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table of CONTENTS

Large Americano, Extra Masculine: How People Do Gender at The Coffee House by Aubrey Limburg.....	01
“BABY, TE AMO”: Code Switching as a Way to Develop and Limit Intimacy in Multilingual, Romantic Relationships by Bracey Hong Parr	12
From Sitamarhi to New Delhi Railway Station: The Agricultural Antecedents to Childhood Migration in North India by Daniel Rosenblum.....	23
“I’m Feeding the World Tonight:” The Impact of Moral Identity Standards on Mobile Loaves & Fishes Homeless Outreach Ministry by Megan Robinson.....	40



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Large Americano, Extra Masculine: How People Do Gender at The Coffee House

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the way in which customers in an urban cafe “do gender.” This research expands existing literature on doing gender in organizational settings by making the customer the focus of the analysis of gender presentations in public spaces. The findings are based on ethnographic research that was conducted over the course of eight weeks in an urban Northwestern city in the United States. My findings suggest that male and female customers most commonly performed hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity, respectively. These performances were further pronounced when analyzed in the context of heterosexual relationships, where accountability for gender presentations became even more salient. The way that customers interacted with employees reinforced already normative presentations of gender.

Keywords: doing gender, hegemonic masculinity, emphasized femininity

INTRODUCTION

In “Doing Gender,” West and Zimmerman (1987) created a theory that posits that gender is a social accomplishment rather than an essential component of sexed bodies. They argue that, “[d]oing gender means creating differences between girls and boys and women and men, differences that are not natural, essential, or biological” (West and Zimmerman 1987, 137). Gender, therefore, is not an innate experience of human existence, but rather a social construct that is reproduced through social interaction. West and Zimmerman (1987), then, see individuals’ gender performances as accountable to culturally normative conceptions of gender (p. 136). This perspective allows for gender to be studied in a social context which gives insight into the way in which individual gender performances are affected by internal or external forces. Therefore, I use the concept of doing gender as the primary theoretical framework to understand the way in which customers do gender at an urban cafe in the Northwestern United States, The Coffee House.

“Our social world is built on systemic structural inequality based on gender; social life reproduces both gender difference and gender inequality.” – Kimmel

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars have applied West and Zimmerman’s (1987) concept of doing gender to the context of work and employment. This research has looked at a broad array of occupational contexts, including: bankers (Forseth 2005), servers (Hall 1993, Hall 1993, LaPointe 1992, Tibbals 2007), fast food workers and insurance agents (Leidner 1991), exotic dancers (Trautner 2005), doctors and nurses (Davies 2003), and police officers (Rabe-Hemp 2009). While some studies assess the effect of customers on workers’ gender performances, there has been little research done with a focus on gender performances of customers. In Hall’s (1993) article, “Smiling, Deferring, and Flirting: Doing Gender by Giving ‘Good Service,’” she discusses the ways in which the gender performances of servers changes depending on the customer. In one instance she states that one of the servers “turns up the charm... smiles a lot more for women... to a table of business men... a little more distant... don’t talk as much... waitresses play up to the business men” (p. 461). Therefore, the service that is provided is based on the gender and gender performances of the customer. This was not an unconscious endeavor, as servers articulated that they were aware of the way they were rewarded: tips and positive interactions due to normative gender performances. In the article, “Serving Hamburgers and Selling Insurance,” Leidner (1992) looks at the way in which gender is

performed by workers in interactive service jobs. In the article she states: “These workers were closely supervised, not only by McDonald’s managers, but also by customers, whose constant presence exerted pressure to be diligent and speedy” (Leidner 1992, 160). In both of these studies, the workers were not only being held accountable by the organizational context, but also by their customers.

While doing gender is an important concept, in that it frames gender as socially constructed, it has limited ability to incorporate and critique power dynamics that are present in gender relations. Kimmel (2004) states: “Our social world is built on systemic structural inequality based on gender; social life reproduces both gender difference and gender inequality.” (p. 113). In theorizing gender inequality as structural as well as interactional, it is possible to see the way in which doing gender, or specific performances, could possibly reproduce ideas and feelings about gender inequality. In the book *Gender and Power*, Connell (1987) outlines the power present in the process of doing gender by looking at hierarchical and socially privileged gender forms. In her analysis, she sees two socially idealized gender forms: hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. Hegemonic masculinity is the dominant form of masculinity in a given society and “is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women” (Connell 1987, p. 183). This type of masculinity is characterized by power, independence, strength, and emotional detachment. On the other hand, emphasized femininity is “organized as an adaption to men’s power, and [emphasizes] compliance, nurturance and empathy as womanly virtues” (Connell 1987, p. 188). In her analysis, the power dynamic is present in the hierarchical arrangement of gender as well as the social privilege that accompanies certain gender performances.

METHODS

Data for this paper came from ethnographic research conducted for twenty-two hours over the course of eight weeks in a coffee shop located in an urban city in the Northwestern United States. The name of the coffee shop has been changed for purposes of confidentiality and will be referred to as The Coffee House. This coffee shop is frequented by students, as well as individuals that work on campus and at surrounding businesses, as it is located on the periphery of an urban University. The cafe

is very large with ample amount of seating including couches, a large common table, bar-style seating, and two-seater tables. Most of the peripheral walls are composed of floor-to-ceiling length windows providing ample day time light. Where there are not windows, the walls are painted dark grey and are contrasted by the light, oak wood fixtures that line the area along the counters and bar. Music plays throughout the cafe just loud enough to cancel out the noise produced by the employees and machinery. Initially upon entering the store, customers are greeted by wall bays and shelving that are stocked with merchandise. As you continue walking there is a two-tiered pastry case that connects to the counter where two registers sit side-by-side. Orders are placed at the register and can be retrieved at the end of the bar area called the hand-off plane. People crowd around the hand-off plane waiting for their name or order to be called for pick up. The lobby is always crowded either with new customers waiting in line or at the hand-off plane, or people occupying tables throughout the cafe.

At the time of this study, I had been employed at this coffee shop for a year and had been working in customer service for five years. As a barista, my job duties included ringing up purchases on the cash register, making drinks, cleaning, and supporting other coworkers. During my observation times, I was either ringing or making drinks in order to maximize interaction time with customers. My time at this site was concentrated mostly in the evening between the hours of 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. This period of time is quite a bit slower than the morning which allowed me to have longer interactions with customers as well as make jottings on receipt paper. After each shift, I would immediately type up the notes that I had made for the day in order to have fresh memories and detailed field notes. This customer-to-worker interaction is an intimate one that gives insight into the way that customers do gender in such an organized public space.

My role as a participant observer in this site was known by my manager and coworkers, but was not known to customers. I felt that this was necessary in order to mediate routine work tasks while maximizing interaction time with customers. Due to my experience in customer service, I feel that I have a nuanced insight and developed understanding which allowed me to navigate the customer service environment and data collection process seamlessly. While conducting my research, I acted in accordance with all of The Coffee House’s standards and

policies and did not manipulate my interactions with customers as part of the research. However, due to my experience in the customer service industry and my familiarity with the customers it may have been possible that I was unable to be sensitive to the more mundane interactions with my customers which may have been counter to my findings. My past experiences may also have led to a predisposition to certain themes. While not all the themes that were present in the site our discussed at length in this paper it is important to recognize that my past experiences as a barista may have influenced the themes that I did end up choosing. The same interactions may have been interpreted differently or held more weight to someone that was not familiar with the environment.

RESULTS

Overall, individual's gender performances were quite normative, meaning men's adhered to hegemonic masculinity while women performed emphasized femininity (Connell 1987). The groups that most noticeably participated in normative gender performances were single men, single women, and heterosexual couples. First, I look at the way in which men and women perform gender when patronizing the Coffee House alone and how their gender performances embodied normative ideas of gender. And secondly, I look at the gender performances of heterosexual couples.

I. HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

The majority of men's gender performances fell narrowly into the category of hegemonic masculinity. This particular gender performance was accomplished through assertions of normative forms of masculinity. Part of this gender performance of masculinity involved distancing from femininity. Connell (2005) states that hegemonic masculinity "essentializes male-female difference and ignores difference and exclusion within the gender categories" (p. 836). Therefore, men are able to effectively do hegemonic masculinity when they distance themselves from femininity and assert normalized and idealized forms of masculinity. What West and Zimmerman (1987) call "efficaciousness" sums up the gender performances among male customers at The Coffee House as individuals "were able to affect the physical and social environment through the exercise of physical strength or appropriate skills" (p. 141).

Men portrayed subtle forms of dominance through a multitude of means. The individuals in this site showed and exercised dominance most commonly through direct eye contact and assertiveness. In comparison with female customers, males had a tendency to make direct eye contact when ordering. In one particular instance, while ordering a drink, a male customer made very direct and intense eye contact with

me which was uncomfortable to break. I had to break the eye contact in order to walk his drink to the bar. When I returned to the counter to complete his transaction he continued to stare intensely, not breaking eye contact. This counters the observation of female customers who did not engage in intense or prolonged eye contact. This is a gender performance that is rooted in dominance and played out by individuals that perform hegemonic masculinity.

This performance of hegemonic masculinity was also observable through the lack of emotion and empathy. In a customer service setting that is comprised of extensive emotional labor (Wharton 2009), men were at times apathetic to the overall customer service interaction and created physical and emotional distance from service workers. A middle-aged male customer came in and ordered a large Americano. He did not engage in dialogue with the two baristas at the bar and instead lingered awkwardly at the end of the hand-off plane, pacing from one position to another repeatedly while staring incessantly without engaging in small talk. He did not make eye contact or thank the baristas when they called out his drink. This man's interaction was detached, aloof, and further intensifies the overall understanding of doing gender at The Coffee House. Doing gender in a manner that aligns with hegemonic masculinity gives way to not only a personification of dominance, but also a lack of engagement. It is very common for customers to chat idly with baristas on bar as they make drinks. This ranges from very simple small talk to more personalized engagements depending on the relationship to the customer. However, this disregard for the emotional labor and customer service interaction serves as an emotional disconnect which is essential to the performance of hegemonic masculinity.

Men often performed hegemonic masculinity by distancing themselves from females and femininity. The dichotomous nature of masculinity and femininity permits masculinity to be justified through the rejection of all things that have been socially constructed as feminine. During one observation, a middle-aged male, dressed in a suit and tie, had been waiting for the men's restroom to become available for quite some time. There are two single-stall unisex bathrooms in the cafe that are assigned, unnecessarily, to a respective gender. I informed the man that the bathrooms were exactly the same and that he was more than welcome to use the women's restroom. He smirked

and said that he was fine waiting. This type of interaction was not uncommon and works to fortify the idea of hegemonic masculinity and the distancing from what is identified as feminine. The business attired coupled with the sarcastic apprehension to step out of a male defined space and engage with what has been socially constructed as feminine extenuates the gender disparity that is reinforced by hegemonic gender performances.

Males that performed hegemonic masculinity were not only unwilling to engage with feminine space, but also created vocal rationalizations when they would engage with what is seen as the feminine. In many instances there were verbal accounts given by customers in reference to physical objects such as merchandise, food items, or drinks. A male approached the register and put both palms face down on the counter while he supported his upper body with his arms. He gazed up at the menus, scanning quickly and repeatedly without taking breaks or asking questions. After thinking for a while he stated that he didn't want to get a "foo foo" drink, but couldn't resist. While this individual did eventually choose a drink that he categorized as "foo foo," the dichotomized nature of gender remains. The vocalization that a particular drink is "foo foo" personifies a particular object as having feminine qualities. By explicitly stating that he did not want a "foo foo" drink it is clear that this individual was attempting to distance himself from appropriating culturally feminine objects. The vocal rationalization to me, the customer service worker, helped to mediate the negative associations that he had with femininity. In this way, it is possible to realize that this individual was very aware of the accountability that comes with doing gender and therefore felt that it was necessary to vocally rationalize his choice as he attempted to put one foot outside the box of traditional masculinity. In essence, he felt that his masculine performance was not compatible with a drink order he identified as feminine. By asserting traditional masculinity as separate from traditional femininity, males are able to secure their dominant gender position.

While hegemonic masculinity seemed to prevail in most of the interactions that I had with male customers over the course of my observations, this was not the sole form of doing gender for men. For example, the performance of alternative masculinities came into play when interacting with a college-aged, Asian, male customer. He approached the register and immediately complemented my lipstick color. Meticulously

dressed with a messenger bag draped over his shoulder, this individual was moderately effeminate. He paid in cash and when I gave him his change, he tossed it into the tip jar. This individual performed an alternative masculinity that was not constructed around dominance, but rather embraced feminine performance in dress and stature. He not only engaged in the customer service interaction, but chose to participate in the emotional labor that constitutes customer service work which can be seen through the extra dialogue that accompanied the normal small talk that is ubiquitous in almost all interactions. This is one example of the many alternative masculinities that were present in customer service interactions with men over the course of my observations. However, in general, hegemonic masculinity was the most prevalent form of gender presentation.

II. EMPHASIZED FEMININITY

In general, females patronizing the coffee shop alone performed emphasized femininity. West and Zimmerman (1987) state that this gender performance accentuates the portrayal of women as “ornamental objects” (p. 141). Here, the individual that is engaging with emphasized femininity becomes an ornamental object through the emphasis on appearance and material artifacts as well as the compliance exhibited during social interaction. More specifically, in this setting, emphasized femininity is characterized by timidity, lack of eye contact, indecisiveness, and need for apology. These characteristics perpetuate the idea of women as “ornamental objects” in that they are decorative and complicit. Connell (1987) elaborates on this by stating that emphasized femininity is “oriented to [accommodate] the interests and desires of men” (p. 183). Therefore, the compliance present in emphasized femininity works to enhance the dominance played out by hegemonic masculinity.

Many of the interactions that I had with females were comprised of timidity and apprehension. This contrasts greatly with the dominance that was portrayed by men. A young female came into the store and was very timid, not approaching the register or initiating conversation. When I approached the counter to ring her up I asked her how her day was going. She did not respond to the question and instead quietly said: “Small caramel latte. Extra hot, please.” I quickly rang her up and said, “Thank you.” She nodded her head, smiled, and turned to walk

away. While this interaction at first glance may be deemed as a decisive and efficient, the real underpinnings reside in the body language and hesitation that was present prior to the interaction. Similar scenarios occurred during other observations. In another instance, a short woman with stark gray hair came into the store and ordered an eggnog latte. When I called the drink at the hand-off plane she walked up quickly grabbed the drink and nodded her head at me as she mumbled “thank you” under her breath. While these interactions parallel the emotional distance performed by male customers, they are not synonymous. For men, emotional distance was used as a way to disengage from the emotional labor present in customer service work which could be viewed as domineering from a customer service standpoint due to the lack of emotional involvement. For women, the distance may be categorized by apprehension rather than disengagement. In this sense, females gender portrayal was less rooted in dominance and seemed to be more compliant and complimentary.

This emphasized femininity continues throughout the observations not only in the physical portrayal, but also the vocal indicators, or lack-there-of. During observations there was a college-aged, short female with long dark brown hair who came into the store. As I was ringing her up she changed her mind on what she wanted to order mid-transaction. She apologized profusely for her indecisiveness. I told her it was not a problem and proceeded to re-write her drink and re-ring her order. She paid, apologized again, and walked to the hand-off plane. The excessive apologizing following her discrepancy in ordering could be seen as sincerity, but can more closely be linked to passivity. This passivity was common in interactions with female customers, but was not present in interactions with male customers. Men rarely apologized for any discrepancy in an interaction which could be an extension of dominance and entitlement. Therefore, the passivity exhibited was inconsistent with the assertion displayed by males in the customer service realm further creating difference.

While women were physically timid and vocally passive, women also had a tendency to be limited in their decision making and were more inclined to comply with employee suggestions. This was of particular significance when listening to the conversations that one of my coworkers was having with a customer. As the business was slower at night and less steady,

it was possible for employees to engage more extensively with customers. In one instance, a young, white female came into the store and was very indecisive about what she wanted to order. She asked one of my coworkers multiple questions about drink recipes. After my coworker offered five drink descriptions, the customer asked them for a personal suggestion. Following the suggestion, she agreed immediately without further questions. This type of compliance was a large component of performing emphasized femininity at The Coffee House. This type of interaction was exclusive to individuals that were not performing hegemonic masculinity. It was prevalent among individuals that participated in emphasized femininity and some alternative masculinities.

Not all women engaged in emphasized femininity. There were quite a few women I observed who performed alternative femininities. Of particular interest was an older female who had come into the store to purchase whole bean coffee. Upon entering the store, she walked to the coffee wall bay and without hesitation grabbed a pound of dark roast coffee. She approached the counter and pushed her coffee towards me and while digging through her wallet she said: "I need this ground on 7." I handed the coffee off to my bar help who worked on grinding the coffee for her. I returned to the register and inquired if she would like a drink today. She said that she would like an iced triple espresso in a medium cup with the shots on the bottom and the ice on top, not stirred or shaken. She insisted that the ice melts too fast. It was uncommon for females to be so detailed about their drink orders without prompts. However, this customer was scripted in her engagement and was decisive and assertive in regards to her needs. This deviation from the general trend is important in understanding that emphasized femininity is not the only way in which women performed gender at The Coffee House. However, the larger trend of emphasized femininity insinuates that it is important due to the prevalence across an array of customers and interactions. The gender performances exhibited by both males and females were even more extreme in the context of heterosexual couples.

III. HETEROSEXUAL COUPLES

Traditional gender performances were the most dominant and salient when interacting with individuals. This notion became even starker within the couple context. The relationship

between individuals leads to a deeper understanding of the way in which gender is enacted in a customer service setting. In this instance, couples become an important sight of gender performances in that individuals are not only doing gender, but doing gender in relation to an oppositely gendered partner.

When engaging in small talk with couples, it was common that males dominated the conversation. For example, a young male and female came into the store and ordered beverages. I did not interact with them at the register, but made their drinks and interacted with them at the hand-off plane. I asked them what they were up to that evening. The male made eye contact and responded by saying: "I think we're just going to hang out and enjoy our evening." He then glanced at the female who smiled and looked at the floor while he proceeded to reciprocate the conversation by asking what I was doing with my evening. The female did not make eye contact or engage in dialogue and let her male partner guide the conversation. Here, the emphasized femininity that was observed becomes more prominent as the woman takes a submissive and compliant role in the interaction allowing the male to dominate and speak for the both of them. There were multiple instances in which this female submission, in the context of a heterosexual relationship, was prominent. During another observation a couple came into the store and approached the counter simultaneously, hand in hand. I asked them how their day was going, to which the male replied: "Very well, thank you." The female did not respond. I asked them what I could get them. The male looked at his female counterpart who shook her head, insinuating that he order first. He ordered a grande eggnog latte. The female abruptly ordered a tall of the same thing. The female then proceeded to pay without further discussion or eye contact. Regardless of her position as a provider, the female insisted that the male go first even though she had clearly known what she wanted. Even in the dominant role of paying the female took a submissive stance to ordering allowing her male counterpart to not only order first, but also carry the customer service interaction.

This female compliance and lack of interaction in the context of a customer service setting highlights the saliency of emphasized femininity in couple interactions. The ornamental nature of the female performing emphasized femininity was also present within couple interactions. In one instance, an young, Asian couple that were similar in height came in to the store.

The male had his hair meticulously styled with a charcoal blazer and glasses. The female was wearing a navy blue Burberry coat and had her hair pilled effortlessly on top of her head in a bun. The male ordered a mocha and I inquired if he wanted whipped cream. The male cocked his head to his right to look at his female counterpart who glanced up at him and shook her head. He turned back towards me and affirmed that the drink that he was ordering for the female did not have whipped cream. He then proceeded to order his own drink. In this instance, the male ordered for the female and the female did not engage in the customer service interaction at all. In this interaction the female acted in an ornamental fashion not only in appearance, but also in the act of compliance in reference to her male partner.

Not all heterosexual couples performed traditional gender roles, however. In one particular instance a college-aged couple came into the store. They approached the register in unison. The female stepped forward and ordered for both of them and continued to pay while the male stood behind and to the left of the female. When waiting for their drinks the male sat at the bar seating across from the hand-off plane while the female waited for their drinks. When the barista finished preparing the drinks, the female thanked him and carried her drink as well as her partner's to the bar seating. In this particular instance, the female took on a dominant role as provider while the male takes on a complicit role not only in regards to providing, but also in body language and lack of engagement. This role reversal was a notable exception to the general pattern.

In these gendered performances, males perform an active role while women seem to play a support role. Within couples, it is not that the submission or dominance is caused by the individuals, but rather that the structure of accountability inherent in doing gender could encourage the performance of emphasized femininity in relation to hegemonic masculinity. While not all individuals participated in normative gender performances, the prevalence of these performances creates a framework in which to analyze the larger structure under which doing gender is understood.

DISCUSSION

Overall, this research indicates that males and females performed traditional gender roles at The Coffee House. The dominant and active male role coupled with the complicit and passive female role dichotomizes performances of gender. Gender performances are context specific and therefore the particular performances exhibited by customers may not hold in all of their other social interactions. Therefore, these findings are not generalizable to all coffee shops or customer service jobs. However, gender performances change across settings and by studying people at this coffee shop it is possible to capture a snapshot of every day life and every day interaction. While it is important to not only understand the specific ways in which individuals do gender, it is also important to understand the larger implications of such gender performances.

When looking at heterosexual couples it was interesting to see the way in which normative gender performances were carried into the context of a relationship. The accountability in this type of a relationship could work to uphold social expectations of normative gender performances. The pressure of accountability in the public sphere seems to encourage traditional gender performance. Therefore, individuals are not only held accountable to social constructions of gender, but also to the individuals in which they are forming relationships with. While it was not possible to conclude that the gender performances of couples were the product of West and Zimmerman's (1987) notion of accountability, it is important to recognize the pressures that are placed on individuals in the public sphere by the organization, the customer service setting, and the other individuals in the setting. These coupled gender performances, however beneficial to social meaning and interaction, could potentially work to reinforce the idea of innate and biologically rooted gender. Creating and reinforcing the idea of essentialism perpetuates the inequalities that accompany the dichotomous notion of doing gender.

The performance of hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity in my site may reinforce or reproduce the idea of innate gender. Masculinity and femininity at large function in a fashion of mutual exclusivity. This is due, in part, to pre-conceived notions of gender performances as a result of inherent difference. The problem with essentializing the genders based solely on difference is that there is no room for overlap. This lack

of overlap positions gender as a product of biology rather than society (Connell 1995). As long as such differences continue to be present between males and females in gender performance such actions will continue to uphold the inequalities that create discrepancies in the understanding and treatment of gendered bodies (Ridgeway 2011). This has powerful implications for individuals who are engaging in or participating in these traditional gender performances. The way in which customers interact with employees shapes and reinforces present notions of gender. Many of my coworkers are verbal about their understanding of male and female gender performances. At times, they were quick to assume passivity or compliance from female customers regardless of their engagement with emphasized femininity as well as assumed assertiveness and confidence in men regardless of the performances of hegemonic masculinity. In essence, they were quick to essentialize male and female behavior based on the traditional gender performances that took place at The Coffee House. Therefore, traditional gender performances were also upheld by my coworkers through their narratives of essentialist gender differences. This has serious implications in that such beliefs make it impossible for social actors to have agency or use resistance towards gender constructs leaving traditional performances as the only viable option. Therefore, the concept of doing gender and the prevalence of normative gender performances by patrons has serious implications for resistance and reinforcement.

“Hegemonic masculinity establishes its hegemony partly by its claim to embody the power of reason, and thus represent the interests of the whole society.”
– Connell

In my particular site it was obvious that hegemonic masculinity held privilege in respect to emphasized femininity it that it was preferred by my coworkers. These gender performances were preferred in that they more often resulted in fluidity, efficiency, and ease. These characteristics are highly valued in the world of corporate customer service and rationalization. The system of rationalization that has come to define the public and private spheres has become reliant on the values that are held within hegemonic masculinity. The ideas of being reliable, assertive, dominant, and independent are prevalent not only in the gender portrayals played out by males at The Coffee House, but are systemically bound to a larger system, in this case corporatism. Connell (1995) states that: “Hegemonic masculinity establishes its hegemony partly by its claim to embody the power of reason, and thus represent the interests of the whole society” (p. 164). Thus, this preference possibly comes from individual’s larger desires for assertion and independence. In a world that is dominated by a global capitalist enterprise the dichotomized nature of masculinity seems to be the preferred gender display and therefore holds more access to privilege. In order to better understand gender it would be necessary to look into the deeper implications of how, or even if, these organizational settings and public spaces, like The Coffee House, not only result in, but also encourage traditional gender roles.

LIMITATIONS

Such considerations as my gender, time of day, and customer demographics are all variables that could not be controlled for and may have shaped the observations or interactions. Future research should look at the way in which customers’ gender performances are affected by the gender of the worker. There were a couple instances in which male customers would engage with me in reference to an alternative masculinities, but engage with my male coworkers in reference to hegemonic masculinity. This obvious change in gender performance could have been attributed to the sex of the worker involved in the interaction. Also, due to my extended experience in customer service and my past familiarity with this particular coffee shop, it is possible to conclude that my observations may have missed some particular nuances in customer service interactions due to my familiarity with the routines, physical space, and customers. In order to make sure this was not a barrier it would have been necessary to

carry out observations for a longer period of time in order to ensure that other gender performances were not being overlooked.

During my observations I was unable to collect substantial data on homosexual couples, therefore, I was only able to focus on heterosexual couples. However, Connell (1987) states that “the most important feature of contemporary hegemonic masculinity is that it is heterosexual” (p. 186). Since, hegemonic masculinity was so salient in this particular location it would have been interesting to have had data to compare and contrast to heterosexual couples. Therefore, future research should look at the ways in which homosexual couples do gender and the ways in which accountability is enacted in social interaction. Of particular interest would be whether doing gender for these couples is used a mechanism of resistance or compliance.

Due to the location of this particular coffee shop it is impossible to consider the results of this study to be generalizable to other coffee shops or other universities. This university in particular is nontraditional due to its urban location and student demographic (e.g. International students and high transfer rate). Such individual gender performances vary across time and place creating a complex system of understanding that is rooted in social and cultural meaning. Therefore, intersectional approaches should be incorporated into future research on doing gender. While gender is an important and salient social identity, it is not a singular identity, and instead is informed by many other coexisting identities. Even though these findings are not generalizable they do give insight into the way in which gender is not an individual identity, but rather a social accomplishment.

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“BABY, TE AMO”: CODE SWITCHING AS A WAY TO DEVELOP AND LIMIT INTIMACY IN MULTILINGUAL, ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores code switching between individuals involved in multilingual, romantic relationship, these being defined as relationships in which at least one partner speaks at least one other language. Grounded in previous research in the field of code switching but departing from its concentration on macro-social phenomenon and rather focusing on language alternation in a much more intimate setting, this study will answer the following questions: what forms does code switching take among these couples? What does it mean to code-switch for these romantic couples? Lastly, what relational function does code switching play? By conducting ethnographic interviews with five individuals and two couples and analyzing the data through Spradley's (1980) developmental research sequence, five forms of code switching emerged. Meanings of these code-switches include consideration, possessing authority in the relationship, professional or romantic identity, emotional conveyance, identity performance, and secrecy. The relational function that these meanings of code switching play among these couples is ascertained as being a way to increase or limit intimacy. Finally, implications for relationships of this type are discussed as well as further directions for studies in this field.

Keywords: multilingualism, code switching, identity, interpersonal communication, romantic relationships

INTRODUCTION

In our ever-globalizing world, the amount of interaction between natives of various tongues and multi-linguals has grown exponentially. Thus, it logically follows that the amount of code switching, or language alternation, between these multi-linguals has likewise increased. The formation of romantic relationships among these multilingual individuals stands out as one special case of communicative interaction, one that involves various forms of code switching. The interpretation that is received from the code switches provide fascinating insight into the phenomenon of love crossing borders and holds great interest for the ethnographer. Ultimately, these meanings reveal how code switching functions as a relational tool for multi-lingual couples. Over the course of this paper, I will first give an overview of the literature, from the first relevant study to the most recent, explain my methods, and discuss the results. Lastly, I will examine the implications and directions for further study.

CODE SWITCHING AND ETHNOGRAPHY: FROM POST-POSITIVIST BEGINNINGS TO NEW DIRECTIONS

Code switching occurs in speech when interlocutors change languages or between different varieties of one language, these called “codes”, within a single speech event (Saville-Troike 2003, 48). Early studies of the alternation between two codes in a speech community include George Barker’s (1947) documentation of Mexican-Americans switching between English and Spanish and Uriel Weinreich’s (1953) study of language contact and multilingualism in Switzerland, a country with four official languages (Nilep 2006, 4). Weinreich’s (1953) investigation attempted to examine code switching from the perspectives of several different speech communities, but failed to take into account the full sociolinguistic context and individual speech community norms. The study instead take a positivist approach by imputing the reasons behind how and why individuals switch between codes to emerging psychological theories or external factors such as “the usefulness of a language, its role in social advance, and its literary-cultural value” (71-72).

Nonetheless, code switching scholarship truly makes its emergence into the Ethnography of Communication discipline with Blom and Gumperz’s (1972) investigation of speakers in a northern Norwegian town who regularly switched back and forth between standard Norwegian and a local dialect. In this

seminal study, the researchers identify two concepts within this communicative phenomenon: situational code switching and metaphorical code switching. The former, illustrated by alternation of codes from both physical spaces such as school to the workplace and also more abstract situations such as from debates to greetings, hinges upon linguistic form appropriate to the social event (Blom and Gumperz 1972). The latter term applies to situations in which “...is there [no] significant change in definition of participants’ mutual rights and obligations” (425) within a conversation but a change in code connotes distinct meanings, all while discussing the same topic (Blom and Gumperz 1972). Gumperz later develops his view on situational code switching in his book *Discourse Strategies*, renaming it “conversational code switching,” a term which claims that interlocutors change between codes “...[building] on their own and their audience’s abstract knowledge of situational norms, to communicate metaphoric information on how they intend their words to be understood” (1982, 61). Furthermore, Gumperz (1982) developed a list of functions for why multi-linguals switch codes, all “... [signaling] contextual information equivalent to what in monolingual settings is conveyed through prosody or other syntactic or lexical processes” (98) or, in other words, the alternation between different languages or varieties of the same language gives speakers clues on how utterances should be interpreted.

Taking cues from Blom and Gumperz, Goffman (1979) developed the concept of “footing” claiming “Gumperz and his co-workers now also begin to look at code switching like a behavior that doesn’t involve code switch at all...”, (127) in reference to an unpublished study in which no code switch occurred amongst the speakers, but changes in body orientation, tone, and other paralinguistic features clearly marked shifts. Goffman explains footing as the following: “A change in footing implies a change in alignment we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance. A change in footing is another way of talking about a change in our frame for events” (1979, 128). Goffman’s idea of footing compelled later sociolinguists to not only to give more attention to aspects of speaking other than language, but also take into consideration how power relationships manifest themselves in code switching, a concept Saville-Troike (2003) defines as “participation framework” (49).

Goffman’s concept of footing, then, combined with Blom

and Gumperz's ideas concerning code switching, would allow a new understanding of how individual speakers negotiate meanings in their interactions; code switching permits interlocutors to signal how exactly a certain utterance is to be interpreted, thus changing the footing of speaker. By using a certain phrase or word in one code, despite employing a different code for the majority of the interaction, and switching back, the interlocutor changes the frame of the other participants for that specific speech event, creating deeper levels of meaning that must be interpreted accordingly.

After Blom and Gumperz's work, exploration into the field of code switching enjoyed a renaissance, with several scholars forging paths into the psychological aspects of code switching, identity and bilingualism, and, most importantly for this study, interactionism as a way to study code switching (Nilep 2006, 10). For the ethnographer studying romantic relationships, a researcher seeking local meaning according to just two individuals, Peter Auer's (1984) interaction perspective stands out as the best approach. The interaction perspective "...is concerned with the meaning/function in individual language alternation in conversation," (1) in contrast the identity perspective, which focuses on "which bilingual communities show language alternation in which situation and why" (1) or psychological approaches concentrating on external factors, alien to the ethnographic methodology (Auer 1984). Auer's (1984) new approach starts where Blom and Gumperz left off, tweaking the previous scholars' ideas to define new procedures for examining code switching, processes that aim at "...coming to a local (situated) interpretation where the exact meaning or function of language alternation is both the result of contextual information and [other] general procedures" (11). Auer's findings in the case studies with bilinguals in Sicily expound on the use of code switching by speakers as a free-choice, with no real connections to utterance-type, fixed genres, or situational contexts, attacking post-positivist explanations of code switching while encouraging further study into the sociolinguistic meanings of speakers' language choice and alternation (1984).

In the late-nineties and into the 2000s, many scholars began conducting investigations centering on bilingualism, many extrapolating Auer's idea of interactionism (Li Wei 1998; Moyer 1998; Gardner-Chloros 2009). One scholar in particular, Christopher Stroud, began a push for an integrated approach between

"Bilinguals commonly observe that they are a 'different person' in each of their two languages"
– Koven

the concrete language analysis and social implications. Stroud (1998) expanded on this approach, stating: "...conversational code switching need to be framed within an ethnographic perspective which attends to details in how people perceive their lives, as well as in an understanding of societal dynamics. The ethnographical framing needs to be wedded to a detailed analysis of conversational microinteraction and viewed against the background of a broad notion of context. In other words, conversational code switching is so heavily implicated in social life that it cannot be treated apart from an analysis of social phenomena (232). This approach, which seeks to combine analyses of speakers' means, the codes, and the meanings, proves extremely useful to the ethnographer, whose true mission comprises both these aspects.

In terms of code switching and language use among individuals and romantic couples, as opposed to macro-studies involving communities, the literature remains scarce. Koven's (2007) investigation on bilingual's enactments of self in different languages makes explicit a concept that will be discussed later in this paper, one that had not yet appeared in the previous literature: "Bilinguals commonly observe that they are a 'different person' in each of their two languages" (1). However, Koven's study does not touch on how individuals enact their identities

in romantic relationships, rather concentrating on how they feel speaking one language or another in formal interview (Koven 2007). Ervin-Tripp (1968) conducted one superficial study examining the speaking habits of Japanese-American couples, and Gal (1978) explored bilingualism versus monolingualism as a technique to attract partners based on identity representation, but until Ingrid Piller's report of language choice German-English and German-American couples in 2001, ethnographic probes into this topic had largely been superficial and never explicitly concentrated on romantic couples. Besides filling this gap in the literature, this study also attempts to give a more ethnographic viewpoint of the topic, given the Piller's (2001) publication, despite its claims to argue "...for a social construction approach to the study of intercultural communication" and identify "...language choice as a major factor in the linguistic construction of cultural identity" (12) ultimately ends up attributing language choice and code switches to external factors such as location and does not discuss other meanings that code switching hold for the couples besides identity representation. Thus, this paper presents itself to remedy both the absence of scholarship on the topic of code switching in romantic, multilingual couples and, via ethnographic methodology, give a voice to participants in their interpretations of the meanings of those code switches. This study will answer the following questions:

RQ1: What forms does code switching take between romantic couples?

RQ2: What does it mean to code-switch for romantic couples?

RQ3: What relational function is being performed between the partners in these couples?

METHOD

Before beginning my formal investigation of code switching, I engaged in participant observation, both at my university and in the private setting of my home due to the bilingual nature of my own personal, romantic relationship. Because of the private nature of the majority of romantic communication among couples, first-hand observation would have been quite difficult and unfeasible. Thus, I chose to focus instead on reports of code switching and employed another method that would allow me indirect access to the data: ethnographic interviews (Baxter and Babbie 2004). I formulated interview questions based on the insights I gained from my observations and made sure to assure participants of their anonymity (Baxter and Babbie 2004). This method allowed me to access romantic partners' ideas about code switching. Additionally, after participants' explanations in the first interview had been recorded, I compared them to check if they rang true to the other interviewees (Baxter and Babbie 2004).

Because this study centers on reports of code switching in romantic relationships, I conducted interviews with both couples and individuals. Interviews are interactional events and the presence or absence of one of the partners will construct two different types of data (Wortham et al. 2011). Thus, by interviewing both couples and individuals, I was able to triangulate data from both kinds of reports (Baxter and Babbie 2004). Of the seven total interviews, two were carried out with both members of the couple present and five with only one partner. Among the interviewees were eight students from my university and one professor from another university, ages ranging from 20 to 55. All participants have been or are currently involved in a multilingual, romantic relationship in which at least one member of the pair spoke at least two languages fluently. Of the one-on-one interviews, only two were presently in a romantic, multilingual relationship. All interviewees spoke English and Spanish, one couple also spoke Russian, and one individual spoke Portuguese as well. All interviews were conducted in English and took place in various locations in Madrid, Spain, including the homes of the interviewees, cafes, bars, and restaurants. The average length of the interview neared one hour.

Data collection was grounded in Spradley's (1979) protocol for conducting an ethnographic interview. I began by briefing the participants on the purpose of the study and acquired verbal

consent. Following this short briefing, I collected information on the participants' language abilities and asked "grand tour" questions centered on their experience with multilingual, romantic relationships, defining this as a relationship in which at least one partner was fluent of more than one language. In all cases in which an interviewee had had multiple relationships of this type, they related to me their experiences in chronological order, at my suggestion. I often put forth questions during their answers attempting to clarify their meanings in my notes and checked to see if what other past interviewees had said also rang true to the current interviewee(s). I also had to guide the course of the interview to stay on the topic of code switching. At the end of each interview, I asked if the participants had any further comments. All data was recorded during the interview by summarizing the responses of the interviewees in shorthand. Direct quotes were noted when deemed appropriate.

DATA ANALYSIS

In my analysis of the data collected from these formal, ethnographic interviews, I employed Spradley's (1980) developmental research sequence (DRS). To carry out the taxonomic analysis, the first step of DRS, I first unitized my data based on my research questions one and two. For (RQ1) I identified types of code switching among couples following the semantic relation "x is a type of code switching", and for (RQ2) I then categorized the meanings couples assign to these different types using another semantic relationship, "x is a meaning of code switching" (Spradley 1980, 97-98). After, I conducted componential analysis of the latter taxonomy and identified the following contrasts: \pm control, \pm seriousness, \pm closeness, \pm consideration, \pm authenticity, and \pm comfort. Finally, with the theme analysis I connected types of code switching and meanings to the function of code switching in a romantic relationship.

ANALYSES

Forms of code switching

Five concrete forms of code switching, or not code switching, among multilinguals in romantic relationships emerged from the data: (1) no code switching with one partner lacking knowledge of the other partner's second language, (2) code switching with one partner lacking knowledge of the other's second language, (3) code switching from the onset of the relationship with equal knowledge of the languages spoken by both partners, (4) code switching incorporated later into the relationship with equal knowledge of the languages spoken by both partners, and, finally, (5) attempts at code switching denied by one partner with partners' unequal or equal knowledge of both languages. I will now examine these specific instances one-by-one, including their meanings according to the participants, concluding with an overall analysis of the relational function of code switching between multilingual couples.

No code switching with one partner lacking knowledge of the other partner's second language

Several times during the interviews, participants mentioned instances in which no code switching occurred throughout the duration of their relationship, attributing the lack of language alternation to practical reasons including “no choice but to speak the common language”, “language barriers”, or even calling code switching “impossible”. Interviewees reported that a code-switch on behalf of one partner to a language that the other did not speak of would have created discomfort, putting the other partner ill at ease by highlighting their lack of knowledge of the language. Thus, code switching did not occur between participants because they interpreted not code switching as a desire to maintain a level of comfort between the couple, and, likewise, being considerate of the other partner for not wanting to create an environment of discomfort. Another meaning of not code switching also materialized in the data: authority in a relationship. One interviewee noted that communicating in a second language, especially in argumentative speech acts, “feels like a disadvantage”. Another individual also responded that Spanish gave her partner the upper-hand in the relationship, allowing him to “dominate” and be “patronizing” due to his efficacy in communicating in the language of interaction, while circumscribing the possibility that the other partner in the relationship changed codes to a language he did not understand, potentially putting him at a disadvantage.

Code switching with one partner lacking knowledge of the other's second language

Although some interviewees reported not code switching in a relationship in which one partner did not know the second language of the other, the majority of participants did, in fact, give accounts of code switching in despite one partner's lack of knowledge of the other's second language. In sharing their experiences, the most often cited interpretation of this was the emphasis of emotions. For example, in a multilingual relationship involving a native Spanish and English speaker and a bilingual Spanish and Portuguese speaker, the interviewee attributed the use of English or Portuguese in the relationship as a conveyor of strong sentiments, specifically when one partner was “mad-mad”. Furthermore, many participants contested that displaying emotions while employing their native language, even if the other partner did not understand, proved more “natural” and thus compounded the significance of the emotion being com-

municated, despite the unintelligibility of the spoken words to the other partner.

Other interpretations of code switching in romantic relationships included formal language instruction and casual language practice. In two instances, interviewees met their partners through teaching English and, thus, employing a certain code lead to an interpretation of a professional identity, that of a language instructor. One participant attested that solely communicating in English meant “student”, but that English and Portuguese, which the participant did not understand quite well, together signified romance. Conversely, casual language practice between couples with unequal knowledge of the second language of one partner also emerged as a meaning in the data. Instead of insinuating a professional role, this rather created a casual, comfortable environment in which couples could change their relationship by “connecting more deeply because of both languages”, verbal practice playing a large role in allowing couples to achieve this secondary language acquisition.

Code switching from the onset of the relationship with equal knowledge of the languages spoken by both partners

In the third form by which code switching manifests itself in a multilingual relationship, several meanings emerged from the data. Firstly, couples that were confronted by a code-switch often interpreted their partner as desirous of secrecy or that the message was meant for just them. Two individuals stated that Russian played the role of a “secret code” in their relationship to talk about “someone in the same room”, whereas Spanish provided another couple with the ability to “shit talk” without having bystanders comprehend. Adding value to humor also appeared as an interpretation of code switching. For example, speakers would alternate between codes because certain expressions prove funnier in another language, to use language-specific puns, or to explain different cultural memes. One individual even said that calling the other partner by names such as “calcetín” (“sock”) or “apartamento” (“apartment”) qualified as humorous only merely for the fact that the expressions were stated in Spanish; English would have resulted illogical and hollow. Lastly, all participants cited the full conveyance of emotions and identity performance as an interpretation of code switching. One couple said that code switching afforded them a manner to “better express sentiment” and allow both partners to “feel a part of [the other's] culture”. In a different instance, an individual said that monolinguals

“didn’t know all of her”, stressing the importance of the identity meanings of code switching. Another interviewee stated that she “couldn’t be her real self in Spanish”, referring to how the use of English with her bilingual partner conferred the transmittance of “true” identity to the utterance.

Code switching incorporated later into the relationship with equal knowledge of the languages spoken by both partners

For this form of code switching, all meaning from the above sections also became salient in the data: secrecy, humor, and the conveyance of identity and emotions. However, one disparate element likewise manifested itself: the incorporation of a language known by both partners as a signifier of romance. In relating her experience with an individual with whom this interviewee had initiated a relationship in English, she stated, “Spanish led to the real him”, demarcating the boundary between non-romance and romance with a code-switch. Furthermore, another couple expressed the same sentiment, sharing their account of meeting in English but then incorporating Russian and Spanish later on as more “intimate” ways to communicate.

Attempts at code switching denied by one partner with partners’ equal or unequal knowledge of both languages

This last form of code switching proved interesting in its appearance in several speakers’ accounts of experiences in multilingual, romantic relationships. More than one interviewee stated that one point in time, whether they had a second language in common with their partners or not, that they denied an attempt at code switching, giving the reason behind this that they interpreted their partner’s code-switch as conveying a different identity, resulting in discomfort. A specific instance includes one native Spanish speaker’s response to her partner after his attempt at speaking Spanish, “Wow, you sound like a Mexican”, which quickly silenced the other partner and resulted in him not attempting to use Spanish again. Clearly, this speaker expressed that this code-switch meant her partner was assuming a new identity, given her description of him as a Mexican. Another case reported that one partner’s code-switch to English “crept her out”, clearly outlining the discomfort she felt at a foreign identity interpreted from an alternation in language.

Relational function

After analyzing the means and meanings of code switching, I will now tackle my third research question: what relational function is being performed between the partners in these cou-

ples? Given that the same salient characteristics appeared again and again in the componential analysis, such as closeness, authenticity, and comfort, I began to examine what cultural theme could tie together these aspects. Undoubtedly, code switching performs the role of creating or limiting intimacy within a multilingual, romantic relationship. The incorporation of a language later into a relationship that holds meanings of romance stands out as an explicit example of generating intimacy, while code switching to maintain a professional identity conversely limits intimacy between a couple and refines the relationship based on the meanings they impute to code switching utterances. However, beyond this, meanings of code switching such as humor, secrecy, the full conveyance of emotions, and identity performance also work to foment intimacy within a relationship, given that they increase closeness, a “...strong, frequent and diverse interdependence that lasts over a considerable period of time” (Kelley et al., 1983, p. 38). On the other hand, authority and different identity meanings work to restrict closeness, creating distance, and thus limit intimacy. Summarizing, code switching exists as a way by which multilingual couples can manage intimacy in a relationship.

IMPLICATIONS AND FURTHER DIRECTIONS

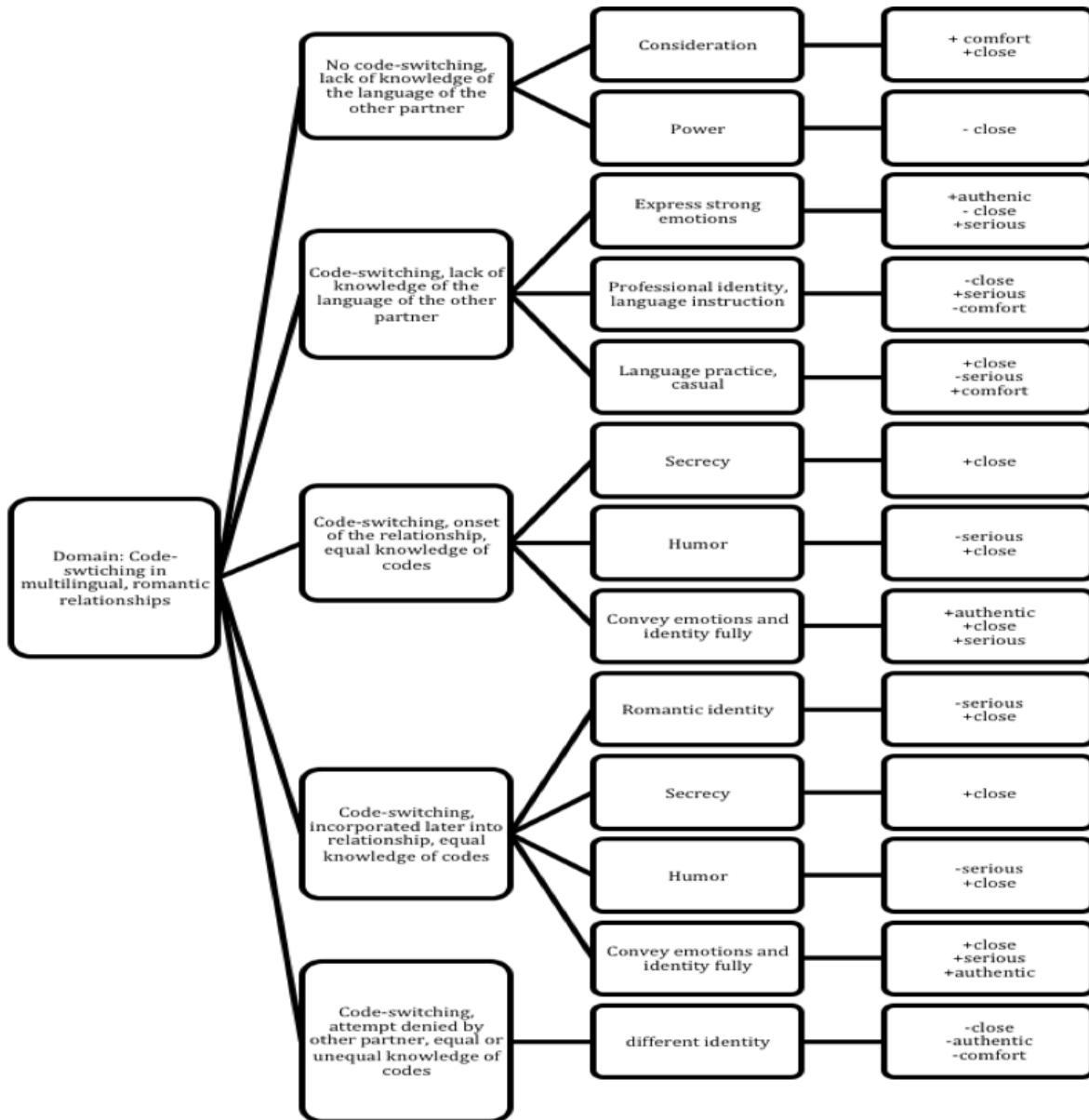
This paper aids understanding of how multilingual couples alternate between languages, the various meanings of those changes in language, and, most importantly, helps us understand what relational function code switching plays in their relationships. Taking a new step in the examination of romantic, multilingual relationships, this study calls into question many of the formerly discussed concepts in the literature. Code switching, as discussed by Stroud (1998) “is so heavily implicated in social life that it cannot be treated apart from an analysis of social phenomena”, and thus cannot figure in the realm of psychological approaches such as that of Weinreich (1953). Likewise, this study does not support the findings of the most current research in this field, that of Piller (2001), due to the fact that the participants in this study did not exclusively use one code or another based on any factors such as origin of the partners, habits, or the influence of the “community language”. However, building off Blom and Gumperz’s (1979, 1982) forays into this field, we come to the understanding that, although these “godfathers” of code switching had much to do with securing this phenomenon a place in the

scope and repertoire of study of the modern ethnographer, these researchers focused on identifying casual factors and did not consider contact interaction and negotiation between individual speakers as the axis and origin of the meaning of code switching. Goffman's (1998) work, though, when taken together with Blom and Gumperz's (1979), does allow a unique understanding of code switching that proves quite useful in this study. One couple offered a concrete example of a shift in footing: that of the illogical utterances "calceñin" or "apartamento". Without a change in footing, this interaction would be misinterpreted as a lack of understanding of the Spanish language, but due to one partner's shift in footing, the event is framed as humorous.

Examining the different types of code switching that occurs between multilingual couples helps us see the variety of communication styles between these increasingly common types of relationships. Moreover, by examining the different meanings attributed by members to these distinct forms of code switching, multilingual couples, who often suffer from communication issues due to the clash of multiple languages, can analyze what messages they are communicating with their code-switches and work to alleviate misunderstandings and conflict based on disparate interpretations of a certain utterance. By identifying code switching's function as a builder or destroyer of intimacy, multilingual couples how have this concept at their disposal when considering their interpersonal communication, allowing them to become more cognizant of meanings they are creating. More than this, and building off of Koven's (2007) and Piller's (2001) work into identity representation, this paper has broadened our understanding on how romantic and professional identity can be enacted in two or more language. As more and more individual are born or become bilingual in today's globalized world, understanding how these individuals understand themselves will become a focal point of ethnographic studies in the future. What remains to be investigated is if these concepts are relevant to multilinguals in a larger context, given the relatively small sample size of this study. Additionally, new directions could be taken in this field by considering not just multilingualism but also multiple nationalities in the domain of code switching. Given the growing rate of bilingual education across the globe, it would be interesting to perform investigations on if, how, and why two natives from the same country would code-switch between the language learned at home and the language learned

at school.

To conclude, the various means of code switching that emerged in this study, five in total, all possess certain meanings that sometimes even reconfigure frames of interpretation based on the sole use of code switching. These meanings hold deep implications for the couples themselves who continually negotiate said meanings via the use of code switching or, in some cases, not employing code switching. Ultimately, however, these meanings fulfill the relational function of regulating interpersonal intimacy between romantic, multilingual partners, an indispensable function in the maintenance of any relationship of this kind.



APPENDIX 1: DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH SEQUENCE

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From Sitamarhi to New Delhi Railway Station: **The Agricultural Antecedents to Childhood Migration in North India**

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ABSTRACT

In India, large-scale rural to urban migrations are occurring in record numbers within the last twenty to thirty years. These migrations are inflating the populations of major urban centers such as Delhi and Mumbai. Within these streams of migrations, the number of youth leaving to cities is also dramatically increasing. At the same time, deep agricultural transformations are taking place in rural sectors, greatly altering the landscape, the opportunities available, and ultimately the livelihoods of its people.

This paper aims to address the agricultural transformations occurring in India in relation to the migration of children from rural to urban centers. With a shifting, but uneven system of landholding, climatic changes, increasing mechanization and industrialization of agriculture, and new development projects, the agrarian system in rural India is rapidly changing. Using interviews from a variety of experts as well as urban and rural informants, I will draw connections between multiple transformations in agriculture with the increase of children running away to major cities, in turn acknowledging that within this complex system of movement, there are innumerable reasons for the migration of youth. In this manner, I make clear the interconnections between issues of agriculture and other socioeconomic, political, and historical factors. This research comes primarily from extended stays in Delhi in addition to rural villages in Bihar.

Keywords: migration; youth; agriculture; development; urban

Acronyms: SBT (Salaam Baalak Trust); IGSSS (Indo-Global Social Service Society); NGO (Non-governmental organization); HYV (High-Yield Variety)

INTRODUCTION: MAI AMERICA, BIHAR SE HU (I AM FROM AMERICA, BIHAR)

The ongoing joke in Salaam Baalak Trust (SBT), a temporary and permanent youth shelter for runaways and children of or on the street, was about Bihar.

“Kahan se hai, bhai?” (Where are you from, brother?)

“Bihar.”

“Kahan Bihar me?” (Where in Bihar?)

“America, Bihar.”

Countless children living in the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation-owned shelter were from Bihar. Many had only come a few years ago, while others had been part of SBT significantly longer. Yet, what was intriguing was they understood Bihar as a symbol of something greater than where their first homes were. This ironic assertion by children no older than twelve, framing America within Bihar, indicates a striking self-awareness of their position in an issue that transcends the individual level. Children are running away from Bihar in alarmingly high numbers and the kids at Salaam Baalak Trust are part of that. They knew I wanted to ask about it. They had heard this chorus before.

People have been migrating out of Bihar for decades. During the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 70s, which heightened agricultural productivity in India to historically unseen levels, Biharis left for seasonal labor in the high-yield variety (HYV) agricultural areas of north India, specifically the state of Punjab (Singh 2002). The work was more consistent, the wages were higher, and the agricultural system in Bihar was becoming bleaker (Oberai and Singh 1980). In Bihar, working in the fields for only four months out of the year was no longer sufficient for sustaining growing families and payoff expenses to powerful landowners. In the last fifty years, conditions in Bihar have undergone great transformation, creating a highly unstable and notoriously “backwards” state in the eyes of the Indian federal government (Sharma 2005, 960).

More Biharis’ began to leave their rural homes, moving to major cities such as Delhi and Mumbai. Leaving their homes behind in search of a more promising future, children came too alongside families, with friends, or alone. From the early 1990s through the 21st century, Delhi’s population of street children dramatically increased. A large portion of those children came from Bihar, where over 1.7 million people migrated from within the last decade (Kumar 2010). What is encouraging this migra-

tion of youth from rural areas of Bihar? In order to find an answer, one must shift the focus to the rural. What transformations can we see as catalysts for a growing trend of running away? The answers to these questions are tremendously complex, multi-dimensional puzzles that require careful analysis of an intricate web of historical, political, cultural, and socioeconomic dynamics.

This paper will primarily focus on one piece of this multifaceted pattern of migration: the agricultural antecedents to childhood migration. Additionally, I will explore the entanglements linking agriculture transformations to other relevant complex processes. First, the research will investigate the multiple controversial definitions that constitute a street child by referencing conditions in Delhi, then move on to discuss the livelihoods of rural Indian children. Afterwards, I will trace agricultural legacies in India with a focus on Bihar, connecting contemporary concerns and future implications with this history. The discussion will shift to issues beyond agriculture, namely educational failures, casteism, and the shared perceptions of urban and rural life. These sections point to the momentous effects agriculture is having on youth migrations as well as to other internal and external factors that contribute to these profound trends of departing rural villages to urban centers. It is important to note that while agricultural transformations have contributed to childhood migration, there are also complex networks and relationships that tie agriculture to many other historical, socioeconomic, and religious mechanisms, which are all simultaneously at work. It is impossible to isolate without erasing or simplifying the intricacies that produce the complex symptoms of social crisis we see today.

FIELDWORK & METHODOLOGY

My interest in India began in an undergraduate anthropology seminar, titled “Street Children”. I created a project that involved incorporating organic, sustainable agriculture within the lives of street children in Delhi. I saw it as a possible route for redirecting migrational flows and improving the rates of repatriation among street kids. This project, with the support of my advisor, led me to apply similar concepts to an undergraduate research project. I applied for a number of undergraduate research grants, which I was awarded in my sophomore year and began to prepare during the end of my semester. I conducted

fieldwork in India over the course of three months during the summer of 2012. My primary areas of study were in the capital, Delhi, and in the northeastern state of Bihar (see figure 1). The first month of my fieldwork was spent in Delhi, working closely with street children as well as with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide care and services to many former and present-day street children. While I spent a major portion of fieldwork in Delhi at railway platforms, temple markets, and major tourist areas—locations where many street children live—I also spent significant time at Salaam Baalak Trust, an NGO that has been a presence in Delhi among street children for over twenty years. They operate numerous shelters and contact points that provide safety and care to many of the children. I volunteered at a major shelter of SBT, teaching children rudimentary English and computer software skills. At that time, I was able to gain the trust of the children and begin learning of their histories

and troubles. My engagement at SBT provided crucial insight into many of my initial research questions; it also gave me time to sift through many of the pieces I heard from children on the street. Delhi presented me with a roadmap for understanding the livelihoods of these children, their survival mechanisms on the streets, and their networking and social organization. Lastly, the experience gave me a foundation to make sense of past rural migrations.

In the state of Bihar, I spent time primarily in two major districts: Sitamarhi, an area along the Nepal border notorious for child trafficking (Sakha 2012), and Samastipur a central town located on the banks of the Gandaki River. In nearby villages on the outskirts of these towns I spoke with local villagers, both young and old, about issues of running away, agricultural transformations within the villages, and their impressions of rural and urban areas. In addition, I met with organizers and children



Figure 1-North India Rural to Urban Migration Corridors (India 2001).

from local NGOs that were working to address issues of child labor and trafficking from rural source areas to major cities. In the final days of my fieldwork in Bihar, I spent time in the capital, Patna, speaking with children in a local NGO as well as on the major Patna railway junction. In Bihar, I was able to connect my experiences in Delhi with contemporary issues of rural life in a major source area for runaway children. This piece of my study provided essential links between the rural and urban, contributing to my understanding of the complexities of youth migration.

I obtained and recorded my field data through numerous methods, namely participation-observation and interviews. Alongside my participation in NGOs and in the villages themselves, these personal interactions were invaluable, helping me to interpret my research questions. Structuring my interviews as loosely-scripted or informal conversations allowed me access to specific, detailed first-person accounts of my primary foci, giving me crucial qualitative perspectives.

Much research was conducted alongside my primary informant and translator, Khushboo Jain, a Delhi-based researcher, activist, and Ph.D. candidate in sociology. Though my Hindi skills were proficient enough to hold a basic conversation, Khushboo's translations allowed me to delve deeper into the critical issues of my research. Her knowledge of Delhi's street children and organizational networks along with her unwavering passion towards making a difference for the children of Delhi proved to be essential. Her input was critical, constructive, and a major force in the success of this project.

THE STREET CHILD

Before exploring the roots of childhood migration in rural areas, it is vital to establish a clear definition of the term "street children". As Panter-Brick notes, the situations of street children are far from homogenous. Street children come from a wide variety of backgrounds and circumstances, so much so that the term often fails to encompass all of the diverse lifestyles of children who are "on or of" the street (Panter-Brick 2002).¹ Children come to Delhi in countless modes: family migrations, alone as solo children, trafficked into a workplace environment, among others. It is impossible to capture these diverse passageways to street life with one term. These complexities extend further into the representation of identity on the street itself. Here, self-identification by these children tends to challenge their so-called status as "urchins" or "street dwellers." No child conforms to a

single fixed identity. Rather, they resist such categorical labeling through day-to-day actions and a unique system of livelihood making.

In Delhi, the estimated number of street children ranges widely as a result of differing criteria for what constitutes a street child. A recent Save the Children study, titled *Surviving the Streets* considered over 50,000 children street kids, despite the fact that over 70% of those children were known to have a home somewhere in Delhi (Bhaskaran and Mehta 2011). Other estimates from SBT claim upwards of 100,000 street children in Delhi. This increase is part of a much larger growth number of street children in India, where there are an estimated 18 million currently on the streets (Butterflies 2011, "Situation of Street and Working Children in Delhi").²

Delhi's street kids live in a variety of ways in order to maintain their livelihoods. For children living in railway stations and platforms, a frequent occupation is "ragpicking," (see figure 2) which involves the collection of plastic bottles in railcars using large nylon sacks (Steinberg 2012). This simplistic description, however, fails to do justice to the meticulous organization and skill required in collecting bottles. Children keep precise track of train schedules, positioning themselves on the tracks to hop on the train right when it arrives. The fastest pickers will be at the head of the trains while the slower ones stay at the back, giving them more time before the train workers move through the cars. The children usually work with others on their platform, typically pooling the total amount of bottles at the end of the day, when they are sold to a 'middleman' who pays the children en masse. The 'middleman' then returns the bottles to a recycling center where they are processed. Other earning options for street children typically involve food service in establishments like *dhabas*, tea stalls, and restaurants. Others work as domestic servants for civil society (Butterflies 2011, "My Name is Today. Butterflies: Programme with Street & Working Children").

For girls, however, being in the public eye puts the family's honor in question due to the risk of impropriety. Frequently, girls who enter the urban landscape are quickly swept up and recruited into elaborate prostitution circles (Huberman 2006). While girls and boys have differing subsistence strategies on the streets due to cultural expectations and norms, one must look beyond material livelihoods to see deeper connections on the street.

Alessandro Conticini's study noted that for street children

in Dhaka, “a feeling of love and trusted friends” and “cooperation” were found to be the most important things in daily life (Conticini 2007, 84-94). Supportive, yet frequently exploitative social networks and relationships are found across all groups of children on the streets of Delhi. Children on the railways tend to identify with a particular platform and have a certain social circle with whom they share money, food, and sometimes drugs.³ Such tight-knit social circles also exist in temple markets such as Kalkaji Mandir in Delhi. Children often sit on the steps of the market begging for alms of money and food. After collection, the children head to one of the pathways out of the market where they pool and share their take, talk, and simply play around. The livelihoods of street children transcend basic survival through their complex relationships and social networks. These children provide social inclusion for one another in social and political structures that have historically rejected their presence, displaying solidarity with others who have had similar experiences.



Figure 2—“Ragpicking” along the tracks in Old Delhi Station.

BEFORE THE STREETS: LIVELIHOODS IN RURAL BIHAR

Today, the children of rural Bihar are more connected with the rest of the world than ever before. The skyline of the district town of Sitamarhi, a place that sits some twenty miles from the Nepal border, is littered with cell phone towers. On the streets below, the walkways are filled with mud, trash, and cow dung. Passersby trudge through the mess to buy fly swarmed *mithai* (sweets) and sweltering fruits at nearby stands. The children of Sitamarhi live in this contrasted space—the severe juxtaposition of a unique “modernity”⁴ and urbanization with dilapidated infrastructure surrounding them. The villages within five miles of the district town scarcely receive electricity, prompting me to wonder how anyone with a cell phone is able to recharge their phones.⁵ The villages I spent the majority of my time in, Amritpur and Baksampur,⁶ gave insight into the livelihoods of children in rural Bihar. In Amritpur, every corner and passageway of the village seemed to reveal more and more children. At times, it appeared that the ratio of children to adults was ten to one. Many of these children had prominent signs of malnutrition: kwashiorkor, stunted growth, and slowly healing infections (Bhutta, et al. 2008; Som, et al. 2007). One boy of about twelve, Deepak had a nasty infection on his lower leg that continued to worsen over the week I visited. However, there was no formal doctor in the village, only someone trained in basic medical practices. He would have to go to Sitamarhi town to be given medicine, which would cost too much money for Deepak’s mother. This was a problem all too common for children of rural Bihar.

School quality and attendance throughout Sitamarhi district was quite mixed. A government school I visited in Amritpur was highly understaffed, lacking proper materials and facilities, and seemed more of a social gathering point for youth. Children sat along the walls with other classmates drawing, talking, and laughing while the teachers and administrators sat impotently near the entrance, splitting their time between socializing and supervising (see figure 3). When we arrived, the teachers began to complain of uneven wage scales and low salaries, citing this as an explanation for the chaos at the school. Another school we visited in Baksampur, however, which was run entirely by women, had sufficient materials, was properly staffed, and seemed to be extremely beneficial for the students. In both cases, there was a noticeable tension between attending school and working at home. Many children, especially older ones,



Figure 3—Lunch at an Amritpur government school. Photo Credit: Khushboo Jain

work in the mornings, helping to transplant rice, and then check into school for the second half of the day. In some cases, children would stop attending school entirely in order to help at home, such as with Hoja, a lower caste girl in Baksampur. Hoja, who was 14 or 15, claimed her family was too poor and her mother needed help taking care of her younger siblings. As her siblings grew older, pressure on Hoja to earn began to outweigh the importance of schooling. This pressure led Hoja to abandon her education in order to help her family. The livelihoods of Bihari youth were rapidly transforming, surrounded by newly “modern” pursuits and desires within a rural structure and community. These developments imply a growing understanding and connection between urban and rural environments, one that

has put increased pressure on youth to earn and sustain others, which in many cases means moving away from rural homelands.

TRACKING AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Bihar’s agricultural history is extremely complex, interwoven with transforming government policy, development, and increasing mechanization of the agrarian system. Prior to the Green Revolution⁷ taking hold in Bihari agriculture, there was a structure of landholding: the Zamindar system, institutionalized under the British Raj. The system’s abolition, however, is what I wish to focus on, in terms of the uneven effects it had on rural villages, landholdings, and landlessness. The zamindari was a system of landholding that consolidated fields in the hands of

powerful village elites. For Bihar, this meant most of the land fell in the hands of upper caste Hindus (Chaudhry 1988). Peasants were then typically tied to the land, working for the grain they produced, while remaining landless themselves. In the late 19th century, however, Bihar began to feel the effects of commercialism due to colonial expansion from the west, beginning a process of out-migration from both the zamindar and lower class populations. In the Chapra region at the beginning of this century, upper castes had to resort to occupations other than agriculture. *Rajputs*, an upper caste group, went out for 'service' along with lower class individuals, becoming "peons and durwans in estates of larger zamindars" (de Haan 2002, 120). Out-migration occurred in high numbers during the zamindari system for both landowners and lower caste laborers, yet the economic gaps between landowners and lower class, as well as the frequency of migration, seemed to increase after the foundation of India and the subsequent abolishment of the colonial landholding system.

Due to the federal government's abolishment of the system in 1948, and the subsequent Bihar Land Reform Act of 1950, the system was slated for reformation. But the redistribution of land was extremely gradual, and in 1964 the India Planning Commission acknowledged that peasants were still heavily employed as sharecroppers, and that "supervision over the staff need[ed] to be tightened and vigorously enforced" (Council 1966, 47-8). Many powerful local leaders in Bihar resisted redistribution, impeding the progress of implementation that the Planning Commission hoped to see (Chaudhry 1988). This resistance was also seen in Uttar Pradesh, where *thakurs* (landowners) "continued to dominate villages politics," despite tenants being sold new property for cultivation after the zamindari abolition (Gupta 1998, 112-13).

While the abolition of zamindari signaled a dynamic change in landholding practices, major landowners continue to wield power in the village. In Amritpur, the son of a former zamindar named Sharma expressed how he was forced to divide up his 60 bighas⁸ worth of land. "Yet," he said, "we see overall that we're in a good state. None of our kids need to buy land, as such, we are pretty well off."⁹ Sharma also explained that one of his sons now lives and works in Delhi and another is in the army. However, poorer villagers we spoke with in Amritpur expressed concerns with the power of landowners. One man I spoke with at a tea shop poignantly stated that, "zamindari is not practiced

anymore but the zamindar still has the money."¹⁰ Sharma's land, for example, is still cultivated by lower caste individuals, who typically have marginal, if any, landholdings of their own. Similarly, in Baksampur, landownership by the lower class is still very insignificant. A *Chamar*¹¹ caste family we spoke with expressed how the powerful landowners rent land to them.¹² The land is big enough to establish a permanent residence for their *kaccha* home (made typically of mud, bamboo, and leaves), yet the land they cultivated is still all owned by the former zamindar. One of their sons, Monu, who was only ten, had recently been running away for days at a time to Sitamarhi town, where he would beg for food and then return home a day or two later. His parents expressed concern that he might continue to runaway to farther locations for longer periods of time. As these examples demonstrate, the uneven abolition of the zamindari system has had lasting effects on the landscape of Bihar, contributing to current power relations in rural villages. The wealth gap between many lower class villagers and landowners widened in many cases, leaving a legacy of instability in rural villages as well as bringing a new stream of young Biharis into Delhi.

The Green Revolution in Bihar has been accompanied by a large increase in the mechanization of agriculture. Much like in the state of Punjab twenty years prior, farming practices and techniques are shifting, leading to a larger dependence on HYV seeds. In turn, more inputs—such as pesticides, herbicides, and water—are needed to maintain these modified seeds. At Sharma's farm, they recently switched to a new seed, called *shree vidhi*, which is supported by a government plan. The new seed is purchased and replaced every year, as its modification does not allow regeneration (such seeds are colloquially referred to as 'terminator seeds'). With the modified seed, more water and pesticides are needed, which "when sprayed, some portion of it fell on the vegetables, and if that is eaten in the next 3-4 days, it has harmful effects, like kidney and liver destruction and so on."¹³ Sharma also made the distinction between crops he sells versus the ones he eats. Rice sold to the market is the hybrid variety that uses *shree vidhi* seeds, while "for our consumption we cultivate a different variety" that smells and tastes much better.¹⁴ In the Amritpur tea shop many villagers expressed concerns over increased inputs yet granted that yields were higher:

Khushboo: Since when did you start using hybrid seeds here?
 Villager: Since a long time, 10-12 years.
 Khushboo: But hybrid is more expensive; it needs more pesticides and water?
 Villager: yes, but the results are also good; it gives more yields.
 Khushboo: but it is more expensive right?
 Villager: It needs more fertilizers and water. Water is a problem here.
 Khushboo: Are tubewells used for irrigation?
 Villager: Yes. In Punjab there are better facilities. They have independence of electricity and irrigation, so there are better yields.
 Khushboo: There are not many facilities here?
 Villager: No, not here in Bihar.¹⁵

In the short term, the HYV seeds are paying dividends despite increased costs for fertilizers, pesticides, water, and machinery. However, if one takes lessons from Punjab's Green Revolution, one can see the grave environmental and social impacts that come with higher yielding crops. Vandana Shiva's *Violence of the Green Revolution* raises concerns about the intensification of inputs in farmland as well as the marginalization of small farmers and landowners due to increasing industrialization. In Punjab, the primary beneficiaries of the "revolution" were large agrochemical companies and the large farmers that could afford the inputs, while the majority of the population was exploited (Shiva 1991). Lower class farmers and laborers were unable to access these new technologies, an inequity that contributes to a widening wealth gap, while larger farmers continued to inflict extreme harm on the local environment.

In Bihar, almost twenty years later, similar issues are being revisited. Distribution of these new industrial technologies is unequal, resulting in the recalling and recapitulating of the zamindar system of the past. Large landowners are the only ones able to afford *shree vidhi* seeds, new inputs, and more machinery. One of my primary informants, Indu Prakash of the Indo Global Social Service Society (IGSSS), felt "a new business model of agriculture" has arrived, "destroying the traditional base of agriculture" in rural Bihar.¹⁶ Profit models and scientific data, which are unfamiliar to rural villagers involved in agriculture, have become the key for success in agriculture. Small farmers are forced into this commercial system with the rising price of cultivation, "compelled to adopt high-yielding crops and technologies in order to pay rents and service debts" (Wilson 2002,

1237). Access to high-yield technologies and inputs typically lies in the hands of large landowners, meaning marginal farmers remain dependent on the services of a minority of powerful landowners, contributing to a dominant power structure that inhibits the livelihoods of small farmers (ibid). With the prices of crops decreasing despite production and yield increasing, farmers must work more over the course of the year to sustain their livelihoods.

Through the usage of HYV seeds alongside newer, more expensive technologies and inputs, small farmers suffer at the hands of large landowners and are forced to make sacrifices. While yields and monetary gains are initially higher, in the long term the system will actually inflict more damage on the small farmer, as part of what Indu Prakash termed, "a flawed developmental priority for the country."¹⁷ This development system has and will continue to marginalize small farmers and lower class individuals, while engendering an unsustainable dependency model that saps fertility from the land. As a result, many are forced to migrate to urban centers in search of better economic opportunities and alternative livelihoods from those rendered untenable in rural villages.

A source of alarm in recent years regarding all areas of India's north and northeast plains is climate change. The areas around the Ganges River continue to suffer more pollution, contributing to the severe climate transformations occurring in the Ganges Delta region, which empties into the Bay of Bengal (Acharyya, et al. 1999; Harvey 2002). Bangladesh and West Bengal continue to experience extreme climate variations, including large-scale flooding, extreme heat, and natural disasters (Ali 1999; Karim and Mimura 2008; Mirza, et al. 2003). In Bihar, as well, climate is very much a concern. As we drove from Patna to Sitamarhi district, I was struck by the flooding. High walls of water reached the admixture road of dirt and gravel, coming dangerously close to a vulnerable gas station. Meanwhile, rice fields sat submerged many feet below alongside the owners' saturated kaccha homes. In Bihar, agriculture depends heavily on monsoon rainfall, which in recent years has become erratic, unpredictable, and uneven in its distribution (FMIS 2011). As a result, flooding has become a much more frequent event, sometimes rendering areas of Bihar inaccessible for months at a time. With such unpredictable, yet steadily increasing flood rates, crop productivity will inevitably take a hit. For example,

in a study of the 2004 flooding in Bihar, 22% of agricultural land was reported as ruined (Chandran, et al. 2006, 253). This trend is expected to increase over time, with a decrease in wheat yield of 5-6% percent by 2080 due to sporadic monsoons and an overall increasing maximum temperature (Kumar, et al. 2011, 171). In addition, with the construction of a dam in Nepal, water flowing into Bihar from the Baghmata River has become increasingly unpredictable. According to Sharma, “after the dam was built and when the dam bursts, all the water goes in one direction with full force.” The dam’s presence has exacerbated monsoon flooding, making these situations increasingly hard to predict. This has inundated countless fields, destroying crops, while crippling the livelihoods of rural Bihari farmers. With these increasingly unpredictable monsoons and droughts coinciding with elevated pollution levels, families who rely on agriculture must make crucial decisions to maintain their livelihoods. Sometimes this means suffering losses and taking loans. Other times, it means uprooting from rural homelands and heading to new opportunities in cities.

In Sitamarhi district a sugarcane processing plant dominates agricultural production, contributing to the monoculturation of sugarcane in the surrounding villages (see figure 4). Monoculturation is defined as the practice of replanting the same crop species in the same field with no crop rotation. Frequently, this process leaves crops vulnerable to epidemics, as it is much easier to transmit diseases between the same plant species rather than across a diverse set of crops. In Sitamarhi, farmers dedicate large portions of their fields to this labor-intensive crop due to the demand from the factory. This industrial development is part of the neoliberal movement of the 1990s. New policy opened up the country to development projects, allowing private foreign and domestic companies to start production in many former agricultural lands. However, unlike the states of Jharkhand and Orissa, which benefit from their rich deposits of lumber and coal,¹⁸ Bihar is largely left alone from industrial development. The state is known for its fertile agricultural land rather than its extractive resources, meaning industrial development is not a primary interest for the Indian government. This leaves Bihar citizens with crucial decisions to make. If there is no impetus by the government to aid in a more egalitarian model of development, then unevenness emerges. People are forced to migrate to pockets of development in Jharkhand and Orissa,

leaving their homeland behind. Thus, one can see how this uneven development model is unsustainable and highly damaging. As Indu Prakash states:

The entire development paradigm, the way it unfolds in the country, I think it’s been faulted. People will go where their work is. If you want to reverse it, you start having some of these things in the rural sector. If the rural sector becomes economically viable, you know, would you go back?¹⁹

For rural Biharis who lack opportunities on their land or on the fields of large landowners, it may be more feasible to go out and find a more consistent job. Bihar’s youth population is compelled to follow this paradigm. Working in the fields is not only unviable, but it is unattractive as a job. Many teenagers expressed to me how they would prefer to have a job working in the city, rather than being a farmer. A discussion with several young men in Amritpur revealed that the majority work in the district towns or in major urban centers because that is where they find most jobs. They only come home to farm for a few weeks before they return to their urban jobs. They see no future or possible channels of development in Amritpur, and believe farming is not a fulfilling profession anymore. Instead, they desire to go to where development exists in order to find work.²⁰

With privatization and deregulation playing an increasingly larger part in the Indian economy, the spread of uneven development is on the rise (Kumar 2008; Pandit 2012). Pockets of investment take precedent over undeveloped regions, many of which are in Bihar, resulting in the relocation of jobs to specific concentrated development regions. An area failing to receive direct investment is not able to hold its inhabitants due to the lack of opportunity, signaling an inevitable out-migration. These migrations tend to move exactly in synch with investment patterns (Deshingkar 2006; Henderson 2010). Men and children constitute a significant portion of these migrational flows in their search for opportunities beyond a depressed agricultural system. At the same time, development policy is reshaping how the Indian government values agriculture. Under the neoliberal economic policy, agriculture is becoming integrated into a structure that relies on policies of investment, incentives, and innovations. This system no longer allows the agricultural sector to strive for self-sufficiency. It is now connected to a larger world economy. And without crucial investment in these Bihari agricultural

zones, it reaffirms the impossibility of working and living solely on one plot of land. Adults and youth have no choice but to head where development is promoted and incentivized—the zones where jobs and consistent opportunities exist.



Figure 4—Sugarcane fields in Amritpur village, Sitamarhi District

BEYOND AGRICULTURAL MIGRATION

While agriculture has played a crucial role in the transformations within Bihar over the last fifty years, it would be narrow-minded to deem this the only factor contributing to higher frequencies of youth migrations. Rather, these agricultural transformations involving issues of landholding, mechanization, climatic changes, and development need to be understood as intertwining processes which interact with other socioeconomic, historical, and religious dynamics. By examining the dense linkages that tie other critical social issues with agriculture, one can begin to see the extreme complexities of youth migration. In this section, I will discuss three significant topics that reoccurred in my fieldwork: rural education failures, the caste system, and the shared perception of rural versus urban lifestyles.

I. Rural Education Failures

For years there has been constant pressure on Bihar's government and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to improve rural education. Kumar has actually drawn praise from many critics for his first term, during which the state government provided much needed infrastructural improvements for Bihar's youth (Ghosh 2012). In Sitamarhi district, many rural villagers expressed how the educational system has improved significantly

in the last decade. The grandfather of a *Bhumihar*²¹ family in Baksampur, an upper-caste landowner, informed us that “boys are all going to school now. Earlier they use to rear sheep and buffalo, but now they are getting books, clothes, cycles for free, and so they have started taking an interest in going to school.”²² These improvements are encouraging more children than in the past to attend school. Yet the quality of education remains inconsistent. Many children still become de-motivated or uninterested in their studies and consider leaving school altogether. A large portion of students drop out before they turn fourteen, the age of guaranteed education under India's Right to Education Act (Parliament 2012).

Additionally, as I mention above, the schools I visited—with one exception—tended to be chaotic, understaffed, and unstructured. Teachers were rarely conducting lessons, students lacked appropriate books and materials, and the buildings were typically unsuitable as educational facilities. Many students failed to stay the entire day while others came in late after helping their parents at home or in the fields. This is quite similar to Sainath's description of Bihar's schools some thirty years earlier in *Everybody Loves a Good Drought*, where many schools suffered from the exact same issues (Sainath 1996, “This is the Way We Go to School”). The rural education system in Bihar, despite making strides under Chief Minister Kumar, has failed to match the standards of the urban centers of Delhi and Mumbai, where primary education tends to be significantly better. As a result, many rural children and their parents fail to see value in education compared to obtaining a job. The lack of a supporting educational structure sets a foundation (or lack thereof) for an unstable rural livelihood, pushing children towards the cities in search of better opportunities.

II. Issues of Caste

In rural Bihar, caste is still very prevalent, producing systems that limit access for many marginalized groups. Historically, the zamindari left many lower-caste families with little to no land, even after abolition in 1948. This made many lower caste families dependent on higher caste landowners for work, food, and ultimately their livelihoods. Even today, lower-caste people face intense discrimination. Hoja, the Chamar caste girl who was our guide in Baksampur, faced direct discrimination from the *Bhumihar* family I interviewed. Hoja was forced to stand at the periphery of the conversation, exposed to the sun outside

the cover of the porch. Two to three feet away, sitting comfortably, members of the Bhumihaar family discussed the practices of untouchability they continue to follow:

Mother: Even we practice it. If someone is a Chamar- belonging to lower caste, they cannot sit everywhere; they have to sit in a particular place made for them.

Khushboo: Still?

Mother: Yes, still! He is not allowed to touch anything.

Father: He is not allowed to walk in the village with slippers on.

Mother: I have lime, water, myself, and I do not let my body touch her and I've given lime water to you all. We don't eat anything that is touched by a chamar.

Khushboo: Still?

Mother: Yes, still!

Khushboo: But now everything has changed; it is not like that.

Mother: In the village, it is a lot. If we have boiled rice and if someone from the lower castes touches it, we won't eat that rice; we will keep it outside.

Khushboo: But when we appoint them as laborers in fields and plough fields and do cutting of *dhaan*, why can't we eat the same rice?

Mother: We take *dhaan* from them and boil it to make it rice. We don't take rice from them. We don't let them touch our water. When they have some feast, we don't go to eat at their place. Our neighbor's mother had passed away; for four days everyone ate there, but no one goes to eat at lower caste peoples' house.²³

This conversation, while effective in capturing a few examples of caste discrimination in Baksampur, fails to reveal the full extent of persecution and marginalization of lower caste people in Bihar. Lower caste adults, who try to escape persecution in their village by attempting to start a business in a district town, still face discrimination. Many times higher caste individuals from their village come into town in order to reveal the shop owner's status to the public, essentially ruining any future business. At certain schools, lower caste children are forced to sit on the floor, while upper caste youth are given chairs. Additionally, teachers give upper caste children preferential treatment, despite stipulations against these actions in India's education acts. This treatment is very significant when discussing youth migration to urban centers. Casteism is practiced much less in Delhi, though it does still exist and can be observed across socioeco-

omic lines. Caste is less of an issue in a city of migrants, where many children can hide their status. On the railways, at temples, schools, and in homeless shelters, caste is less significant, allowing for a greater chance of socioeconomic mobility and escape from caste-based marginalization. Children have more access and *azadi* (freedom) in the city, and are not defined by caste the way they are in rural regions of Bihar.

III. Shared Perceptions of Rural versus Urban Lifestyles

When asking street children, both in NGOs and on the street, what comes to mind when thinking about life in the city, interviewees tended to repeat the same descriptors: *freedom, excitement, money*. On the other hand, when we discussed the rural, many kids frequently described it as *poor, boring, and restrictive*. Among children in Delhi and rural Bihar, there is a consistent perception that the urban environment is busy, entertaining, and a perfect place to earn more money. Working on farmlands at home is monotonous and unattractive, lacking many economic benefits. A similar sentiment is understood in the style of those who straddle both urban and rural environments, something Akhil Gupta notes in *Postcolonial Developments*. "Clothes made the man a villager or a city slicker. What a person wore signified not merely how wealthy he was but where he belonged as well" (Gupta 1998, 85). Dress is crucial in distinguishing one's status. In Sitamarhi, those wearing the traditional dhoti are viewed differently than those in Western business clothes, typically a button down, collared shirt, and slacks or jeans. With Western clothes, a certain bravado is produced, which one is not permitted to access if they have never experienced the city. The men who return to the villages from urban centers, many of which I met through the NGO, Pratham, had an air of confidence in their demeanor. One of our guides, Vikrant, who is twenty years old, ran away to many of the major cities years ago, but has since returned after being taken into the organization. At his home in Amritpur, he is no longer the child that left, but the man of the house. After experiencing the city, he is entitled to this privileged position in the family. He is expected to provide for the family, which was obvious in both his dress and demeanor. Wearing a clean, white button down shirt and jeans, he stood out from other boys in his village, most of whom wore tattered t-shirts and shorts. His movements, and the way in which he spoke to his kin, primarily his mother and older brother, indicated his power within the family unit. Unlike

his brother, a day laborer in the district town, Vikrant had gone to the city, earned, and decided to return.

Earning and ideal occupation are two other factors that create a binary between the rural and urban landscapes. In the cities, one can earn more money in a short time span, doing work other than farming. There is more opportunity for social mobility in the urban than in the rural environment. In my discussion with the young men mentioned above, several of them said they have no interest in agriculture or living in the village. Farming promises low wages, longer working hours, and less satisfaction. A few of them also expressed the view that farmers are uneducated as compared to people who work in the city and have wage-based jobs.²⁴ Leaving the village, at least for young men, has become a route to respect and power within the village; being a man of the city is a desirable trait, that when coupled with the perceptions of a rural livelihood, seems all the more attractive. Children, who are exposed to these value systems, observe older men return to the villages and see going to the city as something exciting, different, and a way to improve their socioeconomic status. In this line of thought, running away is not only realistic, but a respected option for many children.

CONCLUSIONS

At one point in my fieldwork in Bihar, I grew intensely frustrated with the research process. All of my neatly wrapped, perfectly fitting ideas and answers had been twisted, contorted, and bent into something barely resembling what I began with. I had to shift my framework and examine the issue from a new angle, seeing running away as something beyond a system. The complexities of youth migration in India stretch across multiple academic disciplines, spanning large swaths of not just physical landscape, but also mental geography. It is not, and will never be a single-dimensional issue, but rather one riddled with paradox and contradiction. Embracing these intricacies, however, is a crucial step in making sense of this process. We must acknowledge that the dense layers are part and parcel of the stories of running away. The agricultural transformations occurring in Bihar, and throughout large parts of India, are quite significant when one traces historical parallels. These events and histories are foundational to the contemporary state of agriculture and village life, contributing to instability, uneven growth and development, and ultimately the fracturing that supports such a pronounced system of running away for the rural youth. The life of a street child has much to do with the rural past, beginning long before the topic became a subject of social research. However, one must simultaneously realize that developing histories and new concerns become inseparable pieces of these past histories, emerging hand and hand—not separately—as reasons for running away. It is in these increasingly complex mazes and puzzles that a more human picture materializes; a picture in which the story of running away reflects a child's pursuits, goals, and hardships rather than an alienated model.

¹. See also Glauser's "Street children: deconstructing a construct." *Constructing and reconstructing childhood*.

². See also Hecht's discussion of the inflation of numbers in *At Home in the Street: Street Children of Northeast Brazil*, page 100.

³. In Delhi, there was little intermingling between platform groups. Many times, platforms would refuse to speak with Khushboo and I due to the fact she was speaking with children from a platform they didn't particularly like.

⁴. While modernity can be defined differently depending on context, for the purposes of this paper, modernity refers to Western notions of technological progress and innovation that is many times conflated with development.

⁵. There were a surprising number of people with mobile phones in Sitamarhi district. I spoke with children no older than ten who had mobile phones as well as grandparents who used their phone to speak with their children living in distant cities. I should note, as well, the cell phone service in Sitamarhi was the best I had had throughout all my research.

⁶. Names of people and villages noted in this paper have been changed to protect identities.

⁷. The Green Revolution was a government program that involved the introduction of high yield variety seeds into the Indian agriculture system. It first began in the late 1960s and early 1970s in the state of Punjab. The system improved the productivity of agriculture via newly adopted practices that incorporated new facilities, systems of credit, seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. The program's importance is most clearly seen in the sheer quantity of land engrossed by HYV production. According to one report, "during the 1966-1967 crop year only 4.66 million acres (2.2 per cent of the total area under paddy, wheat, maize, jowar, and bajra) were seeded under the H.V.P [high-yield variety program], but by 1968-1969 the area under the H.V.P. had increased to 22.97 million acres (10.4 per cent of the total cultivated area under the five cereals)" (Chakravarti 1973, 320). It has only increased in size and scope since then, expanding to territory outside of Punjab, such as into Bihar. Despite yield increases, the Green Revolution is also responsible for dramatic shifts in soil fertility, land ownership, the use of inputs, and, some even say, ethnic conflict (Shiva 1991).

⁸. Unit of measurement commonly used in India that can vary considerably across regions. In Bihar, 2 to 3 bighas was about one acre.

⁹. Interview with landowner, son of former zamindar, Sharma- July 24th, 2012 in Amritpur village, Sitmarhi district.

¹⁰. Conversation with villagers in tea shop, July 28, 2012, Amritpur, Sitamarhi district.

¹¹. Historically lower scheduled caste, known as untouchables or dalits.

¹². Interview conducted July 27th, 2012 in Baksampur village, Sitmarhi district with Chamar family.

¹³. Interview with landowner, son of former zamindar, Sharma- July 24th, 2012 in Amritpur village, Sitmarhi district.

¹⁴. *Ibid.*

¹⁵. Conversation with villagers in tea shop, July 28, 2012, Amritpur, Sitamarhi district.

¹⁶. Interview conducted August 14, 2012 with Indu Prakash (IGSSS) in New Delhi.

¹⁷. *Ibid.*

¹⁸. In Jharkhand, a joint venture mining project between Indian and Canadian companies operated through accumulation by dispossession. First displacing the residents who were dependent on the land, the mining companies then offered jobs to many of the residents to work at the mine. However, the mine

is only supposed to last for forty-five years, meaning “Godda will have a lot of people with no agriculture to fall back on and no jobs in Rajmahal” once the project has finished (Sainath 1996, 264, “Crime & No Punishment”). While this type of development raises huge concerns for those living in Godda, Jharkhand and future livelihoods without agriculture, it is also alarming for Bihar, into which no investment or funds are being funneled.

¹⁹ Interview conducted August 14, 2012 with Indu Prakash (IGSSS) in New Delhi.

²⁰ Discussion with young laborers in Amritpur village, Sitamarhi district, July 28, 2012.

²¹ Hindu Brahmin caste, that were historically landowners.

²² Interview with Bhumihaar family, Baksampur village, Sitamarhi district, July 27th, 2012.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Discussion with young laborers in Amritpur village, Sitamarhi district, July 28, 2012.

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“I’m Feeding the World Tonight:” The Impact of Moral Identity Standards on Mobile Loaves & Fishes Homeless Outreach Ministry

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine what factors motivate volunteers who work at a religiously affiliated homeless outreach organization in Texas. Specifically, the research examines the extent to which Mobile Loaves & Fishes’ (MLF) framework influences volunteers’ decisions to participate in the organization’s mobile food distribution program. Analysis of three different qualitative data sources collected in fall 2012, including organizational materials, semi-structured interviews, and ethnographic field notes, suggests that MLF’s use of framing conveys a moral identity that encourages volunteers to continue their participation in homeless outreach. This paper adds to the existing social movement literature on faith-based community development organizations (FBCDOs) by examining how religious ideology is used in tandem with elaborated framing and condensing symbols to reflect moral identity standards which induce people to volunteer.

Keywords: organizational framing, ideology, morality



Picture 1—A partially loaded MLF truck.

I would like to thank Mobile Loaves & Fishes for allowing me to research its organization. I am particularly thankful for the commissary staff and volunteers, especially those who took time out of their busy schedules to be interviewed. I would also like to thank Dr. Maria Lowe, Callie Dyer, Lorenza Cigarroa, Victoria Phillips, and Patrice Morgan for their critiques during the writing process, and my family for their support.

INTRODUCTION

The light is fading from the sky as we arrive at our second stop of the evening, a weekly-rate motel south of downtown. Roofs of a nearby university campus are visible as the driver, our team leader, pulls into the motel's parking lot. Just as I catch a glimpse of the building- yellowed walls, wear and tear so noticeable it can be seen from nearly 100 feet away- the driver realizes that he's made a mistake. He turns to address the team, three men, a woman, and myself. "I've pulled into the wrong driveway," he states, "I overshot it, we want the first one." He carefully maneuvers the truck around the motel's marquee before pulling out of the parking lot, turning into the adjacent driveway, and lightly honking the horn. Rather than one building, this section of the motel consists of multiple small shacks, not visible from the road and all painted a dull blue. The children who had been playing in the driveway cluster around the truck before the driver has even cut the engine. As the volunteers exit the vehicle to begin opening the bay doors, the children's parents and other adult residents join them outside. I watch as the Mobile Loaves & Fishes team distributes the food that they have, smiling the whole time, referring to each client as sir or ma'am. One of the clients objects to this treatment. He tells the man serving him, "don't call somebody like me sir," continuing on to say that he is not worthy of the volunteer's respect. The volunteer is visibly taken aback, and insists, "it doesn't matter if you're homeless or not, you're a sir." As the client rolls his eyes, the volunteer hands him his food, saying, "I've gotta hope." The client scoffs and replies, "keep up the hope, 'cause I lost mine."¹

The mission of Mobile Loaves & Fishes (MLF) is to provide homeless individuals with not only a meal and basic essentials, but also dignity and social capital- the opportunity to form social relationships with volunteers who are committed to social service.² Inspired by the tenets of the Catholic faith, MLF asks its volunteers to pray that God, "...soften the hard edges of [their] heart[s]," so that they may, "...embrace those who are hungry and abandoned."³ The present study's research questions have been similarly inspired by the concept of morality in faith. As such, how do organizational framing practices influence volunteer participation, and how do framing practices establish or enhance a moral identity standard?



Picture 2—Cross with MLF logo, near entrance of commissary.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This paper relies on three bodies of literature to address faith-based community development organizations (Fitzgerald 2009), organizational framing (Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford 1992; Jasper and Poulsen 1995), and moral schemas and identity (Cnaan 1999; Goodwin et al. 2004; Stets and Carter 2012). Faith-based community development organizations (FBCDOs) are non-profit or other social action groups inspired by faith (Fitzgerald 2009). Snow and Benford describe framing as an "elaborated code" which comes together to articulate previously inconceivable threads of information (Snow and Benford 1992, 139; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Snow 2004). Moral schemas and identity are based on the ideological values, goals, or social expectations that define a movement (Goodwin et al. 2004; Stets and Carter 2012). Combined, framing and schema help to explain how people are drawn to participate in any given social activist organization.

FBCDOS AND COOPERATIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION

Religious tenets tend to be prosocial (Cnaan 1999). For example, Jewish faith tradition defines charity as “a human obligation” to one’s community, while the Catholic faith sees charity as an opportunity to recognize “people’s brotherhood in Christ” (Cnann 1999, 55). Faith-based community development organizations (FBCDOs) provide social services beyond the traditional soup kitchen, including: job training, affordable housing, and micro-business loans (Fitzgerald 2009). Though entrenched in religious values, FBCDOs have moved from the church or faith community where the programs were established in order to form nonprofit corporations funded in part by government grants (Monsma 2007; Fitzgerald 2009).

Through missions statements and methods of operation FBCDOs demonstrate that shared religious values serve not only as pre-existing social structures, but also imputes for engaging in activism (Melucci 1996; Cnaan 1999). Thus, movement framing strategies and culturally relevant moral codes are linked, as each helps to develop and maintain the other by attaching actors to the established belief system (Hunt and Benford 2004; Snow 2004). Goals and motives located within a shared moral identity encourage further adherence to the moral code.

FBCDOs are unique in that they practice cooperative collective action (Fitzgerald 2009). Specifically, cooperative collective action is not oriented towards conflict, such as protests or other demonstration activities, and is instead “located entirely within the limits of the current political and economic system” (Melucci 1996; Fitzgerald 2009, 183). Organizations that practice collective action are incited to act when they perceive that societal needs have been insufficiently met by the political system. Thus, cooperative collective action “[redefines] as unjust and immoral what was previously seen as unfortunate but perhaps tolerable” by constructing a new or alternative method of meeting societal needs (Snow and Benford 1992, 137; Melucci 1996).

Whereas previous research has used frame analysis to determine how FBCDOs align with government expectations of their outreach, this paper examines how an FBCDO’s unique frame may be used to evoke moral emotions in volunteers that function, in turn, to encourage participation in their various ministries. The present research will also expand upon how organization staff and volunteers navigate the political environ-

ment at the local level. Additionally, the current study broadens the definition of FBCDOs to include like-organizations that do not accept government grants or other such funding.

IDEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND FRAMING PROCESSES

Social movement organizations (SMOs) engage in framing, the process by which organizers and movement leaders manipulate existing ideologies to better fit organizational structure and appeal to potential recruits (Hunt et al. 1994; McAdam 1994). Successful frames are situation-relevant (Snow 2004). That is, the organization’s frame is an easy marriage of cognition and culture, one in which “individual beliefs about the social world and cultural belief systems and ideologies” are cohesive (Gamson 1992, 55; Hunt et al. 1994; McAdam 1994; Eyerman 2005). Formulating frames allows SMOs to propose solutions to problems that resonate with actors within the given ideological system by, “determining appropriate roles and behaviors to be enacted” (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Fitzgerald 2009; Stets and Carter 2012, 121).

One such ideological system is religion (Jasper 1998; McVeigh and Sikkink 2001). Religious ideals or tenets have the potential to exist as “symbolic foundations of frames” which, in their non-specificity, have a broad appeal (Snow and Benford 1992; Jasper and Poulsen 1995, 497). Vague or broad appeals reflect an elaborated master frame, which is a highly interpretive, inclusive system composed of a wide range of ideas (Snow and Benford 1992). For some, participating in religion and religious activities increases their proximity to social movement activists and recruiters (McVeigh and Sikkink 2001). As such, religious congregations act as recruitment networks, wherein an expressed desire to be involved signifies, “cognitive shifts” and an emergent “clarity of vision and purpose” that gives direction to the movement (Eyerman 2005, 45). However, recruitment to a movement is unlikely without an existing structure, or ideologically based frame, in place (Jasper and Poulsen 1995). SMOs must first formulate diagnostic, prognostic, or motivational frames that are not only credible, but also fit in with a central belief or several interrelated beliefs of the targeted audience (Snow and Benford 1988; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998).⁴ The present study focuses on motivational framing.

Motivational framing generates rationale for action by articulating motivating vocabulary and thereby encouraging indi-

Date	Time	Event	Total Hours
8/24/12	11:30 p.m.-1:00 p.m.	Free Food Friday	1:30
9/4/12	3:15 p.m.-5:00 p.m.	Truck Run	1:45
9/9/12	2:50 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	Make Ready and Truck Run	2:40
9/13/12	3:30 p.m.-4:15 p.m.	Commissary Visit	0:45
9/16/12	3:50 p.m.-4:50 p.m.	Make Ready	1:00
9/20/12	3:40 p.m.-5:35 p.m.	Make Ready	2:55
9/27/12	4:45 p.m.-8:00 p.m.	Make Ready and Truck Run	3:15
9/30/12	3:30 p.m.-5:20 p.m.	Make Ready	1:50
10/4/12	4:05 p.m.-5:30 p.m.	Make Ready	1:25
10/15/12	4:00 p.m.-7:10 p.m.	Make Ready and Truck Run	3:10
10/21/12	3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m.	Make Ready	1:30
10/25/12	4:35 p.m.-5:35 p.m.	Make Ready	1:00
11/6/12	4:45 p.m.-5:20 p.m.	Make Ready	0:35
11/11/12	3:00 p.m.-5:45 p.m.	Make Ready and Truck Run	2:45
Total Hours in Field: 26:05			

TABLE 1. DATES AND TIMES OF FIELD OBSERVATIONS

viduals to become involved with movement activities (Snow and Benford 1988; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Fitzgerald 2009). Rationale for action can be evoked via two processes. The first, frame alignment, is the process during which an organization attempts to forge an agreement between its own goals and the goals of potential recruits (Snow et al. 1986; Jasper and Poulsen 1995). Frame bridging is the second process, during which organizations present themselves as a means of pursuing like interests in order to recruit both strangers and individuals already affiliated with the existing ideological network (Snow et al. 1986; Jasper and Poulsen 1995). For SMOs whose elaborated master frames are ideologically based, frame alignment may be heavily situated in value and belief amplification. For the purpose of the present study, values refer to goals, or “end-states,” and beliefs are defined as any ideational relationship between an individual and something or between an individual and a characteristic of something (Snow et al. 1986). As an example, previous studies have shown that people who identify as being religious or as affiliated with “religious traditions” are more apt to engage in volunteerism than those who are not, citing that participating in community service or activism helps them to, “[live] up to their religious ideals” and “practice [their] faith to its fullest” (Cnaan 1999, 26; Monsma 2007, 18; Taniguchi and Thomas 2011). An organization whose frame fits well within the values and beliefs of potential recruits is more likely to be viewed as a viable service opportunity than an organization that does not resonate (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998).

The extant literature on organizational framing holds that successful frames merely emphasize elements of existing ideologies that appeal to people with similar values or beliefs (Snow and Benford 2000). The present study addresses a gap in the existing literature by exploring the possibilities of a marriage between organizational framing and ideology, thus creating a relationship where the frame is the ideology. By doing so, this research examines how ideological frames can serve to influence volunteer participation via an organization’s representation of morally significant value and belief systems.

MORALITY, RESONANCE, AND CONDENSING SYMBOLS

Prosocial religious principles construct schemas—“structures of knowledge about particular domains on life and of the self”—that reflect moral understanding (Cnaan 1999; Myrri

et al. 2010, 214). An activist’s moral understanding is represented, in part, by a commitment or investment to an SMO that shares a moral schema similar to his or her own (Goodwin et al. 2004). Moral schemas are formed around moral rules, “cultural codes that specify what is right or wrong, good or bad, or acceptable or unacceptable in a society” (Stets and Carter 2012, 121). Culturally specific moral codes serve in turn to, “control and integrate members of a society,” thus creating an overarching moral identity standard, or, “the meaning an individual associates with being a moral person” (Stets and Carter 2012, 121, 124). As with ideologically-based frames, an organization’s moral identity must follow relevant cultural rules in order to resonate with movement actors and encourage participation (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Goodwin et al. 2004; Robnett 2004; Yang 2005).

An aspect of resonance is awareness, which helps to reflect not only an understanding of the world, but to cue appropriate emotional responses induced “when we follow what we take to be sound moral rules” (Goodwin et al. 2004, 422). Awareness can be generated via moral shocks which, when properly utilized, trigger empathetic-role taking and motivate people to become involved in “prosocial behavior” as an attempt to alleviate their own feelings of sympathy or “vicarious distress” (Thoits 1989, 328; Batson 2002). Moral shocks include god terms, or, “moral [absolutes] that [appear] to be unquestionable” and, when sufficiently threatened, spark an individual’s involvement in a movement (Jasper and Poulsen 1995, 498).

Condensing symbols have traditionally been thought of as cognitively significant images or objects that threaten individuals’ moral identities and, while doing so, articulate structures of social understanding (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Melucci 1996; Eyerman 2005). Condensing symbols are designed to be emotionally charged and highly resonant (Jasper and Poulsen 1995). Like morals, condensing symbols must be relevant to the culture and society in which they are situated, thus indicating that the corresponding emotions they evoke are culturally and socially constructed (Jasper 1997; Thoits 1989; Robnett 2004; Summers-Effler 2005). In order to retain recruits, an organization’s leaders must maintain their own social relevancy by embodying the group’s moral identity, thereby inspiring trust, loyalty, and lending credibility to the group’s activism (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Goodwin et al. 2004).

Previous literature regarding morality in relation to volun-

Respondent	Gender	Race/ Ethnicity	Age	Religious Affiliation	Length of Time with MLF	Role in MLF
Susan	Woman	White	51	Roman Catholic	8 years	Volunteer
Kelli	Woman	White	47	Unaffiliated	2 months	Volunteer
Nick	Man	White	48	Catholic	5 years	Volunteer
Bob	Man	White	66	Jewish	10 years	Volunteer
Travis	Man	White	36	Protestant	5 years	Staff/Client
David	Man	White	60	Roman Catholic	3 years	Staff: COO

TABLE 2. RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

teerism suggests that, while questioning an individual’s moral identity could motivate involvement, it is not enough incentive to actually inspire activism. This study fills a gap in the extant literature by approaching the concept of morality qualitatively, with the understanding that the actors are rational and emotional people (Goodwin et al. 2000). The present research asserts that threats to morality are sufficient motivation for some individuals to participate in movements with a moral identity similar to their own. Additionally, this paper contributes to literature on condensing symbols by broadening the term to include experiences incurred while volunteering.

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

Mobile Loaves & Fishes (MLF) was founded by a group of six male parishioners from a Catholic church in a large metropolitan area in Texas following a weekend church-sponsored retreat. At the organization’s founding, the men drafted a mission statement promising to “provide uncompromising love and hos-

pitality to our brothers and sisters in need,” by supplying them with food, “promoting dignity,” and cultivating, “a community life of stability and purpose.”⁵ Although food distribution officially began in September of 1998, the first MLF catering truck was not purchased until December of that same year. After debuting the aptly named Truck One to their parish, an influx of volunteers from the church community allowed MLF to do a previously unprecedented 15 food distribution runs per month.⁶ In 2000, MLF applied for and was granted 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. In 2002, MLF began expanding its food distribution program, one city at a time.⁷ In addition to the food distribution program, MLF has started its own sustainable affordable housing program called Community First!, as well as a series of community gardens and a micro-business loans program, called ROADS (Relationships and Opportunities Allowing for Dignity and Security). For the purpose of the present study, the focus of analysis will be on the volunteers of the mobile food distribution program at the original metropolitan location.

Today, MLF operates a total of 16 food distribution trucks in four separate states. Surprisingly, MLF employs only 11 paid staff to supervise its entire operation.⁸ In total, Mobile Loaves & Fishes has served over three million meals to the homeless and indigent working poor, a feat made possible by a veritable army of over 17,000 volunteers who donate their time, money and other resources.⁹ The majority of volunteers at the commissary where this research took place was white, middle or upper-middle class, and religiously affiliated.¹⁰ The original MLF commissary has secured several partnerships with local businesses that donate food, encourage employee volunteerism, and, in some cases, sponsor a truck for six months at a time. Despite these partnerships, the food distribution program must still be allocated a large portion of MLF's annual budget of around \$2.5 million in order to sustain itself.¹¹

METHODS

Analysis is based on data from three qualitative research methods: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and textual analysis of organizational materials. Between August and November of 2012, I conducted over 26 hours of participant observation at multiple make readies¹² and truck runs¹³. During my participant observations I helped volunteers upon their request, but walked around the commissary space recording in my field notebook if they indicated that they did not require my help. I took note of conversations taking place amongst volunteers, between volunteers and clients, and between volunteers and myself, and also recorded non-verbal interactions, my location, and physical surroundings. Due to the limited seating in each truck, I was only able to observe truck runs when there was a spot available for me, which were five out of 14 observations. At the end of each observation I typed detailed descriptions of what I had seen in the field that day, including my own reflections on volunteer actions and conversations. This process generally took three to four hours to complete. The average length of each field journal entry was eight pages, with entries ranging from half a page to 16.5 pages.

Although Mobile Loaves & Fishes has eight commissaries in the metropolitan area, I focused on the original commissary for two reasons: 1) As the home of three MLF food distribution trucks, it is the largest commissary with the most volunteer traffic; and 2.) Two other commissaries are located within a

five- or six-mile radius in the same neighborhood community, which suggests that volunteers would be demographically similar among those three commissaries.¹⁴

In addition to observations I conducted six interviews, four face-to-face and two over the phone. Respondents were chosen in such a way as to: 1.) Obtain a sample of both volunteers and staff; 2.) Reflect the demographics of each population as closely as possible; and 3.) Reflect the wide range of time that participants have spent with the organization. All respondents were white, had at least some college education, and had been with MLF between two months and 10 years. Ages ranged from 36-66. Five out of six respondents identified as being religiously affiliated. Questions ranged from introspective reflections of the respondents' involvement with MLF to inquiries about the organization's religious foundation. Follow-up questions were asked when necessary for clarification. Interviews were digitally recorded and later transcribed by the author. Interviews averaged 41 minutes in length, ranging from 23.59 to 59.48 minutes.

Lastly, I examined a variety of organizational materials, including MLF's official website, informative organizational pamphlets and handouts, and signage posted throughout the commissary space. Data culled from these materials were used to supplement my own findings. Pamphlets, handouts, and commissary signage, specifically, were fundamental in my discussion of organizational framing and condensing symbols.

Thematic categories were chosen based on prominent themes found in previous social movement research and developed over time following the analysis of field notes and interviews. Data were initially coded in an open coding process, and then later coded analytically. During the analytic coding process, thematic categories were added, refined, or discarded.

The current study benefits from my own Catholic upbringing in that it enabled me to easily recognize religious references or behaviors attributed to religion. Additionally, my position as a young, white, female student researcher was beneficial in that observation subjects responded well to my presence, thus allowing open dialogue and discussion among them even as I looked on. Weaknesses of this study include the amount of time spent in the field and the small interview sample size. Given these limitations, the findings of the present study are still significant in that they explore the limitations of FBCDOs, contribute to existing literature regarding the relationship between ideology and fram-

ing practices, and identify moral codes as incentive to volunteer.

FINDINGS

FBCDOs and Cooperative Collective Action

Fitzgerald's (2009) definition of FBCDOs is limited to faith-based organizations that have achieved nonprofit status, autonomy from the church where they were founded, and which partner with government agencies in order to implement social services programs (Monsma 2007). Most notably, Fitzgerald's (2009) FBCDOs receive government grants as their primary source of funding. Mobile Loaves & Fishes offers numerous services in addition to their mobile food distribution ministry, including affordable housing, micro-business loans, and community gardens. Despite being funded completely by "private individuals" and other non-governmental "nonprofit entities," the extent of programs offered by MLF's outreach ministry classifies the organization as an FBCDO, as characterized by its movement away from "traditional forms of charity" to community development (Fitzgerald 2009, 181).¹⁵

MLF's private funding not only allows it the freedom of moving forward with its ministry on its own terms, but also provides its donors with "reliable accountability."¹⁶ In the process

of obtaining private funds, MLF assumes that its goal of serving homeless individuals within the metropolitan community is shared in equal measure by those who are donating towards the cause. Therefore, unlike FBCDOs who obtain government funding, MLF does not risk compromising its philosophy or restructuring its services in order to maintain constituent support (Fitzgerald 2009). However, MLF is similar to other FBCDOs in that they, too, are compelled by cooperative collective action. As such, they are bound by local limitations, do not engage in demonstration activity, and remain largely a-political, thus further fitting Fitzgerald's (2009) definition of an FBCDO (Melucci 1996).

An example of MLF's cooperative collective action is the 2012 election season, when the organization abstained from publicly supporting a proposition allocating \$78 million to improve and expand affordable housing in Central Texas. Bob, a 10-year volunteer with MLF, speculated that the lack of public support was indicative of MLF's struggle with the local government to obtain a land grant for its own affordable housing village:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1.) How did you first hear about MLF? What made you want to be involved? How long have you been working with them? | 12.) If there was anything you could do differently, what would it be? |
| 2.) What motivates you to continue to volunteer? | 13.) What is your hometown? |
| 3.) Do you prefer truck runs or make readies? Why? | 14.) What is your educational background? Include up to last degree completed or last grade level completed. If including last degree completed, in what field? |
| 4.) I've been told that MLF doesn't just hand out food, but also hope. How do you feel about that statement? | 15.) In what year were you born? |
| 5.) Do you consider yourself religious? How have your beliefs influenced your decision to be involved with MLF? | 16.) How old are you? |
| 6.) How does MLF integrate religion into their volunteerism? | 17.) During what year did you first start volunteering or become involved with activism in general, with any organization or as an individual? |
| 7.) Do you think that MLF's religious basis could deter people from volunteering with them? How so? | 18.) During what year did you first start volunteering or become involved with MLF? |
| 8.) Does MLF foster a community between the clients and volunteers? How do you relate to the people that you serve? | 19.) How many hours do you spend volunteering with MLF per month? How many hours do you spend volunteering in general per month? |
| 9.) How has working with MLF influenced you to make changes in your own lifestyle? | 20.) What is your gender? |
| 10.) What is the most rewarding thing about working with MLF? | 21.) What is your race? |
| 11.) What is the most challenging thing about working with MLF? | 22.) What, if any, is your religious affiliation? |
| | 23.) What is your socioeconomic class? |

TABLE 3. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

There's a lot of history there. Awful lot of it involves the trailer park. But Mobile Loaves has worked very, very, closely with the city trying to get affordable, permanent, supportive housing for the chronically homeless-the biggest problem areas-and the city has been not overly helpful...I think it's pretty understandable that Mobile Loaves wouldn't be particularly excited to support [Proposition 15] because [MLF has] to do fundraising to overcome the fact that the city didn't give them the land.¹⁸

When asked, MLF's Chief Operating Officer David referred to the tenuous process of obtaining land as simply a "learning opportunity," and cited the organization's faith and "glass half full" attitude as a means of getting through the disappointment (Cnaan 1999).¹⁹ However, later in his interview David indicated that MLF's community-based affordable housing village was the best possible solution to Austin's affordable housing problem, thus inferring that MLF's program was better than what the city had proposed. By circumnavigating a critique of the local government and its suggested affordable housing solution, David maintained an open channel of diplomacy. MLF further demonstrated a key aspect of cooperative collective action- an unresolved feeling of a need to act- by identifying the city's proposal as insufficient, continuing to work towards obtaining land outside the city limits, and thereby constructing their own system of action (Snow and Benford 1992; Melucci 1996).

The present study expands upon Fitzgerald's (2009) definition of FBCDOs to include like-organizations that do not accept government grants or partner with government programs in order to provide social services. Because Mobile Loaves & Fishes is privately funded, the organization is allowed more regulatory freedom in terms of the allocation of funds and services than the similar, but government funded organizations profiled in Fitzgerald's (2009) study. However, even without funding restrictions, the data suggest that MLF's cooperative collective action does, at times, limit the organization. Specifically, MLF has been careful not to publically criticize the local government's approach to homeless outreach, as doing so may further delay the development of MLF's long-anticipated affordable housing village.

IDEOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND FRAMING PROCESSES

Mobile Loaves & Fishes' elaborated master frame is a direct reflection of the religious ideology that inspired the ministry. MLF's name is derived from the gospel Sermon on the Mount, which holds that following His deliverance of the Beatitudes Jesus fed the masses with only five loaves of bread and two small fish. That same number of loaves and fish comprises MLF's logo.²⁰ The organization's mission statement, that MLF will strive to give "uncompromising love and hospitality to our brothers and sisters in need" by "providing food, clothing, and promoting dignity" is a reflection of the Roman Catholic Catechism, which indicates that all people should have access to "what is needed to lead a truly human life" (Cnaan 1999, 103).²¹

Although MLF positions itself as "all-inclusive," its dedication to its religious frame is evident throughout the commissary space, which is decorated with Christian religious symbols including crosses, a book of proverbs, and a crucifix.²² The repurposing of the phrase, "brothers and sisters in Christ" to "brothers and sisters in need" also indicates religious commitment.²³ By altering a common and familiar phrase, MLF has engaged in restructuring religious ideology and religiously significant vocabulary to clearly convey an organizational purpose to groups or individuals with whom the phrase may resonate (Snow and Benford 1988; Hunt et al. 1994; McAdam 1994; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Fitzgerald 2009). The phrase is also an example of motivational framing, as it represents what David refers to as the biblical philosophy of:

...loving one another, [the] philosophy of always serving those in need. Serving our homeless brothers kind of follows in line with that. [I] think that there always will be homelessness. Our opportunity is to benefit from them by serving them. The more we serve them, I think, the more we are brought closer to God.²⁴

David articulates a rationale for action- service to others- that reflects the religious ideology of MLF's elaborated master frame. By explaining that serving the homeless is an opportunity to become closer to God, he provides a succinct, biblically enforced motive for volunteering (Snow and Benford 1988; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Fitzgerald 2009).

Religious motivators also serve as basis for frame alignment. Like the organization's founders, volunteer and team lead-

er Susan, who has been with the group for eight years, sees MLF as an opportunity that enables her to “live her faith more fully” (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998).²⁵ She explains:

My faith has always been a very important aspect [of] who I am as a person, so I guess that whenever I do something that requires a good bit of time, there's gotta be a higher power in it... I could tie in that mission [that] Mobile Loaves & Fishes has with what I personally believe as far as what our responsibility is to...others that you encounter on a day-to-day basis.²⁶

Susan's statement indicates cohesion between the founders' ideological religious system and her own understanding of the social world (Gamson 1992; Hunt et al. 1994; McAdam 1994; Eyerman 2005).²⁷ It also implies that, if MLF had been structured in such a way that did not benefit Susan's commitment to her own faith, she would not have become such a long-standing volunteer. By calling people to “serve wholeheartedly,”²⁸ and providing them with what one make ready volunteer described as, “space to help our brothers and sisters in need,”²⁹ MLF engages in frame bridging by enabling volunteers to pursue service-based interests (Snow et al. 1986; Jasper and Poulsen 1995).

MLF also attracts volunteers from outside the Catholic faith community. Nick, who volunteers as team leader for his Methodist church's youth group, explained that it was MLF's “vision of help,” which extends beyond “just feeding people, but helping them other ways, to get out of being homeless,” that adhered him to the program.³⁰ For Kelli, a new volunteer who feeds homeless individuals on her own time but “[doesn't] want to get real involved with [MLF's religious practices],”³¹ it was not the ideological framework that attracted her to MLF, but rather the opportunity to serve. Having had a desire to help homeless individuals on a larger scale, it was, “...the opportunity to go and see how an organization was formed on that level, and how they're feeding people” that eventually persuaded Kelli to participate in MLF's program.³² In this instance, MLF has aligned specifically with Kelli's goal of feeding the homeless (Snow et al. 1986; Jasper and Poulsen 1995).

Frame alignment and bridging are heavily oriented in value and belief amplification. Participation in MLF's mobile food distribution ministry denotes a desire to become involved in community based volunteerism—thereby indicating shared interests

and an agreement with at least one of the organization's goals; namely providing food, clothing, and other basic essentials to those who are going without (Cnaan 1999; Monsma 2007; Taniguchi and Thomas 2011). MLF has used religious ideology to construct a volunteer opportunity that resonates with the pre-existing values and beliefs of its volunteers (Gamson 1992; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998). For some, like Nick and Kelli, MLF aligned with an end-state value represented by the belief that everybody deserves “access to opportunity”³³ or “a second chance”³⁴ (Snow et al. 1986; McVeigh and Sikkink 2001). Others' values are more religiously oriented. Susan expressed a belief that her faith, in relation to volunteering, “convicts [her] of the need to reach out and to give back.”³⁵ Bob introduced MLF's ministry to his temple after another Jewish congregation rejected MLF's participatory offer, stating that he was, “concerned that [the founder would blow] off the entire [city's] Jewish community,” thus indicating a desire for his own faith to be viewed positively by others.³⁶ Fifty percent of respondents also expressed that volunteering with MLF aligned more closely to their value and belief systems than their previous line of work, as David describes:

The sense of providing service to others and the realization that providing service to others was just so much more [an] important aspect of living life than sitting in a corporate conference room someplace.³⁷

MLF has aligned so closely with David's value and belief system that it sparked a career and lifestyle change, manifested here as a move from corporate to non-profit work, and the decision to pursue further service by becoming a Deacon of the Catholic Church.

Mobile Loaves & Fishes is representative of an organization whose elaborated master frame is pervaded by religious ideology. By articulating themselves as an opportunity for volunteers to “put feet on [their] faith,” MLF has created a motivational frame that, through frame alignment and bridging, recruits individuals with like value and belief systems into service with the organization (Snow and Benford 1988; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Fitzgerald 2009).³⁸ The present study fills a gap in the existing literature on framing processes by examining an organization in which the elaborated master frame and the foundational ideology are one in the same. This is signifi-

cant in that it is contradictory to recent literature, which posits that ideology and frame cannot be cohesive without corroding each other. Additionally, this study adds to previous research by suggesting that MLF's religiously based elaborated master frame works in tandem with motivational framing, frame alignment, and frame bridging to amplify the values and beliefs of potential participants and therefore encourage prosocial volunteerism.

MORALITY, RESONANCE, AND CONDENSING SYMBOLS

The values and beliefs present in the religious ideology that frames the Mobile Loaves & Fishes (MLF) organization are representative of the "good or bad, right or wrong, or acceptable or unacceptable" behavior that forms MLF's culturally specific moral identity standard (Durkheim 1963; Durkheim 1972; Cnaan 1999; Stets and Carter 2012, 121). Prosocial religious principles like those expressed in the Catechism or, as David says, the biblical "philosophy of always serving those in need," generate the moral code which religious congregations encourage their members to adopt (Durkheim 1963; Durkheim 1972).³⁹ MLF encourages adherence to a moral identity standard in a similar way by increasing volunteers' awareness of the social world via moral shocks. Moral shocks have the capacity to be incredibly basic, such as:

One of the women in the kitchen says, 'they do not have functioning can openers. Maybe that's something we can do, next time? Maybe each of our families can donate one. I'll even try to donate an electric one.' One of the teen girls has a look of shock on her face, like she can't believe that MLF doesn't have something as standard as a can opener.⁴⁰

Though seemingly infinitesimal on the broad scale of homeless outreach, the above serves as an example of increasing volunteer awareness by, as Susan says, "[snapping the] perspective back."⁴¹ Awareness, as well as god terms like "everybody deserves to eat,"⁴² motivates prosocial behavior (Thoits 1989; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Batson 2002). Kelli, a new volunteer who grew up in a small town, recalled that prior to moving to the metropolitan area she "had never seen a homeless person."⁴³ Seeing someone "with a sign" who, "didn't have a place to live, or food to eat," was a "very big shock" that not only made her aware of homelessness, but also acted as a moral shock that spurred her

involvement in social outreach (Thoits 1989; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Batson 2002).⁴⁴

Volunteers who reflect on their actions demonstrate an awareness of the importance of their volunteerism with the mobile food distribution program (Goodwin et al. 2004).

A lot of people that are homeless, they spend most of their day looking for a place to eat. Or something to wear. Or something they can salvage and buy. That's the focus of their day. . . . Their whole focus is on survival. If you feed them and they know they can go to this place at this time to get lunch or dinner, then they don't worry about that and they can do something else.⁴⁵

By reflecting on a potential outcome of his monthly three hours of service and by accepting that homeless individuals lead a challenging life, Nick indicates that he understands and shares MLF's religiously informed, prosocial moral identity, and, as such, remains motivated to participate in its cause (Goodwin et al. 2004).

Condensing symbols are also motivational. Signage around the commissary space bears phrases such as, "Together, we offer more than just a meal," and ask volunteers to provide both food and compassion during the holiday season.⁴⁶ A large wooden donation bin is located prominently at the entrance to the commissary, and laminated cards on the walls inform volunteers of the expenses MLF incurs: "Did you know it costs MLF \$129,050 a year for food and food supplies?"⁴⁷ These posters use relevant phrases, such as "together," "compassion," and "holiday season" to resonate with volunteers and encourage participation (Jasper and Poulsen 1995). Being involved in MLF's food distribution program-or bringing donations for their bin- alleviates volunteers of feelings of guilt; "[volunteering with MLF] lets me have a clear conscious, at least" -or other "vicarious distress" while simultaneously reaffirming the importance of their activism (Thoits 1989; Batson 2002; Rodgers 2010).⁴⁸

MLF's most powerful condensing symbols are its clients (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Melucci 1996; Eyerman 2005). Throughout the study, several volunteers commented that weekly-rate motels are often the most "heartbreaking" places to distribute food.⁴⁹ Five out of six respondents mentioned feeling compelled to continue volunteering with MLF after seeing first hand the realities of life for some of the people they serve at

those and similar locations. Bob, whose first truck run took him to a half-way house only a street away from a housing project, recalled that:

...lots of little kids came on their bikes and running and they weren't dressed real well and they were just thrilled to get food. It just was one of those things that tugs on your heart. So after that, we decided to include Mobile Loaves as a project...⁵⁰

Seeing the living conditions of the indigent working poor, particularly children, inspired Bob to approve MLF as a viable service project for his wife's Methodist church and, later, his own Jewish synagogue. For Susan, it was the clients' positive outlook and faith that inspired her to remain active in the food distribution program:

...it's very difficult to be in the position where you are the one that's receiving something from somebody else and not able to pay [it] back. And just the graciousness that you encounter. Sometimes you run across people that are just so humble and so faith filled and so simple, and I am always inspired by some of the people that I encounter and I do see Christ there.⁵¹

Clients, via their age or their attitude, create emotionally charged scenarios that threaten volunteers' moral identities and motivate participation in MLF's prosocial outreach ministry (Thoits 1989; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Batson 2002). By creating situations in which volunteers are made emotionally vulnerable, clients become the condensing symbols that construct legitimating frames which function to overcome pre-conceived notions that may affect potential volunteers' desires to become involved in MLF's homeless outreach (Gamson 1992; Eyerman 2005).

The tall male volunteer walks up to me, says that someone should interview these people [the homeless]. Says, "They have a good attitude. They wanna work, they're not lazy. A lot of society has an upside down view of these folks."⁵²

Positive and personal interactions with clients lead to cognitive shifts among volunteers, most notably a movement away from stereotypical views of homeless individuals. Indeed, all six respondents and numerous other volunteers were quick to mention that it was clients' circumstances, such as a work-interrupting injury or other financial hardship that contributed to their loss of housing.⁵³

In order to maintain relevancy and retain volunteers, MLF's leaders must position themselves as embodying the group's moral identity (Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Goodwin et al. 2004). Throughout the study, volunteers frequently commented on what a "great man" the president and co-founder of the organization, Alan Graham, is and cited his "spiritual conviction" of service to the homeless as an inspiration.⁵⁴ All six respondents exhibited trust in the ability of MLF's social outreach programs to adequately address issues threatening their moral identity. As Nick states:

If I could change something what I'd like to see is the government get rid of all these wasteful programs they spend millions of dollars on, trying to help people, and give it to someone like Alan. You give Alan \$10 million, he'd probably build condos and house 100 people in [them]!⁵⁵

By exhibiting more trust in Alan and the MLF outreach programs to "help people" and solve housing problems than in government programs, Nick makes it clear that he considers MLF to be a worthy investment of his time. Trust in the organization also denotes that volunteers have faith in the ability of MLF's programs and leaders to sufficiently address those situations that have threatened their moral identity, i.e. homelessness.

MLF's moral identity standard is grounded in the Christian faith, as evidenced by their Catechism-inspired approach to service. MLF generates participation in homeless outreach via moral shocks and god terms that question volunteers' moral identity standard and raises their awareness regarding homelessness (Thoits 1989; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Batson 2002; Goodwin et al. 2004). Condensing symbols, particularly clients, create emotionally charged scenarios that threaten volunteers' understanding of the social world and motivate their participation in Mobile Loaves & Fishes ministry (Thoits 1989; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Batson 2002). The present study contributes to existing literature on morality in volunteerism by approaching the subject qualitatively. This paper adds to previous literature by identifying ways in which organizations induce motivational threats to moral identity via moral shocks and condensing symbols. This research also adds to the extant literature on condensing symbols by broadening the definition to include condensing symbols as legitimating and lived experiences.

“...lots of little kids came on their bikes and running and they weren’t dressed real well and they were just thrilled to get food. It just was one of those things that tugs on your heart. So after that, we decided to include Mobile Loaves as a project...” – Bob

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on a thorough analysis of three different qualitative data sources collected in fall 2012, including interviews, participant observation, and organizational materials, the current study has examined the implications of ideology on organizational framing practices and motivations for volunteering. Specifically, this research has identified how a homeless outreach ministry uses religious ideology as an elaborated master frame to articulate an organizationally relevant moral identity standard and provide sufficient motive to volunteer (Hunt and Benford 2004; Snow 2004).

Previous literature suggests that aspects of religious ideology, rather than the ideology in its entirety, are often used to aid in the creation of a social movement organization’s master frame (Snow and Benford 1992; Jasper and Poulsen 1995). This paper finds that Mobile Loaves & Fishes does not simply borrow from religious ideology, but rather uses it as its elaborated master frame. In doing so, MLF has created a frame that marries individual and cultural beliefs, thus allowing the organization to remain accessible to individuals outside of the specific ideological system (Gamson 1992; Hunt et al. 1994; McAdam 1994; Eyerman 2005).

MLF positions itself as a viable service opportunity to all those with whom the organizational values and beliefs align. The organization's motivational frame highlights prosocial faith-based tenets that attract religiously affiliated participants by articulating a rationale for action that is entrenched in the same philosophy of love and service to others alluded to throughout the Bible (Snow and Benford 1988; Hunt et al. 1994; McAdam 1994; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Jasper 1998; Fitzgerald 2009). Volunteers are also recruited through frame alignment and bridging, which amplify pre-existing values or beliefs and position MLF as an organization that will enable participants to pursue their service-based interests (Snow et al. 1986; Jasper and Poulsen 1995).

MLF's elaborated master frame represents the organization's moral identity standard by encompassing the prosocial religious principles that generate the moral code with which volunteers' values and beliefs align (Durkheim 1963; Durkheim 1972). Moral shocks question the organizational moral identity and therefore spur continued outreach. Given that the majority of MLF's volunteers are middle to upper-middle class, the organization's real-world condensing symbols are particularly powerful in that volunteer interactions with clients offer first-hand exposure to the realities of homelessness and poverty (Thoits 1989; Jasper and Poulsen 1995; Batson 2002). Emotionally charged encounters with clients resonate with volunteers to such a degree that they create legitimating frames that supersede stereotypes and encourage continued involvement in the ministry (Gamson 1992; Eyerman 2005).

Although this study is limited in terms of hours spent in the field and number of interviews conducted, the contributions to the existing social movement literature are still significant. The findings suggest that Fitzgerald's (2009) definition of an FBCDO may be too restrictive in its specificity, and future scholars should consider expanding it to include faith-based nonprofits that are funded by non-government entities and private individuals. Despite having more freedom in its programs than traditional FBCDOs, MLF still faces restrictions at the local level. Notable limitations due to cooperative collective practices included difficulty in securing land for the MLF affordable housing village.

This paper finds that ideology and framing can function as parts of the same successful whole. MLF's entire value system

and, consequently, moral identity standard is based off of the religious ideology that composes the organization's elaborated master frame (Durkheim 1963; Durkheim 1972; Jasper and Poulsen 1995). By clearly articulating religiously inspired service oriented goals, MLF has been able to successfully recruit those who may feel religiously obligated to participate in a cause that enables them not only to practice their faiths, but to live their faiths (Cnaan 1999).

Unlike previous studies, which maintain that morality is not enough incentive to participate in a movement, the present research suggests that moral obligation is, in fact, significant motivation to become involved in volunteerism (Jasper and Poulsen 1995). However, there is a stipulation in that such obligations be presented in applicable ways via the articulation of motivating ideals, the alignment of goals which counter moral threats induced by god terms, and experienced, lived condensing symbols that raise awareness of the impact participants can have.

Though significant, the current study does not address how the perceptions of others may influence volunteers' decisions to be involved. As such, future research should examine the effect of feeling rules and reflected appraisal on organization participants. However, regardless of outsider perception, accessibility limitations, and moral obligations, it is evident that Mobile Loaves & Fishes food distribution volunteers truly believe that they are, as one excitedly told me, "feeding the world."⁵⁶

1. Observed during fieldwork, October 15, 2012.
2. "About MLF: Our Ministry" section of the MLF website, <http://mlf.org>. [Date accessed October 23, 2012].
3. Observed during fieldwork, September 13, 2012.
4. Diagnostic frames persuade potential recruits that a problem must be addressed, whereas prognostic frames provide proposed solutions and strategies for dealing with the problem (Snow and Benford 1988; Jasper and Poulsen 1995). Although these framing practices were evident in MLF, motivational framing was most prominent and therefore became the focus of study.
5. "About MLF: Our Ministry" section of the MLF website, <http://mlf.org> [Date accessed October 23, 2012].
6. "About MLF" section of the MLF website, <http://mlf.org> [Date accessed October 23, 2012].
7. "About MLF" section of the MLF website, <http://mlf.org> [Date accessed October 23, 2012].
8. Conversation during fieldwork, August 24, 2012.
9. MLF website, <http://mlf.org> [Date accessed October 23, 2012].
10. Observed throughout fieldwork.
11. E-mail exchange with MLF's Chief Operating Officer, October 22-23, 2012.
12. In this context, a make-ready is the process during which volunteers prepare the food that is going to be distributed that night and load it onto the catering truck.
In this context, a truck run is the food distribution process, during which volunteers travel to different locations in Austin and hand out the prepared food.
13. "MLF Trucks" section of the Mobile Loaves & Fishes website, <http://mlf.org> [Date accessed October 23, 2012].
14. Interview with David, October 30 2012.
15. Interview with David, October 20, 2012.
16. Source: <http://www.AustinTexas.gov>, 2012 Bond Program. [Date accessed November 1, 2012.]
17. Interview with Bob, October 21, 2012.
18. Interview with David, October 30, 2012.
19. MLF printed materials.
20. MLF printed materials.
21. Observed throughout fieldwork.
22. MLF printed materials.
23. Interview with David, October 30, 2012.
24. Interview with Susan, September 26, 2012. Interview with David, October 30, 2012.
25. Interview with Susan, September 26, 2012.
26. MLF "Plant a Seed" pamphlet. Interview with David, October 30, 2012.
27. Observed throughout fieldwork.
28. Conversation during fieldwork, October 4, 2012.
29. Interview with Nick, October 15, 2012.
30. Interview with Kelli, October 1, 2012.
31. Interview with Kelli, October 1, 2012.
32. Interview with Nick, October 15, 2012.
33. Interview with Kelli, October 1, 2012.
34. Interview with Susan, September 30, 2012.
35. Interview with Bob, October 21, 2012.
36. Interview with David, October 30, 2012.
37. Interview with Susan, September 30, 2012.
38. Interview with David, October 30, 2012.

39. Excerpt from field notes, September 30, 2012.
40. Interview with Susan, September 26, 2012.
41. Conversation during fieldwork, September 4, 2012.
42. Interview with Kelli, October 1, 2012.
43. Interview with Kelli, October 1, 2012.
44. Interview with Nick, October 15, 2012.
45. Observed throughout fieldwork.
46. Observed throughout fieldwork. Interestingly, on my last day visiting the commissary, November 25, 2012 these cards had been taken down. However, stone versions of the cards form a pathway around the commissary and were still present.
47. Conversation during fieldwork, September 30, 2012.
48. Conversations observed throughout fieldwork.
49. Interview with Bob, October 21, 2012.
50. Interview with Susan, September 26, 2012.
51. Excerpt from field notes, October 15, 2012.
52. Observed throughout fieldwork.
53. Observed throughout fieldwork.
54. Interview with Nick, October 15, 2012.
55. Conversation during fieldwork, October 15, 2012.

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