human rights. Ideally, this crash course in indicators would imprint Merry’s key point that, “in the end, those who create indicators aspire to measure the world but, in practice, create the world they are measuring” (p. 21).

References:

In the early 2000s, Carnegie Mellon University researchers Deborah Small and George Loewenstein developed the identifiable-victim effect, which posits: “Specific victims of misfortune often draw extraordinary attention and resources. But, it is often difficult to draw attention to, or raise money for, interventions that would prevent people from becoming victims in the first place.” Introduced halfway through Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World, this framework illustrates the problem-solving mindset of many business leaders and public servants – including a former president – author Anand Giridharadas profiles throughout the book. It offers a theory as to why Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is willing to give $2 billion to fight homelessness, but resists employee efforts to unionize at every turn. Or why people help raise thousands of dollars on GoFundMe pages to cover medical costs, but the idea of funding health insurance for all Americans is a non-starter for a sizeable contingent of citizens and politicians. This is problem-solving designed to maintain the status quo while giving the appearance of the system “working.”

Giridharadas coins the phrase “MarketWorld” to describe this system. In MarketWorld, giving a viral TED talk is viewed as a more effective and desirable way to effect change than attending a public meeting of your local government. MarketWorld exists to satisfy the overlapping part of a Venn diagram between “giving back” and “not taking less.” This is not to say that MarketWorld believes there aren’t social problems worth addressing. But if issues are addressed, members of MarketWorld shouldn’t be implicated as a root cause, and they should participate in setting the terms of the solutions. In Chapter 2, Emmett Carson, who runs the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, sums up the thought process of leaders of MarketWorld: “If the view is I took it from you, versus you gave it, it changes the entire dynamics of the conversation.”

Giridharadas traces the historical context for his MarketWorld framework back to the late 1800s. Andrew Carnegie, in his 1889 essay, “Wealth”, offered a similar version of our present-day MarketWorld: “Individualism will continue, but the millionaire will be but a trustee for the poor; entrusted for a season with a great part of the increased wealth of the community, but administering it for the community far better than it could or would have done for itself.”

This idea – that all problems can be solved by letting the rich spend money on them – is highlighted throughout the book. Giridharadas critiques the ideology at times with scathing turns of phrase, as when he gave his review of a panel discussing the role of girls and women in sustainable development: “Much like the panel on globalism and its haters, it was a panel that could be counted on to provide the right amount of stimulation while worrying absolutely no one.”

The philanthropists and business leaders highlighted throughout the book propose a variety of solutions to policy problems around the world. A role for government is absent from the majority of these proposals. This exclusion is a feature, not a bug. And one imagines if there were to be a loud voice objecting to this philosophy, it would come from a former president. However, both in interviews with President Bill Clinton and reporting from a Clinton Foundation global summit, Giridharadas finds a different tone. President Clinton now proclaims that solutions involving private actors “is all that does work in the modern world.” While striking, when one considers his declaration in 1996 that “the era of big government is over,” it is easier to imagine that this thought has been germinating for some time.
With MarketWorld the seemingly dominant societal ideology and the author strongly against it, one might expect Giridharadas to cover alternatives throughout the book. Unfortunately, solutions are not covered with nearly the depth at which the author describes the problems. To the question “Where do we go from here?” Giridharadas simply answers: “Somewhere other than where we have been going, led by people other than the people who have been leading us.” Not exactly bumper sticker material.

The author also highlights the role of government, along with the inability of people who believe in it to convey their confidence. He quotes Jacob Hacker, a Yale political scientist, who contends that, “many progressives still believe in a role for government that is pretty fundamental, but they have lost their faith in the capacity to achieve it, and they’ve in many cases lost the language for talking about it.”

These ideas are important to consider as policy students. If you believe in policies that do more to tax wealthy individuals and corporations, this book will help you better understand one of the reasons the wealthy believe they are better stewards of their money than the government. If you believe in the role of foundations and private philanthropy to solve social problems, this book explores some of the blind spots you may have to the consequences of that form of problem solving. No matter where you fall on the spectrum of belief in private wealth driving in social change, *Winners Take All* will leave you with a worthwhile viewpoint to consider.
Mississippi Charter Schools

By Katherine Raths

Introduction

Discrimination against African-American students in Mississippi public schools has historical, social, and political roots. Historically, neither the Mississippi judicial system nor its legislature has provided relief or remedy for the continued discrimination. And after more than 100 years of harsh and continued discrimination against African-American public school children, no apparent solution has emerged. Given this political and economic impasse, the most workable solution to rectify the discrimination and de facto segregation rests with a robust charter school alternative for students in failing public schools.

First, this paper examines historically how the disparity between educating African-American and white children occurred and continues today. Second, it highlights data that shows a disparity in educational outcomes for white children and African-American children and how the Mississippi legislature has repeatedly failed to address the current discrimination and segregation. Next, it describes how different lawsuits highlight educational disparities. Given these historical implications, this paper evaluates the recent 2013 Mississippi Charter School Act and recommends that, due to the lack of oversight and follow-through in Mississippi’s executive, legislative, and judicial systems, more high-quality charter schools enter the educational landscape.

Historical Legacy of Public Education in Mississippi

For the last 200 years, public education in Mississippi has lagged behind the majority of other states in the country. Its system, intentionally designed to serve both African-American and white students during Reconstruction, devolved into a separate and unequal system and has since failed to adequately educate its African-American students.

After the Civil War, Mississippi modeled its state education clause after Massachusetts’s, one of the strongest in the nation. In 1870, the United States federal government, anticipating that southern states would return to their antebellum systems of government, passed the Readmission Act. The Readmission Act allowed Mississippi to re-enter the Union, and required that state ratify the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments which provided both legal and civil protections to former slaves. Initially, Congress intended to protect the recently freed slaves and provide them with the right to publicly engage in civic society. Mississippi’s new state constitution gave African-Americans in Mississippi the right to an education, thus allowing them to participate actively in civic engagement.

The chart below traces the changes in Mississippi’s education clause, as segregationists intentionally weakened the state’s role in public education for children. From 1868 to 1987, Mississippi gradually watered down the education clause, from a strong legislative position during Reconstruction, through segregated Jim Crow, to 1987 with its currently used weakened form.
By 1987, unequal public education legacy and years of neglect in the African-American schools fostered a fundamentally divided system. Mississippi’s 1987 education clause provides no obligations that the legislature must follow and, as a result, provides little opportunity for judicial remedy.

Current Evidence of Discrimination

Mississippi continues to ignore the historical implications of segregation and, as a result of that inequity, school districts that serve primarily white students and districts that serve African-American students show stark differences in educational outcomes. School achievement data demonstrates that public education repeatedly fails its African-American students. Mississippi public schools have changed their testing methods three times in four years. As a result, comparing student data between districts is complicated. Yet, the Mississippi Department of Education releases their accountability information yearly and assigns a performance rating of A, B, C, D, and F for every school and district. In the 2015-2016 academic year, 14 schools received an “A” as their official district grade. The school district, official state grade, graduation rate, and demographic breakdown are listed in Appendix A. Based on the reported school demographics, 13 out of the 14 schools primarily served white students. Of all of the school districts that received an A, only one school district, Clinton Public School District, serves a smaller percentage of white students than African-American students.

On the other hand, Appendix B shows the lowest performing districts that received an “F.” In contrast to the higher performing “A” districts, every single “F” district served a majority of African-American students. Furthermore, most of these school districts are located in rural areas. Yet, as found by Mannie (2017), “half of all black students in Mississippi attended school in a district rated D or F. 86 percent of the students in those districts were black.

1 These tables do not include percentages that are less than 5%. As a result, the total does not add up to 100%.
2 See Technical Appendix C.
In districts rated F, more than 95 percent of the student population was black” (para. 1). The historical repercussions of segregation and discrimination against African-Americans remain, as the state continually fails its African-American students in public schools.

**Attempted Legislative Remedies**

In an attempt to adequately fund all school districts in Mississippi, in 1997 the Legislature passed the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) to address the inequity among school districts and the achievement gaps that persisted throughout the state. The MAEP guaranteed that school districts with low tax bases would have supplemental state funding to address the inequitable system that persisted, wherein higher-income communities could better supplement the funding from the state. According to its website, the MAEP is “a promise by legislators to provide teachers and schools the resources necessary to bring students up to the standards required by the [state] accountability system” (“History of the MAEP”, para. 6, n.d.).

Mississippi implemented accountability standards based on both growth and improvement that schools must achieve each year. Since 1997, however, the MAEP has been funded only two times in 18 years and as a result, the lack of funding has left many schools in low-income areas with high African-American demographics drastically underfunded with only the minimal state contribution.

**Attempted Judicial Remedies**

**a. Clarksdale Municipal School District et al. v. Mississippi Lawsuit:** This lawsuit challenged the inadequate funding for schools, but the Mississippi Supreme Court held that no judicial recourse exists to force the legislature to act upon its own financing mandate. Twenty-one Mississippi public school districts, many from rural Mississippi districts, came together and the *Clarksdale Municipal School District et al. v. Mississippi* (2017) lawsuit claimed that the Mississippi’s Legislature inadequately funded public education. The schools wanted the judiciary to enforce Mississippi Code Section 37-151-5, which mandated the legislature to fully fund the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP). The schools requested more than $235 million in state funds, which is the difference between what they received in state funds and what they claim that they should have received if the legislature had fully funded the MAEP. In the conclusion of the *Clarksdale Municipal School District et. al v. the State of Mississippi* (2017), the court held that:

> [B]ecause Section 37-151-106 does not obligate the Governor to sign a bill fully funding the MAEP, the statute cannot be construed as mandatory. Additionally, because the Governor is not obligated to sign any bill fully funding MAEP, the Districts have not shown any injury, as they cannot show that, even had the Legislature passed a bill fully funding MAEP, that bill would have become law (para. 24).

Legislators thus have no pressure to adequately fund schools and continue to underfund public schools that do not provide an adequate education to their students. According to Sanford Johnson, the executive director of Mississippi’s leading policy organization, Education First, “the legislature has always been responsible for funding schools, but ultimately, legislators have determined that there is no political consequence to underfunding public schools” (personal communication, November 8, 2017).

**b. Indigo Williams v. Governor Bryant Lawsuit:** This lawsuit claims that Mississippi repeatedly violated the United States Readmission Act, perpetuating an educational system that disproportionately harmed African-American students. On May 23, 2017, four mothers on behalf of their children, along with the Southern Poverty Law Center, sued the state of Mississippi under a federal lawsuit, claiming that Mississippi is in violation of the Readmission Act. The *Indigo Williams v. Governor Bryant* (2017) complaint alleges that during the 1890 Constitutional Convention, the Mississippi Legislature created a “legal framework for state-sanctioned white supremacy” that has lingered into present-day (p. 17).

While the state did make some attempts to equitably fund schools with the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP), the MAEP has failed and the achievement gap primarily affects African American students. Most recently, Governor Phil Bryant ordered three additional cuts to MAEP in April 2016, February 2017, and March 2017. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center’s SPLC lawsuit (2017), for student bodies that serve at least 70% African-American students, the average accountability rating is a D while for schools that serve 70% white students, the average accountability rating is a B.
By “amending or changing the Mississippi Constitution’s education clause in violation of the Readmission Act,” the complaint in *Indigo Williams v. Governor Bryant* (2017) argues that

by denying the Plaintiffs’ children the ‘school rights’ that Congress intended to preserve through the Readmission Act, the Defendants have caused injuries to the Plaintiff’s children…[assuring] that the trajectories of the Plaintiffs’ children’s lives will continue the cycle of multi-generational poverty that has afflicted Black communities for decades” (p. 36, 39).

Not only is the state’s violation of the Readmission Act unconstitutional under federal law, but also the current education system continues to adversely affect the African-American population in Mississippi.

*c. School Choice:* Each of the mothers in *Indigo Williams v. Governor Bryant* (2017) sends their children to a school in a failing district. The lack of school options in their neighborhoods prevents them from choosing a different school. In rural regions, such as Yazoo County, parents do not have other choices. According to Will Bardwell, an attorney at the Southern Poverty Law Center Jackson office, claims in *Indigo Williams v. Governor Bryant* (2017), “Mississippi is failing its most vulnerable children – those living in the shadow of a Jim Crow system that deliberately undermined education rights in the name of white supremacy. The state’s education system is shamefully inequitable and anything but uniform” (para. 3). Even if parents want to move their children to a better school, they cannot afford the higher property values in another district and thus have no other options.

*Indigo Williams v. Governor Bryant* (2017) seeks declaratory judgement that “Section 201 of the Mississippi Constitution is in violation of the Readmission that; that the 1960, 1934, and 1890 versions of Section 201 were void ab initio; and that the guarantees of Article VIII, Section 1 of the Constitution of 1868 remain legally binding upon the Defendant” (“The Claim for Declaratory Judgement”, para. 10). While this lawsuit could technically provide all children in Mississippi the right to a “uniform system of public schools,” there is no discussion of how to undo 200 years of mistreatment toward African-American students.

**Charter School Priority in Rural Mississippi**

The attempted legislative and judiciary actions have provided no realistic implementation methods to generate change in Mississippi public school districts. Charter schools, therefore, allow for an alternative way to view public education.

*a. The Mississippi Charter School Act of 2013:* Mississippi’s initiative in passing the *Charter School Act* (2013) allows for innovative school improvement for all children in Mississippi. While this act has several goals, two of the most important aim to a) “improve student learning by creating high-quality schools with high standards for student performance” and b) “to close achievement gaps between high-performing and low-performing groups of public-school students.”

Importantly, the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board carefully evaluates charter school applications and oversees charter school compliance. The *Mississippi Charter Schools Act* (2013) prioritizes charter school development in districts that are ranked “D” or “F” by the Mississippi Department of Education, the majority of which serve African-American children in districts that provide little school choice to families while requiring the community majority in districts ranked A, B, or C. It is thus significantly easier to open a charter school in a failing district.

As a result of the stringent authorizing board, only four charter schools have been authorized since 2013, three of which are in the capital city, Jackson. One school, Clarksdale Collegiate, has been accepted by the chartering board and opened in Clarksdale, a rural town in the Mississippi Delta, in 2018.

*b. Rural Priority in Mississippi:* Mississippi should work to improve its low-income urban school districts, but given the current situation, it should focus its efforts on the rural public-school districts. Half of Mississippi’s public schools are located in rural areas and 43.7% of K-12 students attend schools in rural areas. According to Showalter, Klein, Johnson, and Hartman (2017), Mississippi’s rural regions “include the highest rates of students of color and the nation’s second-highest rate from low-income families (70.9%)” (p. 2). Moreover, rural districts pay less than $4,700 per student, and Mississippi has the thirteenth lowest spending for educators’ salaries...It has one of the lowest rural graduation rates., and its rural regions perform most poorly on the NAEP [National Assessment of Education Progress] test” (Showalter, Klein, Johnson, and Hartman, 2017, p. 2-3).
Charter schools provide an alternative method to equitably educate children, the vast majority of whom are underserved, particularly in those rural areas. Charter schools provide communities in failing districts the ability to choose where to send their children to school. Now, families do not have any public school options besides the traditional, often failing, community schools. Rural public school districts serve primarily African-American students, given the white flight into private academies during forced integration in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The Mississippi Charter Schools (2013) provides Mississippi public school students, particularly those in rural areas, school choice.

VII. Conclusion

Mississippi’s history of underserving its African-American students is traced through history, the state legislature, and the judiciary. The historical consequences of an unequal education system resulted in a current education system that discriminates unfairly against school districts with a majority of African-American students. Neither the legislature nor the judiciary has provided remedies to eliminate the continued disparity. Thus, charter schools have emerged as an alternative to the low-performing school districts. By prioritizing high-quality and innovative rural charter schools that partner with local school districts, Mississippi’s historically underserved students will have the choice to participate in an improved education system. For decades, Mississippi has not equitably invested in all of its students. Now, Mississippi leaders have the opportunity to move in the right direction and change the course for African-American students in the public school system.

Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Name</th>
<th>2016 Official Grade</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
<th>% African-American</th>
<th>% White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Multiracial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oxford School District</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>88.6</td>
<td>35.56</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Long Beach School District</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>93.5</td>
<td>17.08</td>
<td>70.29</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>29.76</td>
<td>66.33</td>
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<td>13.63</td>
<td>76.21</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Jackson County School District</td>
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<td>88.5</td>
<td>11.37</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Petal School District</td>
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<td>17.29</td>
<td>74.56</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>21.59</td>
<td>76.25</td>
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<td>89.8</td>
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<td>52.85</td>
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</table>
## Appendix B

<table>
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<th>District Name</th>
<th>2016 Official Grade</th>
<th>Graduation Rate</th>
<th>% African-American</th>
<th>% White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Multiracial</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>F</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>98.54</td>
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<td>Natchez-Adams School District</td>
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Opportunities Under ESSA: Time for Minnesota to Improve Its State Assessment System

By Krista Kaput

Every fall, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) releases the reading and math results of the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCAs), the state’s standardized test that measures student proficiency in those subjects and that is also used for school accountability. For the 2017-18 academic year, 57.7 percent of students overall were proficient in math and 60.4 percent were proficient in reading (Minnesota Report Card 2018). However, during the 2014-15 academic year, 60.6 percent of students overall were proficient in math and 59.8 percent were proficient in reading (Minnesota Report Card 2018). What does this test score data tell us? Are more or less students proficient in reading and mathematics?

If you had a hard time answering or were unable to answer those questions, don’t worry, you’re not alone. A March 2017 report from the Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) on Student Standardized Testing revealed that based on survey data, almost half of Minnesota’s teachers and administrators said that they did not feel prepared to analyze MDE’s student growth data (OLA 2017). Even more indicated that they did not feel prepared to analyze student progress scores that are based on college and career readiness (OLA 2018). Additionally, 20 percent of principals and more than 35 percent of teachers said they do not feel prepared to interpret MCA scores overall (OLA 2018). The report also found:

• The work schools do to administer the MCAs is “onerous and out of proportion to the usefulness of the test scores” (OLA 2018, Page 76).
• Students, and in particular high school students, have little motivation to do well on the MCAs because they are not relevant and there are no stakes for them.
• MCA score data are not useful for teachers and administrators because they arrive too late in the year.
• A majority of teachers and principals find their locally adopted assessments, rather than the MCAs, to be “very useful” in measuring an individual student’s progress, evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum, improving instruction, and informing families about students’ academic progress.
• Some principals and charter school directors used terms like “pointless,” “unfair,” “ineffective,” “a joke,” “obsolete,” “waste of time,” and “massively inaccurate” to describe the MCAs (OLA 2017).

Assessment Requirements Under NCLB and ESSA

The usefulness and validity of standardized assessments has been heavily debated since President Bush signed No Child Left Behind (NCLB) into law in 2002. With the stroke of his pen, President George W. Bush changed the way assessment is done in public education. He did this by instituting a requirement that all states test students in reading and math in grades 3-8 and once in high school and then report those student results—overall and for particular “subgroups”—for accountability purposes (US Department of Education 2002).

The intent of NCLB and its testing requirements was admirable—to close student achievement gaps by providing all children with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high-quality education. However, the emphasis on assessments for accountability has had several unintended consequences, like the narrowing of curricula and cheating to inflate scores (Amrein and Berliner 2003). Research has also shown that standardized, multiple-choice assessments can negatively impact student motivation and learning, and often does not accurately reflect a student’s performance in the real world (Stecher 2010).

Public attitudes reflect this research. According to the 2017 Phi Delta Kappa (PDK) International PDK Poll on Public Attitudes, only 42 percent of adults think that performance on standardized tests are a highly important indicator of the quality of a school (PDK 2017). Furthermore, in recent years there has been a lot of pushback from teachers, families,
organizations, and students regarding the usefulness of standardized, multiple-choice assessments. This is evident in the higher opt-out rates—students who chose not to take the state standardized assessment—in Minnesota, New York, New Jersey, Colorado, Washington state, Oregon, Illinois, and New Mexico (The Washington Post 2015).

Some of these unintended consequences were addressed in 2015, when President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) into law, which effectively replaced NCLB. Even though ESSA retained NCLB’s student testing requirements, it did create opportunities for states to have greater autonomy and flexibility in creating and implementing more useful and relevant assessments.

To be clear, there is value in standardized assessments. However, in order to increase the value they have for students, families, and educators, Minnesota should take advantage of the assessment flexibilities in ESSA in order to create reading and math standardized assessments that are more useful and relevant for educators, families, and students. To that end, this report provides an overview of ESSA’s assessment opportunities—innovative assessment pilot, interim assessments, nationally recognized assessments—along with descriptions of how states have taken advantage of them. This report also provides recommendations for MDE to consider.

**ESSA Opportunity 1: Innovative Assessment Pilot**

When ESSA was passed in 2015, one of the most talked about components was the Innovative Assessment Pilot. Several states, including New York and California, originally expressed some interest, and Colorado even passed a law requiring the state education agency to seek the flexibility.

The Pilot specifically created an opportunity for up to seven states—or groups of no more than four states—to try new kinds of assessments in a select number of districts instead of the standardized, state assessment. Some of the Pilot requirements are:

- States must try out the new assessments with a broad cross-section of students
- Assessments must be comparable to other state tests
- Assessments must eventually be scaled statewide

As of December 2018, Secretary DeVos has approved two states—Louisiana and New Hampshire—to participate in the Pilot. Key features of Louisiana’s Pilot include:

- Streamlining state testing by combining English and social studies assessments.
- Measuring what students have learned via passages from books students have already read, rather than passages they have not read as part of the curriculum.
- Assessing students through several brief assessments throughout the year, instead of one longer assessment at the end of the year.
- Preserving local control as to which books and assessments their students will take (Louisiana Department of Education 2018).

While Louisiana will start their Pilot from scratch, New Hampshire will continue to build on the work they have been doing since 2015. In fact, the concept for the Pilot was inspired by the work that New Hampshire has been doing since 2015 with their Performance Assessment of Competency Education (PACE) accountability system, which they were able to do with flexibilities from their NCLB waiver.

Under New Hampshire’s PACE pilot, students only take the reading standardized assessment in 3rd and 8th grade, the mathematics assessment in 4th and 8th grade, and the SAT in 11th grade. In the other years, students take common PACE performance-based assessments, which range in topics from a “Speed Stacking Challenge,” where students connect real-world experiences to their math work with decimals, to first-person narrative journals, where students write about how their made-up character deals with social issues.
Early results from the PACE pilot are promising. In June 2017, Paul Leather, former New Hampshire Deputy Commissioner, came to Minnesota and spoke about the PACE pilot. He shared that grade 8 PACE students are outperforming their peers in reading and mathematics proficiency on the state Smarter Balanced tests (New Hampshire Department of Education 2017). PACE students with an individualized education plan (IEP) have higher proficiency rates than their non-PACE peers. Additionally, for grade 3 reading and grade 4 mathematics and reading, the percentage of students who are proficient is growing at a faster rate for the PACE students than for the non-PACE students.

Figure 1: Comparison of PACE and Smarter Balanced Mathematics Results for 2015 and 2016

On September 17, 2018, with five slots remaining, Secretary DeVos opened the second round of the Pilot. Georgia, Hawaii, Kansas, and South Carolina initially indicated they want to apply, but only Georgia and North Carolina ended up doing it.

ESSA Opportunity #2: Interim Assessments

Interim assessments are another flexibility allowed under ESSA. This creates the opportunity for states to use multiple assessments throughout an academic year, which will result in a single summative score, rather than merely using a single summative assessment at the end of the academic year. As an example, Dr. Stuart Kahl, founder and CEO of Measured Progress (2017), described, “...a state or consortium of states could be truly innovative by implementing a two-component assessment system consisting of, for example, curriculum-embedded performance assessments and a shortened end-of-year summative assessment” (page 2).

Interim assessments can be used for a variety of purposes, including “predicting a student’s ability to succeed on a large-scale summative assessment, evaluating a particular educational program or pedagogy, or diagnosing gaps in a student’s learning” (Perie, Marion, Gong, and Wurtzel 2007). They can also be useful for early warning and growth monitoring (Kahl 2017).

No states, however, have decided to use this flexibility yet. According to Kirsten Carr (2018), senior program director at the Council of Chief State School Officers, many states had spent most of their time drafting and submitting their accountability plans, leaving them with little room to try changing their assessments. Now that all of the accountability plans have been approved, states can turn their attention to considering implementing interim assessments.
Replacing State Assessment with Nationally Recognized Assessment

ESSA also creates the opportunity for states to allow individual districts to opt-out of their state’s high school standardized assessment and instead use a “nationally recognized” high school assessment, like the ACT or SAT. As shown in Table 1, 12 states were already using the SAT or ACT for accountability prior to the implementation of their ESSA accountability plans.

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Table 1: States using SAT or ACT for accountability prior to ESSA implementation

A potential benefit to using the ACT or SAT over the MCAs is the relevance factor. Because the ACT and SAT are college entrance examinations, students who want to attend college could find them more useful and relevant than the MCAs. And even though the MCAs can be used for Minnesota State universities and colleges, that feature is not relevant for a student who is planning on applying or attending a private Minnesota college or university, like St. Thomas or St. Olaf, or a college or university that is out-of-state.

Despite the benefits, some states are hesitant to this route because of comparability concerns. If a handful of districts are taking the ACT or SAT, and the others are using the MCAs, then the performance of those districts cannot be compared. There is also concern about whether the ACT or SAT sufficiently cover Minnesota’s standards.

Even with the concerns, a handful of states are moving forward with trying to use this flexibility. Currently, North Dakota is the only state that has received USDE approval and allows districts to use the ACT instead of its state assessment. Several states have had problems with getting USDE approval. Wisconsin, Wyoming, and Connecticut tried to get this flexibility, but were denied by USDE because of “insufficient alignment” with their state’s standards.

Oklahoma initially took another route and decided to end its required high school end-of-course assessments, and was going to allow districts to choose between the ACT and SAT. However, USDE said that, because of concerns with comparability, the state had to choose one assessment as its “default.” (Gewertz 2018, Page 2). Oklahoma chose the SAT.

Throughout 2017 and the first part of 2018, MDE hosted a working group to explore the possibility of using this flexibility. In the culminating report, MDE noted that the interest to adopt this flexibility came from stakeholders who had “a desire to increase student motivation and participation while also decreasing the total number of tests a high school student must take. Minnesota stakeholders have had several conversations about the current situation of student and parent opt-out which makes this flexibility more appealing” (MDE 2018, page 2). Minnesota is currently exploring this assessment flexibility for the ACT, but it is unclear whether or not progress has been made since the report was published in May 2018.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The testing flexibilities in ESSA provide MDE with an opportunity for districts and schools to provide their students and educators with assessments that are more relevant and useful. In order to do this, it is recommended that MDE do the following:
Recommendation #1: Considering the stakeholder feedback from the OLA and concerns around student opt-out rates, it is recommended that MDE alter the MCA assessments from a single summative assessment to interim assessments given throughout the year. The rationale is two-fold: it would provide useful information for educators, students, and families about the proficiency and growth of students, while also providing more relevance for students. If done well, interim assessments could be embedded into the curriculum in a more meaningful way so that students would not even know that they are taking a standardized assessment thus curtailing anxiety.

Recommendation #2: Rather than allow districts to use their discretion in whether to adopt the ACT or SAT, either of these assessments should become the standardized state assessment for high school. And even though MDE would have to work with the testing provider to ensure they aligned to state standards, adopting one of these assessments would cut down on testing time for students because they would not have to take the MCA and a college entrance exam, but rather would only have to take one. Additionally, with ninety-four percent of American public school students indicating they want to attend college (TNTP 2018), this would increase access to college by providing all students with an opportunity to take a college entrance exam for free and in a familiar setting.

There is value in standardized assessments. However, data from students, families, and educators indicates the MCAs are falling short. The testing flexibilities in ESSA present an opportunity for MDE to create an assessment system that is not only useful, but also wanted by stakeholders.

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Dear Economists – I want an apology!
If I can’t have that, at least give me pluralism.
By Andrew Butts

“The ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed, the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually slaves of some defunct economist.” — John Maynard Keynes

You learned it in kindergarten. When you make a mistake—when you hurt someone—you apologize.

In 2007, I was majoring in business. My father was still employed. The OECD had proclaimed, “Indeed, the current economic situation is in many ways better than what we have experienced in years.” Ben Bernanke, head of the Federal Reserve, reassured, “[d]espite the ongoing adjustments in the housing sector, overall economic prospects for households remain good. Household finances appear generally solid, and delinquency rates on most types of consumer loans and residential mortgages remain low.”

They weren’t alone. This was the consensus.

Then my father watched nearly a third of his 401K disappear. The mortgage on his recently purchased home went underwater. By 2009 he had lost his job and spent the next three years using what was left of his retirement and my college savings to keep the bills paid. Despite all this, we were lucky. The government gave me more college loans, and he hung on to the house.

During the late 2000s recession, one-quarter of American families lost three-quarters of their wealth. The situation was so dire that 4,750 additional Americans took their own lives (150% of the death toll of 9/11). For the former chair of the Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, he found “a flaw” and was “very distressed by that fact.”

In the 10 years since, I found a flaw too. Well, a few. I’ll save you the trouble of a decade of searching for the answers that still remain hidden, even at this esteemed institution.

In the 1800s, economics was known as ‘political economy.’ Grouped with the social sciences, it also took cues from the life sciences. At the turn of the century, Thorstein Veblen opined, “Why is Economics Not an Evolutionary Science?” He wrote this in response to a new breed of economists who grew envious of the success physics was enjoying using calculus. Nevertheless, Leon Walras arranged a mathematical coup with the introduction of General Equilibrium Theory and The Marginal Theory of Value. “Economics” was born. Unfortunately, a few simplifications were in order.

The supply and demand graphs that structure the entirety of introductory economics are the visual manifestation of what is known as “neoclassical” economics. Neoclassical economics has dominated economic thought since the early 1900s. Neoclassical economics is structured on three assumptions:

1. People have rational preferences between outcomes that can be identified and associated with values.
2. Individuals maximize utility and firms maximize profits.
3. People act independently on the basis of full and relevant information.

These are not my words. These are the words of E. Roy Weintraub, an economist, former president and distinguished fellow of the History of Economics Society.

Read them again: People act rationally. Individuals maximize utility. People act independently—on full and relevant information. A lot of things have changed since the early 1900s; these assumptions have not.

In 1953, Maurice Allais would overturn the first assumption with the Allais Paradox. In 1956 Herbert Simon would overturn the second assumption by introducing the concepts of “satisficing” and “bounded rationality.” In 1961, George Stigler cut down the third with the publication of “The Economics of Information.” All three won Nobel prizes. All three would be followed by over a dozen more Nobel prize winners whose work directly undermines these core assumptions. Three and a half economics courses in, none of the works of these
I’m a first-generation college student. I almost didn’t go to college. I remember telling my father, who dropped out of high school to support himself, that college seemed too expensive. He told me I should move out of the house if I felt that way. My father was good with money. I went into business. I wanted to be good with money too.

It was there I was taught that crashes do not exist in an efficient market, regulations reduce individual utility, and inequality is merely a consequence of human variation. There is no need for morality at the altar of neoclassicism; all preferences are accounted for. What you *receive*, is what you *deserve*.

It took a lot of time to scrub those lies from my brain, but pain is a potent antidote. A decade later in my poverty economics class, when the professor asked who felt like they were personally affected by the Great Recession, only two of us raised our hands. I’m still not sure if my fellow classmates were afflicted with timidity, forgetfulness, or the type of good fortune that enables one to make it to graduate school but, for me, the Great Recession is why I study policy communications now.

I don’t hate economics. I don’t even hate neoclassical theory. As George Box once remarked, “All models are wrong, but some are useful.” Economists took “useful” and turned it into fundamentalism. They effectively shut out all heterodox approaches from their departments, their journals, their classrooms, and their sources of funding. Despite this, economic exiles have found homes in many other fields, and have been hard at work weaving a tapestry of alternatives. I don’t hate economics, but I do hate the orthodoxy.

As a student who has been misled repeatedly, as a citizen who has been lied to and harmed by academic insularity, and as a policy communicator who is in love with all the wonderful things the field of economics could be, I implore economists —apologize— *please*. Only then can the healing begin.

Economists may still think economics is the best, but for the 40% of Americans who can’t cover a $400 emergency expense, a whole lot more than pride is at stake. Be honest about your mistakes. Be transparent about how you intend to change. Welcome the diversity (and history) of economic approaches into your classes, into your departments, into your research, into your policy recommendations, and into your public discourse. Fortunately there’s even a brand new pluralist textbook to help you.

And if you can’t do that, then step aside. The tighter you hold on to this “wonderland of your own creation,” the more dangerous and unpredictable our political climate will become. We already know using your models won’t allow us to address the United Nations’ sustainable development goals, nor stay within our planetary boundaries. You can’t even address the recent findings that across 6,700 empirical studies, the average statistical significance was 18%, nor that the Federal Reserve was only able to successfully replicate 22 out of 67 studies sampled from top journals. You had the last century. We need radical solutions now.
The word monopoly is evocative of two major things in American culture: an infamous, friendship-ending board game; and an economic concern of the past. Since the 1980s, American public opinion has ceased attacking concentrated corporate power. However, monopolies exist across diverse industries and are responsible for many of our societal and political ailments. Our economy is moving ineffably toward total consolidation, including:

- three pharmacy chains controlling 80% of the prescription market,
- four airlines controlling 80% of the airline industry,
- Amazon controls 50% of all dollars spent in online shopping,
- two companies controlling 72% of the beer market in America, and
- Google and Facebook controlling nearly 75% of digital advertising.

Is this consolidation inevitable? Examining the history of anti-monopoly policy in America, the answer is an emphatic “no.” With roots in our nation’s founding documents, juiced by turn-of-the-century Progressive movement, realized by the New Deal coalition, and dismantled by the Reagan-era conservative movement, monopolies and policies thwarting them represent an essential tension of our political economy. Due to inaction by U.S. regulators, antimonopoly advocates are undertaking the cause of fighting monopolies. Monopoly is not just a game. It is an unfortunate organizing principle of our economy.

The history of monopolies is an American tale of corporate greed, political opposition, and legislative change to protect our economy. This history began with roots in America’s founding documents and bloomed in response to the Gilded Age’s vast concentration of wealth during the early- to mid-20th century. As president, Woodrow Wilson did his part to curb the power of industry giants like Standard Oil and U.S. Steel by pushing for the Clayton Antitrust Act of 1914, the creation of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), and a more decentralized Federal Reserve system. Progenitors of this legislation knew that economic vitality was predicated on an innovation, which is why the Clayton Act stymied anti-competitive mergers and delivered enforcement power to the FTC and the Department of Justice. If these laws were enforced adequately today, the market power evident in Amazon’s acquisition of Whole Foods or Disney’s purchase of 20th-Century Fox would trigger greater argument over healthy markets.

The economic boom and subsequent Great Depression united disparate threads of the antimonopoly movement culminating in the presidential administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. FDR’s administration knew that regional monopolies threatened to balloon into national problems by dismantling existing monopolies. For instance, Dutch InBev acquired Anheuser-Busch creating a behemoth responsible for 28% of global beer sales known as the conglomerate AB-InBev.

Our monopoly-fighting muscle atrophied, however, and by the late 1970s monopoly regulation had eliminated the constituency that clamored for its existence. Robert Bork – the Chicago School of Economics champion, enforcer of Nixon’s “Saturday night massacre,” and failed Supreme Court Justice nominee – wrote in *The Antitrust Paradox* that, despite decades of precedent in antitrust legislation, “the only legitimate goal of antitrust was the maximization of consumer welfare.” Throughout the following six presidential administration the “consumer welfare standard” dominated
antitrust enforcement. Since then, two-thirds of corporate sectors have become more consolidated. In the past ten years, a new group of scholars have called for reinvigorating antitrust and taking on corporate consolidation.

This new group, sardonically denoted “hipster antitrust,” is a collection of lawyers, researchers, and activists arguing for the renewal of antitrust law. Lina Khan, a researcher prominently involved in this work made ripples with her landmark “Amazon’s Antitrust Paradox.” She proposes to shift antitrust policy’s purpose away from the “consumer welfare standard” to a better evaluation of market health, something championed by Senator and Democratic Presidential-hopeful Elizabeth Warren.

The final question is charting what the modern economy looks like without monopolies, which is being examined by Stacy Mitchell at the Institute for Local Self-Reliance and other local-first organizations. By arguing for innovative local policies to curb chains and reinvigorate the field hearings on competition, Mitchell details our next steps. These advocates are doing the work that federal agencies had previously done. In November 2018, the Open Markets Institute released a comprehensive report on America’s concentration crisis. It detailed the consolidation of diverse industries including cat food, social media, and washer/dryer manufacturing. Mitchell analyzes how Amazon captured the market on the public sector’s office supply contracting public organization office supply procurement. These and other elements of research point the course forward to breaking up our concentrated economy.

With numerous highly concentrated industries holding an iron-like grip on hiring and innovation in the economy, something will break. The reinvigoration of our antitrust laws, alongside a growing and powerful anti-monopoly popular movement, will lead to a more inclusive and equitable future. Innovators such as Khan and Mitchell (amongst countless others) are bringing awareness to a critical failure of our modern economy. We would do well to heed their warnings and engage in the movement ourselves.

*Full disclosure: I worked for the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, mentioned and cited in this article, from June 2015 to August 2018.*
Economic and Equitable Carbon Pollution Policies Urgently Needed in Minnesota

By Jacob Herbers

Increasingly, our Minnesota hometowns are experiencing many significant effects of climate change and pollution.

In August 2007, FEMA declared a disaster area as flash flooding struck southeast Minnesota. A state record 15 inches of rain fell in 24 hours, according to the National Weather Service. Seven died, and the rain significantly disrupted many lives, especially those already living in poverty. Hundreds of homes and businesses were destroyed, along with significant damage to roads, bridges, and utility infrastructure. Economic damages exceeded $200M.

In August 2018, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) issued a statewide air quality alert as wildfire smoke, industrial and vehicle emissions, and high temperatures caused significant ozone and particulate air pollution. They also declared that the health of thousands of Minnesotans was put at risk by the pollution. Those with breathing conditions, the elderly, and pregnant people were especially vulnerable.

Climate change is caused by greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the electricity, transportation, agricultural, industrial, and other sectors in Minnesota and around the world. The associated temperature increases, air pollution, affected waterways, and more extreme weather events all negatively affect everyday Minnesotans. Something significant needs to be done about this.

Americans are entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Those whose actions deny other citizens those rights should have to make up for it, by the principle of justice. For example, anyone who vandalizes public property should provide adequate compensation. The same logic should apply to Minnesota’s environment. Those who inflict pollution onto our common resources of air, water, land and climate must repay society for those damages.

Minnesota state legislation in 2007 established the Nation’s most aggressive Renewable Energy Standard, catalyzed energy efficiency, and set emissions reduction goals. However, the MPCA notes that the 2015 goal of 15% GHG emissions reductions below 2005 levels failed, and it will be difficult to meet the goal of a 30% reduction by 2025. Thus, Minnesota should retake its place as a national leader on environmental justice by enacting a fee on carbon pollution.

This would be a free-market mechanism to ensure that environmental externalities are financially accounted for, just like in any other part of the economy. Businesses and individuals would have the freedom to decide for themselves how to deal with a carbon fee, instead of just a government mandate. There are societal benefits regardless of how one chooses to manage their emissions.

The price of carbon pollution must be set high enough to induce impactful emissions reductions. The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) has already set Carbon Costs for utility infrastructure planning at up to $42.46 per ton of carbon dioxide-equivalent (CO₂-e) emissions. This was based on input from diverse stakeholders like utilities, environmentalists, businesses, and private citizens of Minnesota. The state government should adopt that value for the entire economy, indexed to inflation to retain long-term viability.

The National Survey on Energy and Environment found majority support for carbon tax policies, especially those that are revenue-neutral. Everyone would receive funds collected via the carbon fee. In addition to protecting the environment by motivating emissions reductions, funds from remaining emitters could be re-allocated to citizens affected by environmental damages. Those consumers then would have increased ability to stimulate Minnesota’s local economy. Another option would be to direct funds towards investments in green infrastructure and environmental projects throughout Minnesota.

British Columbia has had great success with a carbon fee policy. They were able to decouple economic growth from greenhouse gas emissions, reporting a 17% GDP increase while reducing CO₂ emissions by 5% over an eight-year period. The policy attained widespread praise, according to the Pembina Institute. In the U.S., California has reported success with Cap-and-Trade, a different type of free-market carbon pollution policy, and other states like Washington have considered implementing carbon fee policies.
A revenue-neutral carbon fee also has great potential to improve environmental and health equity in Minnesota. A University of Minnesota study found that low-income people of color are more likely to live near large industrial sites and congested highways that cause particulate and ozone air pollution. As mentioned, funds could be allocated towards those disadvantaged citizens, who bear the brunt of the environmental externalities. British Columbia implemented a Low-Income Climate Action fee credit as part of their revenue-neutral carbon fee program.

Technology has a big role to play in conjunction with implementation of effective policies. Emissions sensors on vehicle tailpipes, power plants, and other industrial sites are needed to ensure the validity of emissions reduction claims. Intricate software programs have also been developed to keep track of different types of emissions from diverse sources, and have been used by governments to implement policies.

With the technology in place, only political will is needed to improve the economy and the environment in an equitable way by enacting carbon pollution policies in Minnesota.
Minnesota can still protect its deer herd

By Nick Atherton

Each November, nearly half a million Minnesotans rise in the early morning hours and venture into frigid woods and fields. They wear orange and carry rifles, bows, and the odd camera. They are searching for whitetailed deer, the most sought-after game animal in North America. Though most hunters will not bring home their quarry, a lucky minority will be rewarded free-range protein that can feed a family for months. But now, along with unforgiving weather and the distinct possibility of failure, Minnesota hunters must contend with a new, existential threat to their way of life: the emergence of chronic wasting disease, or CWD.

CWD is a fatal, communicable brain disease afflicting cervids, the ecological family that includes deer, elk, and moose. Though CWD does not appear to have infected any animals outside of the cervid family, its ecological effects should be worrying enough even absent a risk to human health. CWD is now present in 24 U.S. states, and it shows little sign of slowing absent immediate intervention. Transmissibility, a lengthy incubation, and the idiosyncrasies of animal movement add up to a disease which can spread through a population without creating the appearance of an epidemic. Such was the case in Wisconsin, where in 2002 state wildlife officials counted their first three cases of CWD. By 2017, Wisconsin had reported 4,100 positives in white-tailed deer.

While Wisconsin officials struggled to contain the epidemic, Minnesotans were taking notice. In July 2018, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources published a 10-year deer management plan, which addressed among other issues the state’s strategy to combat a growing number of CWD cases along the Iowa border. In the plan, public officials call for a coordinated effort between researchers, hunters, and land owners to contribute to the goal of eliminating CWD in Minnesota.

Though ambitious and comprehensive, this new plan risks falling short if officials, hunters, and the general public are not willing to embrace potentially uncomfortable tactics: namely, reducing deer density to an acceptable level state-wide, and aggressively controlling the sources of the disease. Epidemic levels of CWD are made possible by deer density, and Minnesota’s deer management strategies have for years favored abundance and maturity. Though DNR officials have added new hunting seasons intended to reduce herd density in disease management areas, most white-tailed deer in Minnesota’s southern third are still protected by rules restricting harvest to older males. Eliminating restrictions would have the effect of lowering deer densities in the CWD outbreak area. Simultaneously, it would loosen protections on younger bucks, who are more likely both to be carriers of the disease and to wander far afield in search of suitable habitat.

Though reducing deer densities through liberalized hunting would certainly help slow CWD, the disease incubates and spreads in livestock populations of deer as well. Minnesota’s cervid farms, where deer and elk are raised in captivity for meat and medicinal products, have seen seven cases of CWD since 2002 – long before it was first detected in the state’s wild populations. The industry’s outsized role in incubating disease belies its marginal economic importance: cervid farms in Minnesota generated an estimated $17.2 million in 2011, less than 3.5% of the estimated $500 million in economic activity attributable to deer hunting. Escaped deer from captive facilities present a real threat to wild populations of hunting-industry favorite, white-tailed deer – particularly for rural areas, which disproportionally benefit from total dollars spent on outdoor recreation.

Minnesota’s newly-published deer plan names a goal of “collaborating with the Board of Animal Health [BAH] to limit the risk of disease spread from captive to wild deer.” This approach simply ingrains the status quo in which captive deer are regulated as an agricultural asset, outside of DNR jurisdiction. If policymakers in Minnesota are indeed serious about combating CWD, they should authorize the state to begin buyouts of deer farms, with the goal of eliminating the industry from Minnesota entirely. These buyouts could occur voluntarily, prior to an outbreak, or coercively, at farms that have failed to protect their livestock from CWD.

No matter which policies the state pursues, Minnesotans must face the fact that no state or province has yet been able to eradicate CWD within its borders. Endemic levels of CWD in neighboring Wisconsin, however, offer a clear indication of the disease’s ecological consequences if its presence is met with insufficient resolve. Indeed, there is evidence that the DNR’s swift initial response has been effective: no deer tested positive for CWD in 2017, and 2018 cases have remained in the single digits. Since that is likely to change in coming years, however, Minnesota should seize on this momentum and take the hard, but necessary steps to a CWD-free state.
THE GLOBAL THREAT OF ANTI-MICROBIAL DRUG RESISTANCE
By Noel Gordon Jr

Abstract
Absent quick and decisive policy intervention, increasing rates of global anti-microbial resistance (AMR) will eventually reduce the effectiveness of antibiotic medications worldwide. Left uninterrupted, this tragedy of the global commons will lead to increased illness, mortality and healthcare expenditure, as well as increased human and animal suffering. To combat this international public health crisis, the Trump Administration and the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee should work together to create a Global Treaty on AMR that requires each signatory to limit usage of antibiotics within its borders only to relatively serious cases. Insofar as the U.S. is concerned, the 116th Congress should correct inefficient use of antibiotics by raising taxes on domestic consumption. Such a move could subsidize the production of new, commercially viable medications, thus helping to ameliorate an already dire situation.

Introduction
Antimicrobial drugs are medications used to treat a range of infections caused by bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites. Ever since 1928, when Sir Alexander Fleming first discovered the curative effect of penicillin, antibiotics and other antimicrobial drugs have transformed modern medicine and saved millions of lives (Ventola, 2015), but not without significant costs.

Antibiotics usually work by entering a bacterium’s cell wall, destroying it, or disabling the cell’s ability to self-replicate. However, some bacteria grow more drug-resistant upon exposure to antibiotic medication as a result of natural selection. Natural selection is the process whereby organisms better adapted to their environment tend to survive and produce more offspring. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, bacterium grow resistant to antibiotics in at least three ways: by interacting with the medication in a way that neutralizes the effect, by pushing the medication back outside of its cell walls before the medication can do any harm, and by changing the cell’s outermost structure so that the medication cannot latch onto the bacterium in the first place (“Antibiotic Resistance Threats,” 2013). While drug resistance is a naturally-occurring phenomena that has happened to nearly every antibiotic medication developed over the last 50 years, epidemiological studies demonstrate a clear and causal relationship between antibiotic consumption and widespread dissemination of drug-resistant bacteria (“Antibiotic Resistance Threats,” 2013).

Many people are familiar with the myriad benefits of antibiotic medications, which have had a decidedly positive impact on all clinical areas that affect human health. In addition to keeping human beings healthier, antibiotics are also used in agriculture to prevent disease in animals. Antibiotics improve animal growth rates and feed efficiency, reduce mortality and morbidity in animals, and improve reproductive performance (Johnson, 2017). Even so, risk of drug resistance increases in all beings whenever “antibiotics are prescribed frequently, in low doses, over long periods of time” (Hojgard & Vaholm, 2010). Given the relative ease with which people, goods and services now move about the globe, new forms of drug-resistant bacteria are crossing international boundaries like never before (Hojgard & Vaholm, 2010). Public health officials in the U.S. have even described AMR as nightmare bacteria that pose “a catastrophic threat” to people in every country in every part of the world (“Antibiotic Resistance Threats,” 2013).

The significance of global AMR was described in pain-staking detail in a 2014 report released by the United Kingdom and the Wellcome Trust. Following 19 months of expert consultation and eight interim reports, researchers now argue that “10 million lives a year and a cumulative $100 trillion of economic output” could be lost by 2050 if we do not find workable solutions to combat the rise of global AMR (O’Neil, 2014).
The implications for the U.S. are clear from “Antibiotic Resistance Threats” (2013):

- At least two million Americans acquire serious bacterial infections that are resistant to one or more of the antibiotics designed to treat those infections.
- At least 23,000 Americans die each year as a direct result of antibiotic-resistant infections; thousands more die from related secondary or tertiary conditions.
- At least $20 billion in excess direct healthcare costs can be attributed to global AMR, with an additional $35 billion coming each year from lost wages and productivity.

Several major factors contribute to the problem of global AMR, including:

1. **The misuse and abuse of antibiotic medications.** As previously discussed, the sheer number of antibiotics used and abused in the U.S. is staggeringly high. One analysis of the IMS Health Midas database in 2010 revealed that 22 doses of antibiotics had been prescribed per person in the United States (Ventola, 2015).

2. **Inappropriate prescribing of antibiotics generally.** Incorrectly prescribed antibiotics are also a major problem, with some studies showing “treatment indication, choice of agent, or duration of antibiotic therapy” to be incorrect in 30 to 50% of cases (“Antibiotic Resistance in Minnesota,” 2013). Much of the problem stems from negligent healthcare provider behavior, which has in recent years prompted state and local health departments nationwide to embrace antimicrobial stewardship programs that “ensure each patient receives the right antibiotic at the right time at the right dose for the right duration” (“National Action Plan,” 2017).

3. **Extensive agricultural use of antibiotics.** The use of antibiotic medications in agriculture and aquaculture is vast, excessive and unnecessary (O’Neil, 2016). While treating livestock with antimicrobial drugs has been found to improve overall health and wellness, growing scientific evidence suggests AMR can be transferred from animals to humans through direct consumption of undercooked meat and the indirect handling of animals infected with drug-resistant bacteria (see fig. 1).

4. **Poor availability of new antibiotic medications.** Development of new antibiotic medications by the pharmaceutical industry has all but stopped in recent years because it is no longer profitable to produce these kinds of curative drugs. In 2017, only three of the 18 largest pharmaceutical companies remained in the field of antibiotics despite strong global demand (“Combatting Antibiotic Resistance,” 2017).

5. **Regulatory barriers** are the fifth and final factor contributing to global AMR. The wide variation in clinical trial requirements among countries have made it especially difficult for private firms to obtain governmental approval of new drugs. Nineteen new drug applications were approved for antimicrobial use between 1980 and 1984. Between 2010 and 2014, that number fell to six (“Combatting Antibiotic Resistance,” 2017).

**Status Quo**

Several researchers and infectious disease experts have characterized AMR as a tragedy of the global commons. This economic phenomenon occurs whenever “multiple individuals acting solely out of self-interest ultimately exhaust a limited shared resource” even though doing so may not be in their collective interest (O’Brien, 2017). In this case, the global commons is the microbial environment we all share, and our limited shared resource is microbial sensitivity to antibiotic drugs. By refusing to place limits on human and animal consumption of antibiotic medication writ large, governments around the world have allowed an inefficient allocation of microbial sensitivity to develop, wherein global demand for effective antibiotic medications now exceeds global supply (Hojgard & Vaholm, 2010). The only way to correct this market imbalance is through direct government intervention.

Fortunately, the international community’s appetite for combating global AMR has grown significantly in recent years because of increased attention paid to the issue by a range of influential stakeholder groups. Tackling antibiotic resistance has become a high priority for the World Health Organization, as evidenced by a high-level meeting that took place at United Nations (UN) Headquarters just two years ago (“Antibiotic Resistance,” 2013). Private industry firms have also signaled their support for coordinated collective action. In January 2016, more than 80 pharmaceutical companies joined together in calling on governments around the world to support “investment in the development of antibiotics, diagnostics, vaccines, and other products vital for the prevention and treatment of drug-resistant infections” (White, 2016).
Proposed Reform

Assuming, then, that antibiotic resistance is indeed a tragedy of the global commons as previously characterized, the Trump Administration and the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee should work together in 2019 to create a Global Treaty on AMR that requires signatories to limit usage of antibiotics within their borders to relatively serious cases. The purpose of the Treaty should be to create a more efficient allocation of antibiotic resources, wherein the global community of buyers, sellers and third-party observers is better off than they are now under the status quo. Unfortunately, while “all nations would benefit from a global reduction in the imprudent use of antimicrobial drugs,” no two nations would benefit in the same way, thus muddying prospects for a diplomatic solution based purely on incentives (Anomaly, 2010). Consider Anomaly (2010)’s helpful analogy comparing Iceland and Malaysia.

Whereas Iceland is a large sparsely populated county whose climate is not particularly hospitable to people or microbes, Malaysia’s climate foretells the opposite: a warm densely populated country whose people are prone to parasitic infections because of the weather. Given these superficial but important differences, Malaysia may be more inclined than Iceland to join a global campaign against global AMR even though people in both countries undoubtedly contribute to, and are undoubtedly harmed by, increasing rates of global anti-microbial resistance. Absent the creation of some superordinate government body that could coerce Iceland’s enthusiastic participation, one obvious alternative would be to form a Global Treaty on AMR that allows each participant to correct antibiotic market failure through command-and-control regulation or market-based alternatives (Anomaly, 2010). Whichever option a country selects, the most important aspect of any Global Treaty on AMR should not be the specific means by which a nation chooses to comply, but whether, in fact, they are through independent monitoring and verification.

To better address the inefficient allocation of antimicrobial resources within the U.S., the 116th Congress should raise taxes on domestic consumption of antibiotic medications like penicillin. Whether applied somewhere along the point of production or at the point of sale, the new tax would generate revenue that could then be used to subsidize the research and the development of new antibiotic treatment regimens. While pursuing this course of action would undoubtedly raise equity concerns about the potential impact of higher drug prices on lower-income Americans, immediate steps can and should be taken to mitigate this harm. Several options exist too, including the creation of antibiotic payment assistance programs like the ones used to reduce the cost of antiviral medications to treat HIV and Hepatitis.

In addition to the corrective taxes previously mentioned, the Trump Administration should work with global trade partners to resolve this issue by:

- Joining a global public awareness campaign to increase understanding of AMR among community stakeholders and to promote antimicrobial stewardship
- Raising hygiene and sanitation standards for those working in healthcare facilities and throughout the agricultural sector to prevent the onset of bacterial infection
- Limiting the use of certain last-line antibiotics among animal livestock to halt transmission of drug-resistant bacteria to human beings
- Requiring increased transparency among food producers to enable better-informed decision making among consumers
- Improving surveillance of AMR as well as rates of drug-resistant, bacterial infection
- Providing stronger financial incentives to better align public health needs with private commercial incentives

Anticipated Challenges

Experts put the total cost of tackling global AMR at $3 to $4 billion per year (Anomaly, 2010). While a relatively modest amount for fully industrialized nations, “countries with comparatively limited resources” may not be able to afford many of the technical inputs needed to reduce private consumption of antibiotic drugs in the first place (Anomaly, 2010). One example of a costly but essential access good needed to reduce global AMR is a nationwide surveillance system because such systems are needed to measure the number of drug-sensitive microbes in the environment (Anomaly, 2010). As with other global treaties, it seems inevitable that developed countries will need to provide financial aid and technical assistance to developing countries for this effort to be successful.
A second practical challenge to achieving a Global Treaty on AMR concerns stakeholder accountability, or the lack thereof. Free-ridership is a common problem in political economic situations like these, so any Global Treaty on AMR should provide enforcement tools that incentivize collective action and disincentive individual non-compliance. One option would be to “emphasize the losses that rogue states will incur to their own population by permitting the profligate use of antimicrobials” through the use of sanctions and multi-lateral trade restrictions (Anomaly, 2010). The Montreal Protocol used this approach with some success and offers an instructive model for how to share costs across multiple countries with competing priorities.

**Conclusion**

While U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly expressed skepticism toward the UN in general and international cooperative agreements like this one, increasing rates of global anti-microbial resistance present a historic opportunity for President Trump and other members of the Republican Party to secure a sorely-needed win on the global stage after being roundly criticized for America’s withdrawal from the Paris Accord. While there is some hope for a technological discovery that will help keep global catastrophe at bay, now is the time for nations around the world to coordinate their efforts under the auspices of a Global Treaty on AMR.

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**APPENDIX 1**

References


The Shortcomings of Countering Violent Extremism

By Evan Davis

In 2014, Abdifatah Ahmed’s name was thrust into national media coverage as the first Minnesotan to fight and die for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Disaffected and disillusioned, articles claimed, Ahmed left Minnesota and adopted an extremist ideology with an intent for violence. Ahmed and a number of other young Somali men’s decisions to join ISIS became the basis for a narrative in which particular Islamic ideologies instigated young Muslim men’s paths toward radicalization. This narrative gave rise to a series of policy initiatives in the United States collectively titled Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). The current implementation strategy of CVE programs intends to provide opportunities for Muslim-majority and immigrant communities. However, this strategy is driven by discriminatory targeting of Muslim-majority communities and reactionary security policy. On the contrary, a more meaningful engagement plan would originate from Muslim-majority and immigrant communities and include social and economic opportunities for underserved individuals.

In 2011, President Barack Obama created a task force to counter extremist organizations’ efforts to radicalize and recruit individuals in the U.S. The CVE task force advocated for interdepartmental collaboration and local community-based approaches. Minneapolis and St. Paul were selected as part of a pilot program in 2015 called Building Community Resilience, the U.S. Attorney General’s Office implementation strategy of CVE. The plan cites al-Shabaab and ISIS recruitment efforts of youth from the large Somali communities in Minnesota as rationale for CVE funding. CVE funding and the Building Community Resiliency plan, the U.S. Attorney General’s Office argues, will help disaffected Muslim youth find opportunities and engagement in U.S. institutions. Since its inception, however, this plan has created significant controversy amongst policy stakeholders.

A primary reason why CVE measures are ineffective is because they establish discriminatory policies targeted at Muslim-majority and immigrant communities. Because CVE is a more recent initiative in the United States, literature delving into the topic is limited. However, European scholars have considered issues around preventing extremism since the early 2000s. Though European and U.S. contexts are undoubtedly distinct, the comparison helps elicit some of the problems with the theoretical rationale for CVE programs. Britain, for instance, implemented similar policies titled “Preventing Violent Extremism,” often referred to as ‘Prevent,’ in 2004. Paul Thomas, professor of Youth and Policy at the University of Huddersfield, suggests that governments’ singular focus on Islamic communities as the objective of ‘Prevent’ initiatives overrides the goal of community cohesion. Mistrust of government institutions is already pervasive among many U.S. Muslims and Immigrants due to intelligence agency’s intrusions and surveillance of these communities. Community cohesion and resilience relies on programs that facilitate integration and economic opportunity rather than suspicion and derision. This singular focus creates a number of adverse effects that do not support the intended outcomes of Prevent or Countering Violent Extremism programs. A 2017 report by the Brennan Center for Justice expands this idea, challenging the assumption that Islam is the underlying cause of extremist ideology. This presumption serves to reinforce stereotypes about Islam as an inherently violent religion and culture. These stereotypes exacerbate existing animosity toward Muslim-majority communities. The resulting discrimination increases Muslim-majority communities’ mistrust of government institutions. Though Prevent and CVE programs attempt to integrate Muslim-majority communities, the implementation process runs contrary to their intended outcome. To illustrate this point, almost 50 Muslim organizations in Minnesota signed a published statement describing the CVE pilot program as “stigmatizing, divisive, and ineffective.” These organizations recognize that funding structures for CVE create an unhealthy competitive environment. The strategy pits Muslim organizations against each other instead of encouraging a collaborative, grass-roots policy formation process.
Furthermore, CVE programs inefficiently use public resources in an attempt to identify individuals at risk of radicalization. CVE presupposes the ability of the government to predict who will commit violent acts for ideological reasons. Peter R. Neumann, a German journalist and academic who is the founding director of the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, suggests that radicalization is neither clearly defined nor indicative of violent tendencies. Radicalization, he suggests, is rather a nuanced and complex process that happens because of many different factors. Government prevention programming, however, tends to focus on how cognitive radicalization leads to extremist behavior or violence. This manifests in prevention program funding coming through the Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and local public safety departments. If policymakers were truly concerned with building community resilience and helping immigrant communities, then funding would not be channeled through defense and security agencies.

Countering Violent Extremism policies do not appear to be diminishing in spite of evidence that they are ineffective means for stopping terrorist activities. Consequently, policymakers and researchers must remain vigilant as extremism and radicalization become increasingly politicized terms in national security discourse. Additionally, Muslim-majority and immigrant communities are demonstrably overrepresented in CVE strategy. Thus, policymakers hoping to address issues within Muslim-majority and immigrant communities will need to reconsider their rhetoric, funding mechanisms, and community engagement if they hope to accomplish their intended outcomes.

References


The United States Military in Stability and Reconstruction Operations: Some Historical Context
By Ashley Fischer

Introduction

Modern schools of thought claim the military’s role in recent nation building endeavors in Afghanistan and Iraq reflect a new and accelerating expansion of its traditional role into jobs meant for the State Department or United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Some scholars argue further that the military has usurped the stabilization and reconstruction missions that belonged to the State Department and USAID prior to 2001 (Dobbins, 2014). The argument is premised on the assumption that this is a new role for the United States military; that prior to 9/11 the military was solely responsible for the provision of security in nation building operations and the State Department and USAID handled “everything else.” This assertion is incongruent with the historical record.

While several academics and policy experts argue that, “many of the other non-security functions that have migrated from State and USAID to Defense should transition back to those civilian agencies” (Dobbins, 2014, p. 47), they forget to consider that the U.S. military has been primarily responsible for governance and civil services – including nation building and reconstruction efforts – dating back to the late nineteenth century. The most recent attempts at nation building in Afghanistan and Iraq are not new or unfamiliar roles for the military as some suggest, but in fact are in keeping with the historical precedent set in the Philippines, Dominican Republic, and several other overseas military operations.

This paper admittedly falls short in addressing the foundational colonialist issues that are pertinent to this debate, for example whether these policies are morally appropriate. Rather, the purpose of this paper is to examine the historical precedent behind the policies’ current implementation. This paper offers a counter point to the assertion that the U.S. military is completely inexperienced in the missions of reconstruction and nation building. From the earliest days of American expansionism, the military has taken a central role in reconstruction and nation building as the early examples of the Philippine Insurrection and military governorship in the Dominican Republic represent. These historical examples highlight the military’s role in stability, reconstruction, and nation building operations. If historical and current trends hold, the military will continue to play a vital role in stabilization, reconstruction, and nation building into the future.

Historical Context for the Military’s Role in Modern Stability and Reconstruction Operations

Contrary to the assertions of contemporary scholarship, the military’s role in nation building did not begin in Afghanistan and Iraq in the 2000s. Nor did it begin in Kosovo in the 1990s. Rather, the U.S. military has conducted these missions abroad repeatedly since at least 1898. Similar to its role in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. Army stepped in to fill a political vacuum and took control of the Philippines after the Spanish departed the islands following the Spanish-American War. The Marine Corps conducted a very similar mission in the Dominican Republic beginning in 1916. Both of these operations involved the sustained deployment of military forces to provide government services directly to local populations. While today’s popular opinion would assume the deployment of State Department Foreign Service Officers or U.S. Agency for International Development officials, the Foreign Service Officer Corps as we know it today and USAID did not exist until 1924 and 1961, respectively. As with today, the only agency immediately available for extended overseas deployment was the U.S. military.

The Philippines declared its independence from Spain in 1898 after two years of bloody revolution. However, the Spanish refused to recognize the declaration and that same year ceded the Philippines to the United States under the Treaty of Paris to end the Spanish-American War. After fighting and dying for their independence from the Spanish, the Filipinos were averse to continued outside interference. Filipino guerilla fighters resisted their new American occupiers and attacked both American soldiers and anyone seen as their collaborators.
The conflict digressed into what one observer called, “a harsh and philanthropic war” (Baker, 2003, p.2). Similarly, to today’s conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. Army simultaneously fought a bloody battle to quell the Filipino insurgency as well as provide humanitarian aid and assistance in an effort to establish order and stability for the Philippine Islands. Not only was the U.S. Army responsible for establishing and maintaining security, they were also expected to rebuild the local economy and government institutions. The American soldiers,

threw themselves into every sort of effort to improve life in the country they were occupying, building sewers, distributing food, vaccinating people against smallpox, and even reforming the Spanish judiciary by appointing Filipino judges. American soldiers started and taught in makeshift schools throughout the islands, bringing formal education to many rural areas for the first time (Baker, 2003, p. 1-2).

The Philippine Insurrection from 1898-1902 was not a major combat operation. Rather it was what the Defense Department would deem today a Stability Operation, “military and civilian activities conducted across the spectrum from peace to conflict to establish or maintain order in States and regions” (Department of Defense, 2005, p.2). Yet, as in Iraq and Afghanistan today, it was the U.S. military, not the State Department, that assumed responsibility for the mission and provided government administrative services directly to the Filipino people.

The Philippines was not the only country to find itself under U.S. military governance in the early 20th century. In 1914, in an attempt to subdue ongoing political turmoil in Santo Domingo (today known as the Dominican Republic), President Woodrow Wilson deployed the U.S. Navy and Marines to supervise presidential elections in the country. A wealthy strongman named Juan Isidro Jimenez was elected. In return for the U.S. government’s assistance in the election President Jimenez allowed the U.S. to establish a paramilitary police force to take control of his country. However, the Dominican Congress did not support this agreement and in 1916 began impeachment proceedings against him. Simultaneously, General Desiderio Arias, the War Minister, declared a revolt against President Jimenez. Wilson’s administration considered Jimenez “our man” (Boot, 2014, p. 168) and deployed Marines from Haiti to the Dominican Republic to intervene on his behalf. The Marines quickly ousted General Arias with minimal force, but President Jimenez had already resigned his post. On November 29, 1916, after years of political turmoil, Rear Admiral Harry S. Knapp declared himself governor of the U.S. military government of the Dominican Republic. The Marines took charge of several local government ministries, including: The Interior, War, and Police. Just as the Army did in the Philippines, the Marines turned to building roads, improving sanitation, updating hospitals and overhauling the tax system (Boot, 2014, p. 170). All these tasks were well outside the limited scope of security provision. Even as the United States entered World War I, which commanded the world’s attention, Marines remained behind to govern the Dominican Republic until 1922.

Many of the tasks the military has been most criticized for performing in Iraq and Afghanistan were the very same jobs they did throughout the campaigns in the Philippines and Dominican Republic. Reflective of the Army and Marine Corps’ earlier experiences, in Iraq and Afghanistan these military branches have rebuilt correctional facilities, and judicial systems; revived and helped build the private sector; developed representative governmental institutions; and rebuilt infrastructure in Iraq and Afghanistan (DODD 3000.05, 2005). Specific military projects included building police headquarters, hospitals, medical clinics, electrical power systems, and schools (SIGAR 16-22-IP, 2016). In addition to building the physical structures, the military also often found itself responsible for recruiting and training the professional staffs who worked in the buildings just as it had done in the Philippines and Dominican Republic.

The military governorships in the Philippines and Dominican Republic are only two examples of the persistent trend in American foreign policy leading up to efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The military has been consistently relied upon to oversee or directly deliver government administrative services in post conflict environments, also known as “stability operations” or “nation building.” The Marine Corps and the Army were called upon numerous times to, “manage the internal politics of nations” (Boot, 2014, p. 129), including Cuba, Panama, and Nicaragua between 1898 and 1914 during the Banana Wars (Boot, 2014). Perhaps the greatest example of the military’s role in nation building occurred after World War II with the Allied occupation and reconstruction of Japan, led by General Douglas MacArthur from 1945-1952.

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If history is our guide and current trends persist the U.S. military will continue to play a significant role in stabilization and reconstruction efforts in post conflict environments around the globe. Marks (2014, p. 239) said it best:

The wealth of the military services – in money, personnel, and equipment – stems of course from the undeniable resource requirements of war fighting. A number of other problems and challenges – such as natural disaster emergencies, post conflict reconstruction, and nation building – also require the extensive use of resources… That the military may not be the most appropriate organization to perform these tasks is irrelevant; they exist, are available, and can react quickly.

Because the Department of Defense did not formalize its guidance for stability operations into doctrine until 2005, in the DoD Directive On Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations, some believe stability operations are a new and unfamiliar mission for the Defense Department. However, based on its experiences in the late 19th and 20th centuries, the U.S. Marine Corps has maintained and updated a written record of lessons learned from stability operations since 1940. The U.S. Marine Corps Small Wars Manual provides direction to service members involved in small wars, defined as “operations under executive authority, wherein military force is combined with diplomatic pressure in the internal or external affairs of another state whose government is unstable, inadequate, or unsatisfactory for the preservation of life and of such interests as are determined by the foreign policy of our Nation” (United States Marine Corps, 2009, p. 1).

Calling for the military to abandon this mission and “return to more conventional war-fighting capabilities” (Adams & Murray, 2014, p. 256), not only leaves the United States ill-prepared for the future, but also contradicts precedent. Throughout its history, the U.S. military has engaged in asymmetric, unconventional conflict and stability operations far more often than it has engaged in conventional military-on-military warfighting removed from civilian populations. Rather than attempt to rigidly divide authority between the State and Defense Departments, policy makers should support close cooperation between the two. The U.S. Marine Corps Small Wars Manual provides historical guidance for this relationship and should inform modern policy-making regarding reconstruction and stability operations. While the military possesses the money, personnel, and equipment to rapidly respond to natural disaster emergencies and post conflict reconstruction, “the State Department…may be of great help to the military commander whose knowledge of the political machinery of the country may be of general nature” (United States Marine Corps, 2009, p. 34). These operations, “indicate that diplomacy does not relax its grip on the situation…and calls for the earnest cooperation between the State Department representatives and [military] authorities” (United States Marine Corps, 2009, p. 33). Close cooperation between the Defense and State Departments at every level is imperative to integrate the respective areas of expertise and provide a true whole-of-government approach to stability operations, “[i]n many cases very junior subordinates of the State Department and the [military] may have to solve problems that might involve the United States in serious difficulties” (United States Marine Corps, 2009, p.34).

**The Blurry Line Between War and Peace**

Contemporary scholarship asserts that the military’s substantial involvement in post-conflict stabilization, reconstruction, and nation building is a recent phenomenon without precedent and has precipitously encroached on the customary duties and responsibilities of the State Department and USAID. However, the claim that the military’s assumption of these duties represents a seismic shift (Brooks, 2016) from how the U.S. military has been employed abroad discounts the historical record. Brooks and others claim that the post 9/11 environment has blurred the lines between war and non-war in a novel way (2016, p. 13). This claim is based on the assumption that for most of its history the U.S. military has been fighting conventional wars where the line between war and peace is clear, the enemy is uniformed and easily identified, and the only missions are to “kill people and break stuff,” i.e. in World Wars I & II.

It is true that emerging technologies have changed some of the ways the military engages America’s enemies: cyberwar and drone strikes are two notable developments. However, it is inaccurate to claim that, “[building] isolation wards in Ebola-ravaged Liberia, [operating] health clinics in rural Malaysian villages, [launching] agricultural reform programs and small business development projects in Africa, [and training] Afghan judges and parliamentarians…” (Brooks, 2016, p. 13) are missions counter to the military’s historical employment. The truth is, since the earliest days of American expansionism, the U.S. military has operated in environments that bear little resemblance to scenes in
war movies like *Saving Private Ryan*. Long before the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, the military repeatedly performed “many of the other non-security functions” that some claim have, “migrated from State and USAID to Defense” and “should transition back to those civilian agencies.” (Dobbins, 2014, p. 47).

**Conclusion**

Given this historical context, the question going forward should not be whether stabilization and reconstruction operations should transition back to civilian agencies. The military is well positioned for these missions and can react quickly to tasks in ways that are impossible for the State Department and USAID to match (Marks, 2014, p. 239). Additionally, these are missions that the military has historically performed across the spectrum of conflict. The more relevant question to be explored is how best the Department of Defense and State Department can coordinate, cooperate, and integrate their staffs in order to ensure a true whole-of-government approach to nation building operations. From the department secretaries at the operational level down to the diplomats and soldiers at tactical level, the Defense Department and State Department must devise an effective inter-agency approach to future stability and reconstruction operations. The State Department and USAID provide subject matter expertise in diplomacy and development, while the military is unmatched in its ability to rapidly execute orders. The goal of future presidential administrations must be to optimize that partnership rather than let any particular organization’s influence outsize the other. Rather than continuing to debate which agency is better suited for stability and reconstruction operations, policymakers at State and the Defense Department should recognize that both agencies bring unique strengths to the mission that mitigate the other’s shortfalls. Neither agency will be successful without the other.

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Introduction

Since the Revolutionary War, American women have engaged in military service, yet only recently were women given opportunities equal to their male counterparts to serve their country. While the repeal of certain discriminatory policies is reason to celebrate for women in the military, others may find female involvement in the armed forces antithetical to key tenets of feminism. Still, key policy changes to the United States Military are a crucial step in reaching gender equality throughout the country as a whole.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, women’s roles were informal and supportive of military men. Women first formally served in the military in 1901 when Congress established the Army Nurse Corps. World War II brought a dramatic increase in women in the military, specifically in noncombat roles. The Women’s Armed Services Integration Act of 1948 made women a permanent part of the armed services. The legislation prevented women from serving on aircrafts or vessels where they were “likely to be engaged in combat missions,” (Kamarck, 2016, p. 2) but it did not specifically ban women from ground combat. The legislation also limited the number of women who could be in the military to 2% of enlisted members and 10% of officers (Kamarck, 2016).

After the conflict in Vietnam and the end of the draft, the military, mirroring the social climate in the U.S., made some progress toward gender equality, by including a universal age requirement and women’s admittance into the United States service academies. In 1977, the military opened additional jobs to women, but explicitly barred women from serving in combat roles, and in 1979, the Senate Armed Services Committee cited the policy banning women from combat roles when determining whether women would also have to register for the Military Selective Service Act (Kamarck, 2016).

In 1994, U.S. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin enacted the Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule. This policy prohibited “(1) assigning women to units that collocate with direct ground combat units, (2) assigning women to direct ground combat units below the brigade level, and (3) assigning women to a combat arms military occupational specialty (MOS)” (Dietz, 2011, p. 87). Not only was this policy discriminatory against women, it also undermined some of the core values of the United States military, outlined below.

Maintaining a Meritocracy

The United States military prides itself on being a meritocracy, and by putting the best men in the most important positions the military ensures readiness. When Aspin put the Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule (often called the Exclusion Rule) in place, he assumed that the best soldiers would, in fact, be men. Supporters of the Exclusion Rule believed women were not fit for combat. They based their beliefs on two central ideas: women are not as strong as men (and thus, could not rescue male soldiers who are wounded), and the presence of women will negatively impact unit cohesion (Haring, 2013). Indeed, many women are not as strong as many men. However, military policy should not rely on overbroad generalizations of gender differences (United States, 1996).
The Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT), used to test the strength and endurance of soldiers in the U.S. Army, is a combination of three physical events: two minutes each of push-ups and sit-ups, and a two-mile run, with minimum requirements based on age and gender. The minimum number of sit-ups is the same for men and women, but women can achieve the same score as men in their age bracket by running slower and completing fewer push-ups. Among the female cadets of the United States Military Academy Class of 2011, 52 percent passed the APFT using male standards for their age bracket. Furthermore, 98 percent of the Class of 2011 passed the APFT using the standards for 42-year-old men, the oldest age an individual can be to enlist in the Army (Haring, 2013). Forty-two-year-old men who pass the APFT are deemed physically capable of performing the duties required of a direct ground combat position, yet women demonstrating the same level of strength and endurance are deemed too weak. APFT standards are based not on job function, but rather on age, and many women have proven they can meet the standards of an infantry soldier (Haring, 2013). This APFT data demonstrates the exclusionist argument that women are not strong enough to hold direct combat positions is “merely a manufactured and contrived excuse for exclusion” (Dietz, 2011, p. 138). Policies grounded in generalizations and stereotypes only “perpetuate perceptions of inferiority” (Dietz, 2011, p. 146) and send “the message that women in the military are subordinate to men due to their gender” (Dietz, 2011, p. 88).

The argument that women will disrupt unit cohesion is largely based on stereotypical impressions of men, particularly young men, and assumes that (1) young men are (hetero)sexual beings who will not be able to focus on the mission if women are present; and (2) the high levels of testosterone present in a unit of men are imperative for training “warriors.” Hyper-masculinity is seen as the lynchpin to unit cohesion. These assumptions have nothing to do with women, their strengths, assets, or abilities. It casts further doubt on the ability of women in the military because it identifies testosterone as a key component of combat success, a quality that naturally excludes women. The bonding that creates unit cohesion is based on the rejection and diminishment of women and femininity (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016). A 2003 study of Army units showed that the presence of women in a given unit decreased hyper-masculinity. Mixed-gender units saw a decrease in the correlation between hyper-masculinity and unit cohesion, suggesting that hyper-masculinity is not necessary to unit cohesion (Cawkill et al., 2009).

Unit cohesion is vital to successful missions, so it is unsurprising that exclusionists point to disruption of that cohesion to defend their position. However, unit cohesion has much to do with collective goals, objectives, and experiences. Mixed-gender training and working toward a shared objective will allow a unit to develop cohesion, regardless of the gender makeup (Cawkill et al., 2009). Research also suggests that diversity, particularly gender diversity, positively impacts performance (Haring, 2013). Looking at gender-integrated units in other countries, “the change has been positive as attitudes shift and standards do not drop” (Fitzsimons, 2013, p. 252). Women have risen to some of the highest ranks, successfully holding command over men, refuting another exclusionist argument that women could not be in charge of men. If women receive training to match that of men in higher ranks, female leadership can be as effective as male leadership.

Military leadership may actually have the biggest effect on unit cohesion. A 1997 RAND Corporation study found that individuals reported high levels of cohesion in units where they believed “the command emphasized unity and the importance and necessity of all members and divisions in accomplishing the mission” (Harrell & Miller, 1997, p. 54). Ensuring that commanding officers emphasize unity among their troops is possible through top-down leadership. High-ranking military personnel, therefore, have the power to greatly impact unit cohesion in all branches of the military.

Unit performance is also positively impacted by a unit’s collective intelligence. Numerous studies have shown that the collective intelligence of a group increases as the percentage of women in the group increases. Gender-integrated groups have been shown to be more collaborative and socially sensitive. Increased intelligence does not, and should not, replace physical strength in a military unit. Collective intelligence should be complementary to the physical nature of military duties (Haring, 2013).
Research studies and APFT data provide sufficient evidence for the inclusion of women in combat units. Yet, perhaps the most persuasive argument for the repeal of the Exclusion Rule is that women already have been serving in combat roles, especially since 2001. Military conflict areas in Afghanistan and Iraq are characterized as nonlinear battlefields; the distinction between operating areas is unclear, and it is difficult if not impossible to adhere to the first stipulation of the Exclusion Rule. In current military conflicts in the Middle East, collocation is inevitable. According to the Congressional Research Service, as of August 2015, more than 9,000 women had received Army Combat Action Badges, awarded to soldiers for “actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy” (Sisk, 2015, para. 12). Despite the Exclusion Rule, two women have been awarded the Silver Star (the only two women since World War II), in 2005 and 2007 (Dietz, 2011).

**Repeal of the Exclusion Rule**

On January 24, 2013, Leon Panetta, then-U.S. Secretary of Defense, instructed a review of all military occupational standards and announced the repeal of the Exclusion Rule. During the initial review phase, the military established gender-neutral occupational standards that would “accurately predict performance of actual, regular, and recurring duties of a military occupation; [and be] applied equitably to measure individual capabilities” (Hardison et al., 2015, p. 2). Each of the military services needed to identify standards that would validly predict job performance for each position, to provide “evidence that the selection test predicts important outcomes on the job” (Hardison et al., 2015, p. 3). Without such gender-neutral standards, opponents of integration could always argue that a woman was assigned to a given position because she had an easier test. The next phase of the repeal included lifting the ban on women collocating with direct ground combat troops and serving in combat units below the brigade level. Finally, on December 3, 2015, then-Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter opened all combat positions to women, approximately 220,000 positions (Bradner, 2015).

**Feminist Framing**

While military policies tend to focus on whether women are capable of serving in combat roles, feminist theorizing about women in the military often questions whether women should fight for inclusion in the military. There are two main schools of thought regarding women’s military inclusion. The first is “the right to fight,” which argues that women should have the right to access any position that men are entitled to access. The second, the anti-militarist school, maintains that inclusion does not promote gender equality, and instead legitimizes an institution that is antithetical to central tenets of feminism: gender equality, peace, and justice (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016).

“The right to fight” argument frames women’s military involvement as an issue of women and men enjoying the same opportunities. In 2013, fewer than 15 percent of those in the top-five ranks of the military were women. While women are rising in the ranks, they are still far outnumbered by men, primarily due to the fact that most high-ranking positions require combat experience (Haring, 2013). As a result, career paths available to women are limited and women’s status in the military remains inferior (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016). This could change significantly in the coming years as female graduates from the U.S. military academies are commissioned as infantry officers and other recently opened positions. Additionally, three women have graduated from the Army Ranger School, which trains one of the most elite groups of soldiers, since it opened its doors to women as a part of the policy change in 2015. These women will have the same opportunities as their male counterparts for career advancement.

“The right to fight” feminists also believe that gender integration will impact the hyper-masculinized culture of the military. Women’s rights advocate Judith Hicks Stiehm argues, “if male soldiers see women in positions of agency and strength, it makes it more difficult for them to objectify and sexualize women” (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016, p. 5). Stiehm emphasizes how excluding women from certain positions effectively divides society into the protectors and those who need protection. Through functional equality comes cultural and ideological equality. Feminist engagement can positively affect seemingly irredeemably masculinist institutions, and as the number of women in the military and their ability to hold all positions increases, it becomes increasingly difficult to claim that women do not belong. On the other hand, the hyper-masculinized culture could mean that women may never be truly equal. Anti-militarist feminists see the greater efforts women have to make to be accepted by their unit as an impenetrable barrier that “undermine[s] the argu-
They also point to the misogyny of military training tactics to demonstrate how contrary inclusion is to achieving equality: “During training and beyond, the military removes service members’ inhibitions against killing by brutalizing and feminizing them, and then inducing them to transfer feminization that has been instilled into them onto targets of violence that they imagine annihilating” (Belkin, 2013, p. 249). Male soldiers are trained to create a feminized Other: they learn to turn their enemies into weak, lesser beings by equating them with femininity. Soldiers are called derogatory names, frequently related to femaleness or homosexuality, as a means of motivation. It is not realistic to think that they would treat women differently, even in contexts in which they are fighting side-by-side. And while training tactics may become less misogynistic with added female presence, “the military likely will continue to train service members to feminize targets of violence” (Belkin, 2013, p. 250). Repealing the Exclusion Rule may be a step toward equality, but it is clear that other gender-based issues still need to be addressed.

Changing the Culture

Emphasizing the need for women to be equally included is not necessarily the best way to address the gender biases in the military. This emphasis on inclusion evokes “sameness” and requires women to fit into a male-centric space, adopt male norms, and repress their “feminine” qualities. A route that acknowledges and encourages “differentness” may ultimately have greater impact on the hyper-masculinized culture of the military. Instead of forcing women to conform, working to remove gender binaries within the military could contribute to effectiveness and readiness.

A plethora of studies have focused on the role of women as peacekeepers in post-conflict areas. These studies suggest that women have specific contributions to peacekeeping efforts, noting traditionally “feminine” characteristics as beneficial (for example, communication, compassion, and higher levels of collaboration). While this focus on the differences between male and female soldiers can be dangerous—it can easily become essentialist and undermine the contributions women can make in other arenas—it also valorizes alternative characteristics in a soldier. It is crucial to not relegate women to only peacekeeping roles, but the military can emphasize those alternative characteristics as beneficial to all soldiers. Creating an image of masculinity that incorporates “feminine” attributes will drastically change the hyper-masculine culture of the military. No longer will women need to work to adopt traditionally male norms. Instead, each individual soldier will be valued for whatever strengths—physical, emotional, communicational—they already have. The gendered hierarchy of the military can be dismantled through an emphasis on displacing gender binaries (Duncanson & Woodward, 2016).

Additional Considerations

Increased female leadership in the military due to the Exclusion Rule repeal does not mean that leadership will necessarily be representative racially. African-American women make up a disproportionate percentage of enlisted soldiers and outnumber white women in enlisted rankings of E6 to E9—the highest levels for enlisted soldiers. Since the U.S. military became an all-volunteer force in 1973, it has offered training, employment opportunities, and economic incentives to enlistees that are not as readily available in the civilian sector, making the military “an avenue of upward mobility for women of low socioeconomic backgrounds, so long as they stay on active duty” (Moore, 2013, p. 247). Unemployment rates among African-American women are double those of white women, so it is unsurprising that African-American women join the military in the enlisted ranks. Since the repeal of the Exclusion Rule, more women will be able to reach ranks such as Colonel or General, yet the women who have the greatest chances of mobility are those who are already General Officers or Tactical Operations specialists. More than three-quarters of these women are white. Additionally, if assigned to combat arms (a position within the enlisted ranks), soldiers may not be able to advance their career or transfer their skillset to a civilian job after they have completed their service.

Though serving in the enlisted ranks holds a certain amount of social status within the military, it is not well understood in the civilian sector. This leads to increased challenges such as higher rates of unemployment, homelessness, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Thus, opening combat positions to women will likely help white women, but it might create further disparity between white women and women-of-color in the military (Moore, 2013). This is an issue that is paid little attention and should be examined as a new policy is implemented.

1 A telling example of the language used during training comes from Aaron Belkin’s studies of masculinities in the military. Belkin quotes a drill instructor from the 1970s, addressing an all-male group: “Unless you women get with the program, straighten out the queers, and grow some balls of your own, you best give your soul to God, because your ass is mine and so is your mother’s on visiting day” (Belkin, 2013, p. 249).
**Recommendations**

The repeal of the Direct Ground Combat Assignment and Definition Rule was an initial step on the path toward gender equality in the military, but there is still much work to be done. The recommendations below highlight a few areas that require continued attention.

1. **Gender-neutral standards**: Gender-neutral standards must directly relate to job function of each military occupational specialty, and a process of continual evaluation should be created.

2. **Training tactics and cultural change**: This report illustrates how pervasive ideas of masculinity are within military ranks. An emphasis on changing the culture, particularly through language used in training, is crucial. The leadership must embrace this change, as the rest of the unit looks to leadership and will likely remain unchanged if not guided (Cawkill et al., 2009).

3. **Recruitment**: An emphasis on recruiting women of color to the military academies will increase the diversity among higher-ranking service members. While the military must continue to emphasize the military as a meritocracy, it should pay particular attention to the demographics of who is deemed “the best.” Increased diversity in the military academies will bring diverse leadership at the Officer level, setting the stage for greater racial diversity in the highest ranks of the U.S. military.

**Conclusion**

There remains some opposition to the repeal of the Direct Ground Combat Assignment and Definition Rule, but among military officials, reactions are largely positive. The 2016 Army Posture Statement, a yearly publication summarizing military efforts of a particular year, states:

The Army provides an inclusive environment that provides every Soldier and Civilian equal opportunities to advance to the level of their ability regardless of their racial background, sexual orientation, or gender. We increasingly recognize that we derive strength from our diversity, varying perspectives, and different qualities of our people.

Continued attention to gender-neutral standards, greater emphasis on promoting diversity in leadership, and revisiting training techniques will benefit United States military readiness and effectiveness, ensuring it is comprised of the most skilled and best suited for each position.

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Xi’s Inner Circle: China’s Nineteenth Party Congress and Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy

By Josh Quinn

Introduction:

In late October of 2017, Chinese leader Chairman Xi Jinping cemented the influence of his closest allies, limited the power of political rivals, and enshrined his own name in China’s constitution. During the Nineteenth Party Congress, a gathering of Party delegates that happens every five years, all eyes were on Chairman Xi as he consolidated power. If we are to reaffirm American commitment to regional allies, it is critical for U.S. policymakers to recognize Chairman Xi’s heightened influence both within Chinese domestic policy and on the world stage. Chairman Xi is likely to continue to use his personal power to expand China’s influence abroad while challenging U.S influence in the Asiatic region. Xi’s goal of leading China into a prominent world leadership position has clear policy implications for the United States. As such, to retain its influence in the region U.S. policymakers should continue freedom of navigation exercises in the South China Sea, but also place renewed emphasis on multilateral diplomatic channels and not rely solely on the personal relationships prioritized by the Trump administration.

This paper will first offer a brief overview of the Nineteenth Chinese Communist Party Congress, discussing shifts in power, new appointments, and constitutional changes that may affect China’s behavior abroad. Next, the paper will draw on recent literature to make predictions about how changes made during the Nineteenth Party Congress will embolden Chairman Xi to pursue Chinese interests, as well as what military, political, and economic mechanisms are being used to realize those goals. Finally, the paper will conclude with policy recommendations for U.S. lawmakers and foreign policy officials. Special attention will be given to the options available to institutions weakened by the Trump administration’s retreat from global leadership. Specifically, this paper will argue that the U.S. State Department should maintain a robust U.S.-China relationship through official channels; use international legal frameworks to challenge China’s “historical rights” claims in the South China Sea; increase funding for U.S. government-sponsored Chinese language instruction; and maintain a strong naval presence in the area without angering China through high-profile military exercises. In all, Chairman Xi’s consolidation of power requires altering established notions about Sino-U.S. relations to reflect a potential shift toward more targeted Chinese assertions of power in the region.

Cementing Power

The Nineteenth Party Congress has brought significant changes to decision making in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), in sharp contrast to the post-Jiang Zemin factional nature of Chinese Party politics. In a 2009 article, the Brookings Institution’s Cheng Li wrote that the transfer of power from Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao in 2002 was the “first time in the republic’s history that the transfer of power didn’t involve bloodshed or purges” (Li, 2009, 88-93). Li contended at the time that Chinese politics were no longer dominated by a single strongman such as Mao Zedong or Deng Xiaoping, but rather by a “team of rivals.” Today, however, Chairman Xi’s actions signal a return to a more unilateral leadership style. To be sure, competing interests and various factions still exist and compete for influence in the CCP. Nevertheless, the changes made during October’s Party Congress signal a dramatic consolidation of power around Chairman Xi’s inner circle.

Chairman Xi used several mechanisms to secure his grip on power. First, he exercised careful control over the new membership of China’s top governing body, the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC). This entity’s seven-member council is responsible for most of the high-level economic and political decisions made in the government, and now a majority of the PSC’s new members either worked for Chairman Xi at some point in their careers or otherwise had ties to him (Albright Stoneridge Group, 2017). Second, he broke tradition and
failed to indicate a clear successor who would take his place after 2022, when he would presumably step down (Scott, 2017). Despite speculation that he would “elevate his protégé Chen Min’er and Guangdong party secretary Hu Chunhua” (ibid.) to the PSC, he instead appointed much older party figures, fueling speculation that he may refuse to step down after his two terms, as his predecessors had done. Third, and perhaps most unsettlingly, Chairman Xi enshrined his own name in the Chinese Communist Party Charter. Students across China will now study “Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era” (Wang, 2017). Personal politicking this explicit has not been seen in China since the reign of Mao Zedong.

**Implications for U.S. Foreign Policy**

Xi’s power grabs have significant implications for U.S. policy. With Chairman Xi’s increasing power, an emphasis on internal party discipline has already strengthened his hold on the direction of Chinese foreign policy. Shortly after taking office, Chairman Xi cracked down hard on “tigers and flies,” or large and small corrupt government officials, respectively (Davies, 2017). While cracking down on corruption certainly has inherent benefits to party cohesion, it also provides Xi with a convenient excuse to purge political rivals. The fall of Bo Xilai in 2012 was only the beginning of a long, thorough purge of the Communist Party (Foreign Policy, 2017). After the Nineteenth Party Congress, this sharp focus on party discipline shows no signs of abating. Having fewer rivals in the Party could embolden Chairman Xi to pursue more aggressive foreign policy goals, in sharp contrast with Chinese leaders in the recent past who have emphasized peaceful economic development. Chairman Xi not only has fewer rivals among Party leadership, but local academics and journalists have little will to criticize him either. In the mainstream Chinese discourse, “The political situation remains frozen, the language of media and academia stilted and sycophantic” (ibid). In such a favorable domestic situation, Xi will not balk at using his popularity to pursue more aggressive goals in the foreign policy realm.

One of Chairman Xi’s first priorities after taking office in 2013 was to establish firmer control of the military. Chairman Xi took office during a time of continuous and fast-paced development of advanced military technology in China. Many of these weapons are intended to counter U.S. naval power in the region. President Obama’s “pivot to Asia” did move a significant amount of U.S. naval resources to the Chinese region, but the U.S. must remain vigilant to assure regional allies of its continued commitment to regional stability. Additionally, China’s People’s Liberation Army has an advanced and now infamous cyberwarfare division that has already achieved several high-profile intrusions into many U.S. government institutions. Continued research and development into new, more efficient naval and cyberwarfare technologies is critical to countering improved Chinese competencies. Furthermore, there is increasing support among scholars and researchers that the U.S. should be assertive and consistent when responding to aggressive Chinese actions, especially when the interests of a regional ally such as Japan or Vietnam are at stake (Dollar et al, 2017).

China is also increasingly assertive in the economic realm. Western countries have long encouraged less affluent nations to embrace free market values and allow unbridled corporate investment, and governance and accountability standards typically accompany such assistance programs. By contrast, China’s new One Belt One Road Initiative, a comprehensive Eurasian development strategy, encourages developing nations to reject the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as “tools of imperialism” (Murphy, 2016). Instead, China uses its growing wealth to entice other developing nations to follow its own model and to allow Chinese investment to drive the growth of their economies. This investment comes with less governance conditionality but leads to increased Chinese control of natural resources.

China’s argument is strengthened by its continued perceived status as a developing nation, with its subtext that Chinese policymakers understand the plight of developing countries better than Western nations. China has also accelerated investment campaigns in Africa, where projects along the continent’s east coast presumably will complement maritime trade routes to Europe through the Suez Canal in Egypt. In sharp contrast, the U.S. is currently led by a president who has a “30-year track record of opposing...free trade and alliances” (Wright, 2017).
and has backed away from U.S. leadership in international trade regimes. U.S policymakers should reconsider the nation’s protectionist retreat from the global stage in both the diplomatic and economic realms. China’s aggressive foreign investments have already begun to erode U.S. global trade leadership, and President Trump should reconsider retreating from robust global trade agreements to help reverse this trend.

**Recommendations and Conclusion**

More than two years into the Trump administration, the notion of the United States as the world’s primary peacekeeper has been seriously weakened. President Trump has called into question longstanding alliances, publicly contradicted his then Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on key policy issues, and cancelled U.S. participation in comprehensive trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The idea of a globally-integrated United States is currently under attack, opening up a power vacuum. China will step in and attempt to embrace its growing leadership role in world politics, and Chairman Xi’s personal political victories will only serve to encourage this behavior. As the world comes to terms with an emboldened China, several policy options should be considered:

1. The U.S. should maintain a military presence in the region while avoiding direct conflict with China. The U.S. should maintain a strong naval arsenal and continue to conduct freedom of navigation exercises to signal a commitment to allied interests. China’s “9-dash line” territorial claim in the South China Sea should be contested through established international legal institutions. And to reassure regional allies, the U.S. should join in contesting China’s “historical rights” claims in the South China Sea.

2. At the same time, the U.S. State Department should maintain strong diplomatic relationships with Chinese officials. Despite institutional turmoil in the U.S. federal government, officials on the ground are skilled and knowledgeable experts on China who should be utilized and appreciated both for their expertise as well as their extensive networks.

3. The United States Congress should take seriously China’s growing influence, and the implications of that influence for the U.S. To that end, the U.S government should increase investment in domestic intensive Chinese language programs that focus on teaching young Americans Chinese language and culture. If Chairman Xi’s “China Dream” will be realized by 2049, America should be ready to engage China with a new generation of skilled, culturally competent diplomats, as well as business and academic leaders.

4. While China has an abysmal human rights record, the U.S. should exercise care when pressuring China on human rights issues. While critically important, most domestic human rights violations in China do not directly affect U.S. or allied interests. Choosing battles carefully is important, and the U.S. has a much higher likelihood of having an impact by focusing political capital in certain areas. Namely, the U.S. should concentrate its influence to limit the chance of China becoming a regional military hegemon. Doing so will protect key U.S. allies and U.S interests in the region.

5. The U.S. should reverse anti-trade initiatives and rejoin the international discourse on multilateral trade agreements. Pulling out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, though a popular domestic move, only served to make China a more attractive trading partner to economies in Southeast Asia.

In sum, Chairman Xi’s political success at the Communist Party’s Nineteenth Party Congress will continue to lead to more assertive Chinese behavior on the world stage, and the U.S. should be prepared to respond with a concrete commitment to its allies’ security. Lack of strong rivals will encourage Chairman Xi to make firmer demands in trade, as well as more aggressive territorial claims in the South China Sea and elsewhere in the region. The U.S. should continue to counter Chinese hegemonic ambitions with a strong naval presence, but also avoid high-profile exercises that may aggravate Chinese authorities and make negotiation difficult. In diplomacy, the State Department should continue to rely on its established foreign policy professionals to maintain relationships with Chinese officials. Finally, the U.S. government should commit to investing in a new generation of American China experts by funding intensive Chinese language and culture education programs. In the age of a rising China that appears to be getting no less authoritarian, it is critical that Americans have the capability to engage with China in a way that maximizes U.S. interests.
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Pedestrian Safety has Become a Public Health Crisis

By Aaron Westling

Life in a city looks a lot different when you’re not behind the wheel of a car. The benefits of pedestrian life are wonderful; chatting up your neighbor on the sidewalk, knocking out your errands and exercise at the same time, and using your nose instead of Yelp to find the best Thai food around. In spite of this, we chose to make the simple act of walking down the street downright dangerous, so it’s up to us to change that.

In 2017 nearly 6,000 pedestrians were killed in auto-related crashes, and 2016 and 2017 were the two deadliest years for pedestrians in US history. Since 2008, the pedestrian fatality rate has risen 48% in urban centers despite dropping 6% in rural areas.

Locally, the City of Minneapolis conducted a Pedestrian Crash Study in 2017, which showed that Minneapolis has a relatively low pedestrian fatality rate compared to the rest of the country. However, the study shines a light on issues that need to be addressed—specifically, that crashes are more often than not the driver’s fault and marginalized communities are disproportionately affected.

Contrary to popular belief, most pedestrian crashes aren’t caused by drunk walkers or texting in the crosswalk; they’re caused by inattentive or reckless drivers. In Minneapolis, drivers were responsible for 62% of pedestrian crashes and had at least one contributing factor in 71% of crashes, with the main factor being failure to yield to a pedestrian who has the right of way. Additionally, even in cases of death, drivers rarely face consequences when they are at fault. Between 2010 and 2014 in the seven-county metro area, there were 92 drivers responsible for the deaths of 95 pedestrians, 64 of them received no charges while only nine of them spent more than 90 days in jail. The first step to being able to alleviate the dangers of walking is to accept that poor driver decisions and street design are the main cause of pedestrian crashes.

Additionally, crashes involving pedestrians mirror other health crises, with low-income residents and people of color (POC) being disproportionately affected. Nationally, nonwhite and Latinos make up 35% of the population but account for 46% of pedestrian deaths. Minneapolis’ study shows a similar distribution. Neighborhoods in Minneapolis that have high numbers of low-income and POC residents account for 42% of pedestrian deaths while only accounting for 31% of the city. Pedestrian safety is an equity issue that must be addressed to protect already vulnerable communities.

People are dying on our streets while trying to cross them, but it doesn’t need to be this way. We know exactly where these crashes are happening and the engineering reasons behind them. In Minneapolis, 75 percent of pedestrian crashes happened on just 5 percent of our streets. Overwhelmingly, these streets tend to have multiple lanes and higher speed limits. When a person walking is hit by a person driving 40 miles-per-hour (MPH), they are eight times more likely to die than if hit by a person driving at 20 MPH. Improving street design and lowering speed limits on the 5 percent of city streets that are the most dangerous will significantly decrease the number of pedestrian related crashes in Minneapolis. Reducing limits has proven to slow cars in cities like Boston and is being implemented from coast-to-coast. Portland, Oregon, was even able to change state law to be allowed to reduce speeds from 25 MPH to 20 MPH on residential roads, a change that will affect about 70% of the city’s streets. Lower speed limits and improving street design makes walking more comfortable for everyone, especially families and children. This is especially important considering that nationally in 2015, 21% of children 14 and younger killed in traffic crashes were pedestrians.

The bottom line is that we’re all pedestrians. No matter what neighborhood we live in, we deserve to feel safe walking down the street. So now, the question for policy makers is simple: What is the acceptable number of pedestrian deaths in Minneapolis? We know why traffic deaths are happening and where—we just need to decide whether we care enough to stop them.
Addressing Graduate Student Food Insecurity
at the University of Minnesota

By Max Dalton, Madeline Norgaard, Yunlei Qi

Introduction

A systematic review of student food insecurity studies found that rates of post-secondary food insecurity ranged from 14% to nearly 60% across different campuses (Kurudiyara et al., 2015). Literature on this topic has sought to better understand the numerous influencing factors, effects, and implications experienced by students. Research has shown that students’ financial condition plays a major role in their food security status—including financial aid received, housing costs, and employment status. Gaines (2014) found that students without financial support from their family and those who rely on loans and financial aid are at greater risk of food insecurity. Further, the Wisconsin Hope Lab indicated that food and housing security are closely linked (Sutton, 2016). These hardships can be attributed to the increasing cost of college: up 260% since 1980 (Jackson, 2015).

There is also a wealth of research documenting the effects of food insecurity on student health and wellbeing. Students who worry about where their next meal will come from or who have to skip meals are more likely to experience higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Bruening, 2016). These health consequences make it difficult for students to concentrate in the classroom and engage socially with their peers. In addition, food insecure students tend to prioritize cheap and less-nutritious food that negatively affects their overall health and wellness (Martinez, 2017; Hughes, 2011). Ultimately, food insecurity impacts nearly every facet of student life and has major implications for academic and professional success.

While recent studies have documented the complexity and causes of student food insecurity, many of them also suggest strategies to address the issue. Some studies recommend interventions like campus food banks, gardens, and dining vouchers (Patton-Lopez et al., 2014; Martinez, 2016; Martinez et al., 2017). Others recommend reducing tuition costs, while increasing financial assistance, rent controls, and wages (Farahbaksh, 2015; Martinez, 2016). Cady (2014) suggests long-term responses should include elevating awareness of student food insecurity and reducing the stigma associated with accessing needed resources. Wisconsin Hope Lab suggests the issue extends beyond campuses, and thus solutions to alleviate student financial burdens must not only come from colleges, but local and state governments, too (Sutton, 2016). Awareness, partnerships, and policy changes will be necessary to address the root causes of food insecurity.

Most of the studies reviewed focused on undergraduate populations or sub-groups, including low-income students or students of color. Interestingly, some of the surveys conducted included graduate students, but none of the articles examined graduate students specifically. For example, a quarter of respondents for a University of California system study on student food access and security were graduate students (Martinez et al., 2017). However, many of the recommended solutions were geared toward the undergraduate population; who are more likely to live on campus, have a meal plan, and be connected with campus-wide resources.

Surprisingly, the 2015 University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (UMN) Boynton Student Health Survey found that 22% of UMN graduate students had experienced food insecurity, compared to just 9% of undergraduates in the prior 30 days (UMN Boynton Health Services, 2015). By design, the Boynton study aimed to discover the driving factors behind these differences and shed light on barriers and solutions to addressing food insecurity in the graduate student population.
Methodology

This qualitative study was limited to the Twin Cities campus of the University of Minnesota, and included staff, researchers, and students who work on or study student food insecurity. The selection process attempted to exclude any students who experience food insecurity directly. Interviewees were recruited through a snowball process.

Nine semi-structured interviews were conducted on the UMN, Twin Cities campus. Two interview participants were researchers from the College of Education and Human Development; six were from student health, nutrition, and family services; and one was from graduate student government. All participants have been at UMN for more than two years, and three have been with UMN for more than 10 years, including a professor and two directors. The interview started with questions about the participants’ relationship to UMN and their work on food insecurity. The remainder of the questions probed their perceptions about the causes, impacts, current solutions, and barriers to addressing food insecurity for all students and graduate students.

Results

Existing Initiatives at the University of Minnesota

One participant noted that before 2017, “we [UMN] were the only Big 10 school that did not have a food pantry on campus.” As a result, during Spring 2017, a graduate student studying food insecurity piloted the NutritiousU food pantry. Due to its initial success, the food pantry was permanently established in the Fall 2017, with a three-quarter-time staff member hired to manage it.

Participants were most aware of the NutritiousU food pantry, but more than half noted other existing programs. These programs include: Swipe Out Hunger, a meal-plan-based form of emergency assistance; cooking classes offered through Boynton Health; the Student Nutrition Advocacy Collective, a nutrition-based education program; counseling services; and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) referral assistance. Participants had mixed knowledge on the effectiveness of each of these programs but did note that many of these resources are fairly new and are being evaluated for improvement. Participants also had mixed knowledge on access levels for each resource, but generally indicated these resources are available to all students, regardless of their level of study or program. However, two participants stated that Swipe Out Hunger, while available to all students, did require a referral due to limited meal vouchers. Participants cited other universities with similar programs, but all participants stressed that these colleges, like UMN, are still working to understand and combat this issue.

Food Insecurity Experience

General Students

Participants indicated that students’ food insecurity experiences varied, regardless of degree level. This range of experiences impacts students’ physical health (skipping meals, buying unhealthy food), mental health (stress, anxiety, depression), and social health (skipping engagements, stigmatization) to varying degrees. Almost all participants spoke to the stigma of being food insecure as a major component of food insecurity. Additionally, all participants noted that financial barriers are often the root cause of student food insecurity. Students tend to prioritize paying their rent, loans, and tuition over purchasing food. Over half of the participants also pointed out that students typically have busy schedules, so barriers of time (to cook or shop) also compound the issue of food insecurity. Additionally, there are limited culturally-sensitive food options for students from diverse backgrounds which may contribute to the issue. The mindset of “I just need to get through this” causes students to avoid seeking assistance until the situation is dire. As one interviewee indicated in their experience with a student;

“[I]t just was not in her budget to go out. So, she was constantly doing this mental management of, ‘how am I going to allocate my limited resources and financial resources for the week, there’s no way I can go out and spend $25-$30 on a meal.’ So, she was saying she would have to decline these offers even though she wanted to be part of this group.”
Undergraduate Students

One major barrier undergraduates experience is their lack of access to transportation and healthy food options. Participants also heard from undergraduates that university meal plans, while important, were also a barrier: both in the number of meals included and the dining hall hours. Similar to graduate students’ experience, all participants indicated schooling costs place a financial strain on undergraduates since loans and scholarships do not always cover the schooling costs entirely. However, many participants noted that reaching undergraduate students with resources and information is easier as they are more involved with campus life and social media. As one participant specifically noted:

“Food insecurity gets overlooked on college campuses because it is like, ‘oh, these people can afford to go to college, therefore they must have money, and therefore they aren’t food insecure.’ Obviously, it's false.”

Graduate Students

Participants often spoke to the “life experience factor” of graduate students; they are assumed to be able to cook, shop, budget, and find resources if needed. “There is an assumption that you already have some self-sufficiency. You already have some life experience, maybe more maturity, such as knowing how to cook, nutrition, and diet.”

Participants also indicated that graduate students, like undergraduates, experience financial strains, but in a different way. These strains were the result of life experience factors, such as supporting household members, carrying loans from their undergraduate schooling, and financing a graduate education without parental support or scholarships. Additionally, participants indicated that graduate students represent a privileged part of society that can afford to attain a higher degree, so the assumption is made that they should be able to afford things such as food. One participant is quoted in saying:

“When you are dealing with graduate students, some of them come straight from undergrad and some take some time off and so that life experience is obviously going to factor into whether or not they will have food insecurity in their lives. So, with professional students more than undergraduate students I would also say that I think it represents a different segment of society. Look at demographics at the [professional] school, diversity, socioeconomic factors, I would say it's not very representative of society at large.”

Barriers to Alleviating Food Insecurity in the Graduate Student Population

Hard to Reach Graduate Students

Reaching and educating the graduate student population about student services and resources available to them is difficult. One participant mentioned graduate students are “deeply entrenched in individual programs.” Participants are aware of general methods of reaching graduate students, such as the graduate synthesis email, but program specific methods pose a greater challenge in terms of time and resources. A participant in the study further elaborated by saying;
“If I want to reach undergrads, I can go to MSA [Minnesota Student Association] social media and so many programs have social media, so it’s really easy to connect with undergrads. There are many newsletters and flyers… For graduate students, there is COGS [Council of Graduate Students], but even when I was a student, I really didn’t engage with them, and didn’t understand it really, and it wasn’t really appealing to me… there are not as many ways to engage with [graduate students] and at the same time, they are less engaged.”

**Limited Employment Opportunities for Graduate Students**

Additionally, participants noted the disparate employment opportunities at the graduate level. The disparate is critical to food insecurity, since usually students with a part-time job are less likely to have food insecurity problems. Graduate programs vary widely in terms of research and funding availability. Without income stability, graduate students usually cannot or do not want to spend enough on their food. Participants also noted that when employment or funding was not available in a graduate program, students would often rely on employment outside of the university or on the income of a significant other. Off-campus jobs usually pay less or offer fewer benefits, which could lead to food insecurity as well. One participant framed the problem by saying;

“I think there’s a misperception that graduate students are doing fine, you know they’ve got these graduate research assistantships, umm, they get paid well, their tuition is covered, so I think part of this might be changing these misperceptions about how graduate students are doing, because we know not all of them are doing well and are experiencing food insecurity.”

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

Our research sheds light on a previously unstudied population of the food insecurity discussion. Universities and other researchers recognize the graduate student population is different in comparison to undergraduates, but previous research tends to group this student population in with undergraduates or excludes them altogether in discussions about solutions. Our research shows that graduate students experience food insecurity differently than undergraduates in some ways; therefore, the unique needs of this group should be considered when designing solutions to address food insecurity. As mentioned, 2015 UMN Boynton Student Health Survey further reiterates our findings, showing that 22% of UMN graduate students experienced food insecurity, compared to just 9% of undergraduates of all those surveyed. Based on our analysis, we recommend the following initiatives to address food insecurity among graduate students:

- Efforts to address food insecurity at the institutional level should include specific efforts to reach graduate students. This will require deeper partnership with individual graduate programs to increase the awareness of those efforts.
- Departmental programs that educate students about campus-wide resources available should cover nutritional, physical, mental, and financial (counseling) resources. Hosting workshops early in the fall semester and providing a menu of resources would be the best course of action for each program.
- More research is needed to understand why and how graduate students experience food insecurity. Future qualitative and quantitative research should focus on graduate students specifically. Students should be selected across many different programs, age groups, and other factors to understand what differences may exist among graduate students.
References


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