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About the Journal

The Undergraduate History Journal at Illinois is a peer-reviewed, double blind, history research publication, run by students at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, that strives to provide undergraduate students with the opportunity to share their research and gain exposure for their writing. The journal is committed to high standards of writing, a broad sampling of areas of research, and the integrity of academic research.

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“His Master (if any he has)”: Race, Slavery, Newspapers, and Black Seafarers in the 18th Century Anglo-Atlantic

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On the night of November 12th, 1773, a Black sailor named Nath saw his chance. He fled from the schooner *Two Brothers*, docked in Boston Harbor. The next day, the man who claimed to be his master would publish a notice in the Boston Gazette, offering a reward for Nath’s return.[1] This would be one of many such notices published in the British colonies of North America as enslaved Black sailors used their skills and their lives at sea to resist their enslavement. The newspapers of the 18th century, written by and for a white audience, preserve the struggles of African sailors and the ongoing construction of race in the Anglo-Atlantic world. This article examines the references made in those newspapers to Black sailors, to locate both the racial construction of the 18th century, and the resistance of Black sailors. Black sailors made regular efforts to escape or resist slavery, and that resistance is clearly visible in the record.

Race as a category of identity had emerged from European society by the middle of the 17th century, but its construction was not and never could be complete. In the Anglo-Atlantic world, the socio-political environment which tied together England and her colonies, race would continue to be developed throughout the early modern period, and, indeed, through to the present. What emerges from the newspapers of the Anglo-Atlantic is that, to white society, Blackness and slavery had been made almost entirely synonymous. Still, Black individuals sought constantly to negotiate these terms or resist their enslavement. The 17th century had seen

[1] "Advertisement." *Boston Gazette* (Boston, Massachusetts), no. 971, November 15, 1773: [3]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.

an explosive rise in maritime and coastal trade in the Atlantic World. This rise continued into the 18th century, supported by an enormous class of sailors drawn from and forming a new working class in England, the Caribbean, and the English North American colonies.[2]

The 18th century began with a relatively fully developed colonial system incorporating both the Caribbean and North America, saw the last great age of piracy, and ended with the English North American colonies achieving independence.[3] The new class of laborers who supported the Anglo-Atlantic of the 18th century included a large number of Black sailors, particularly in the Americas.[4] While the labor of all sailors in the period was frequently compelled, only Black sailors had to contend with the institution of racial slavery.[5] Their appearances in the newspaper record of the 18th century both document the constructed racial system in which they existed, and the ways in which Black sailors could negotiate and resist that system. The life stories of Black sailors were almost never directly attested in the newspapers of the 18th century. However, references to Black sailors and their conditions were a constant of the newspaper network. One described how a Black sailor named Robin "ha[d] often absented himself before, and at those times used to follow fishing."[6] These short references both showcase the views held about Black sailors by the elites who claimed to own them, and provide important details about their life history and even preferences, such as Robin's apparent preference for working as a fisherman while free.[7]

While other forms of unfree labor existed, particularly in the form of indentured servitude, slavery was far more extreme and almost wholly inescapable. While not perfectly

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[2] Marcus Rediker. *The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. Cambridge UP, 1987. 77.
[3] *The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. 75.
[4] W. Jeffrey Bolster. *Black Jacks*. Harvard UP. 1997.
[5] Peter Linebaugh. Marcus Rediker. *The Many Headed Hydra*. Beacon Press, 2000. 60. and *The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. 31, 81, 100.
[6] "Advertisement." *City Gazette* (Charleston, South Carolina) XVI, no. 3368, May 23, 1798: [4]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[7] "Advertisement." *City Gazette* (Charleston, South Carolina) XVI, no. 3368, May 23, 1798

mappable to modern racial categories, a very strong distinction had been made between Black, those who could be enslaved, and white, those who could not be. Native Americans, whose enslavement had been common early in the colonial period, moved into a unique third category as African slavery became the dominant form of slavery. Roxann Wheeler's article "Colonial Exchanges: Visualizing Racial Ideology and Labor in Britain and the West Indies," demonstrates that as the enslavement of Native Americans became less common in the late 18th century, characters in several prominent works including *Robinson Crusoe* changed from being portrayed as "Indian" to being portrayed as African.[8] While Wheeler argues that this was the result of race being viewed as malleable, it is also consistent with a late 18th century view of 'Black' as being synonymous with 'slave.' This system of racial categorization fundamentally relied on the dehumanization and commodification of enslaved Black labor, a process described by Stephanie Smallwood in "Commodified Freedom."[9] As a key example, white indentured servants regularly appeared with last names in newspapers, while Black slaves did not.[10] Black freedmen appear in the record with last names, but this state was precarious at the best of times.[11]

The story of racial construction at sea is complicated by the overwhelmingly male environment aboard the ships of the 18th century. Sailing in the 18th century was a mostly (though not entirely) male occupation, and so women appear infrequently in the newspaper record for sailors.[12] At least one group of runaways mentioned in the newspaper record who attempted to

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[8] Roxann Wheeler. "Colonial Exchanges: Visualizing Racial Ideology and Labor in Britain and the West Indies". 37-38.
[9] Stephanie Smallwood. "Commodified Freedom: Interrogating the Limits of Anti-Slavery Ideology in the Early Republic" in *Journal of the Early Republic*.
[10] "Advertisement." *Providence Gazette* (Providence, Rhode Island) I, no. 29, May 7, 1763: [4]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
"Advertisement." *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), no. 464, October 10, 1751: [2]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[11] "Advertisement." *Weekly Advertiser of Reading, in the County of Berks* (Reading, Pennsylvania), no. 70, September 2, 1797: [4]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[12] Introduction. *Iron Men and Wooden Women*. ed. Margaret Creighton and Lisa Norling. John Hopkins UP, 1996. ix.

disguise themselves as sailors included a woman, but this group was composed of (white) convict laborers, not enslaved African sailors.[13] Compelling research, however, has been done showing that the construction of race in many ways began with Black women. In Jennifer Morgan's "Some Could Suckle over their Shoulder," she writes that European authors conveyed the 'savagery' that they were associating with African and Amerindian populations through the women of those societies. Female physical features were particularly emphasized by these authors, particularly those that had to do with reproduction.[14] In even the most positive depictions, African women were used to illustrate the 'savage nature' of the rest of their peoples.[15] Morgan writes that "By about the turn of the seventeenth century, as England joined in the transatlantic slave trade, assertions of African savagery began to be predicated […] on production via reproduction."[16] Another key belief developed by European explorers and colonizers was that African women were immune or resistant to pain, including in childbirth.[17]

This belief allowed African women to be identified as productive laborers, who could be exploited in both production and reproduction. This belief produced not just a construction of otherness, but a construction of *race* that was permanent and immutable, in which status as the racial other of 'Black' denoted first and foremost the potential for labor exploitation. This construction of race, while drawing upon the statements and writings of men from all over Europe, would prove to be particularly influential in England and its colonies. There, it was not

[13] "Advertisement." *Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg, Virginia), no. [1166], December 2, 1773: [3]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[14] Jennifer Morgan. "Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder": Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770. in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Jan., 1997, Vol. 54, No. 1, Constructing Race (Jan., 1997). 181.
[15] Morgan, "Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder". 184.
[16] Morgan, "Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder". 187.
[17] Morgan, "Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder". 189.

in conflict with other constructions of race, such as the somewhat more mutable one that developed in the Spanish colonies.[18]

It was in this environment that the Black sailors of the Anglo-Atlantic World lived and labored, and the context in which the Anglo-Atlantic racial construction was further developed. This Anglo-Atlantic is the application of the broader idea of the Atlantic World, the shared environment encompassing the colonies, the West African coast from which Black people were seized to work in the colonies, and the European imperial metropoles, to England and its colonies. This world was tied together by Keith Dawson's concept of "cultural hydrography".[19] The idea of cultural hydrography is that the Anglo-Atlantic world shared a common approach to the maritime and littoral environments, and that this approach welded together colonies that were geographically far apart. This is a development of the idea of cultural geography, the "organiz[ation] [of] Atlantic Africa into cultural spaces with shared traditions and histories," which Dawson identifies as originating with scholars such as Boubacar Barry.[20]

This shared culture, both maritime and terrestrial, can be seen clearly in the newspaper network of the British American colonies. A shared print culture developed in the colonies of the Anglo-Atlantic world, usually written for, but perhaps not always read by, the privileged elite of British colonial society. News stories could easily spread across the colonies, being reprinted and often rewritten in multiple colonies, when a story was considered particularly shocking or noticeable.[21]

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[18] Rebecca Earle. "If You Eat Their Food". in *American Historical Review*. June 2010.
[19] Kevin Dawson. "Enslaved Ship Pilots in the Age of Revolutions". *Journal of Social History*. 2013 74 and 89.
[20] Dawson, 74.
[21] "Extract of a Letter from Charlestown, in South Carolina, January 23d 1733, 4." *Boston News-Letter* (Boston, Massachusetts), no. 1567, February 14, 1734: [2]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
And
New-York Gazette (New York, New York), March 11, 1733: 2. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers.*

The Newspaper Evidence

For Black sailors, the greatest body of newspaper evidence lay in the runaway notices, like the one which identified Robin as a fisherman, that were constantly produced in every colony as slaves and indentured servants ran away from their masters.[22] These notices, predictable and formulaic in their structure, are revealing of both the ways in which race was understood by the white community, and of the ways that Black sailors negotiated and resisted that construction. Nath's runaway notice, a fairly typical example of the genre, was published in Boston on November 13th, 1773, by Samuel Lightbourn. It read as follows:

> "Ran away last Night from on Board the Schooner Two Williams, lying at the Hon. John Hancock, Esq'rs Wharff, a Negro Man, named Nath. of a yellow Complection, about five Feet seven Inches high, 28 years of age; a likely well made Fellow, and a good Sailor. — Had on when he went away, a blue Waistcoat, lin'd with Red.
> Whoever shall apprehend and secure him, so that his Owner may have him again, shall have SIX DOLLARS Reward. And all Masters of Vessels and others are hereby cautioned against entertaining or concealing said Negro, as they may depend on being prosecuted according to Law."[23]

Typically contained in the advertising section of the newspaper, subscribers would take out adverts, often for days, weeks, or even months, in order to notify the literate white community, and, inevitably even if unintentionally, any racial others able to read, of the escape of their slave or servant. These notices follow a highly predictable structure: the name of the runaway, their physical description, a description of the clothes they were wearing and their profession, if they had one, a reward, and then, in many cases, a postscript, usually phrased as *N.B.* for *nota bene*, separate from the rest of the text, addressed to "owners and masters of vessels."

While it is difficult to draw out the details of individual lives from a mode of text so deeply formulaic, the formulas and phrasings used in these notices and adverts reveal how the

[22] "Advertisement." *City Gazette* (Charleston, South Carolina) XVI, no. 3368, May 23, 1798
[23] "Advertisement." *Boston Gazette* (Boston, Massachusetts), no. 971, November 15, 1773: [3]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.

racial identity of Black sailors was understood and constructed by white society. The first clue to the understanding of race that is visible in the notice is Nath's name. Nath is referred to only as Nath, without a last name.[24] No runaway notice, out of approximately 30 surveyed, listed a last name for an escapee who was identified as Black. Similarly, and unsurprisingly, while phrasing along the lines of "so that his Owner may have him again" was a feature of almost every runaway notice, including those referring to indentured servants, only those referring to Black sailors referred to an "Owner," with those referring to white indentured servants (and many Black sailors) using the word "Master" instead.[25]

In these notices, there was a total overlap between the categories of Black and slave. These two categories were collapsed into the single adjective "Negro," used to identify almost every Black person named or referenced in the newspapers. The meaning of this term can be seen in the total absence of the use of the word slave in the runaway notices. In fact, the term slave is used exceedingly rarely in the newspaper record, especially in notices, though it appears in articles about plantation rebellions.[26] For the Anglo-American society of the 18th century, the word "Negro" alone was enough to identify someone as a slave, without any further specification. This synonymous meaning of the two words can be seen in two of its key exceptions and contrasts: free Black sailors, and white indentured sailors subject to some of the same restrictions on free movement and legal penalties. This second category was not, as will become clear, subject to the same processes of commodification and identification with slavery.

The first case —the case of the free Black sailor— was highly individualized: print sources produced by white authors could prove fairly sympathetic to free Black sailors, at least in

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[24] "Advertisement." *Boston Gazette* (Boston, Massachusetts), no. 971, November 15, 1773
[25] "Advertisement." *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* (New York, New York), no. 474, February 17, 1752: [4]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[26] "To Charles Yorks, Esq.." *Gazette of the United States* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) X, no. 1266, September 29, 1796: [2]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.

cases of tragedy, while still assuming that unknown Black sailors were the slaves of unknown masters. For instance, in 1764 in Maryland, the Black sailor George Hartford was murdered by his friend and shipmate William Jacques.[27] The response in the Maryland Gazette was a condemnation of Jacques in the strongest terms, and a general recognition of George Hartford as an upstanding member of the Maryland community. Hartford was, by 1764, a free man, though unfortunately the means by which he achieved his freedom is unknown. The details of the description of Hartford stand out in the article, as they are radically different from the usual treatment of Black sailors, particularly enslaved sailors appearing in runaway notices.

First, Hartford is described as "a Black" in the first mention of his race in the text, which begins to establish Hartford's status as different and more respected by the white community in which he existed, even though the article does then revert to the usual use of the term "negro."[28] Second, the article makes the fact of his freedom clear: Hartford is said to have "been formerly a servant to William Liston […] but late his shipmate onboard the *Stag* Man of War, and had been discharged at the same time".[29] This sentence firmly establishes Hartford's status as a free man in the community, not only by making it clear that he was no longer bound to his former master, but also by the note of his discharge from the man-of-war *Stag*. Sailors, often pressed into service with the Royal Navy, could find themselves in situations in which they were not free laborers, even if they were paid, and the article firmly establishes Hartford as outside of that category. Hartford, released from obligation to both former master and to his ship, was therefore, to the writers of the newspaper, an acceptable free Black sailor, and deserving of respect. Hartford is

[27] "Dantzick May 16." *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis, Maryland), no. 1006, August 16, 1764: [1]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[28] "Dantzick May 16." *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis, Maryland), no. 1006, August 16, 1764
[29] "Dantzick May 16." *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis, Maryland), no. 1006, August 16, 1764

further described as “the generous Negro,” while his murderer is “this execrable Wretch” “lost to all sense of Gratitude.”[30]

To identify Hartford as a free man, the newspaper had to take explicit steps, by writing that he had “been *formerly* a servant” (emphasis mine).[31] Without this information, clearly, the newspaper editor or article author believed that the audience would identify Hartford as a slave, not as a free man. George Hartford was also now George Hartford, instead of simply George. Hartford, released from slavery, was granted the dignity associated with having a last name of his own, or at least one associated with him, instead of leaving him with only a first name. This too indicated to the audience that Hartford was free, as the use of last names was non-existent in runaway notices, and the use of names at all was quite rare in other newspaper entries such as sale notices for slaves.

Cases involving runaway indentured servants were less common by the 18th century, but still existed. These were identifiable as white in the newspaper record by their contrast with the records of enslaved Black sailors. These men, such as John Hervey of New York, were sometimes identified by their national (English or Irish) origin, but never by a racial category.[32] Hervey, an Englishman, ran away from John Denyce on the 3rd of January 1752. In the details of its structure, the notice taken out by John Denyce is mostly indistinguishable from the one taken out about Nath: the same physical description: Hervey was “short but well set;” his clothing identified in the same way: a “blue Ratteen Waistcoat with Slash Sleeves;” given the same identification of past laboring experience: he “ha[d] been used to the sea” and so on.[33] The differences, therefore, stand out all the more strongly. John Hervey is identified as English, not as

[30] "Dantzick May 16." *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis, Maryland), no. 1006, August 16, 1764
[31] "Dantzick May 16." *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis, Maryland), no. 1006, August 16, 1764
[32] "Advertisement." *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* (New York, New York), no. 474, February 17, 1752
[33] "Advertisement." *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* (New York, New York), no. 474, February 17, 1752

white, because whiteness was the absence of blackness, not really its own racial category. John Hervey receives the dignity of his last name, and, furthermore, the reason that he is appearing in the paper is elucidated: he is an "English serving-man."[34] It is his specific laboring position in life, not his intrinsic status, that identifies him as a candidate for a runaway notice. For Nath, and for any other Black sailor, it was enough to be identified as a "Negro Man," a category that had been deliberately and entirely associated in its meaning with servitude, with exceptions being rare and carefully explained.

This process of racial construction can also be seen in a second major category of references to Black sailors in the newspaper record: the catch notice, the runaway notice's opposite. These notices, published by local jails, detailed the arrest of servants or slaves who had committed crimes or were believed by the jailer to have violated the law, even, as will be seen, merely by the fact of their existence in society.[35] These notices, unlike runaway notices, often portrayed substantially more ambiguity as to the status of those who had been arrested. It appears that, in many cases, it was not entirely clear to the jailer if the arrested was a runaway or a free man.

For instance, a Black man named Jeremiah Gibbs was arrested in 1797 in Reading, Pennsylvania, and a notice was put out in the local paper by the jailer. Gibbs was described as wearing sailor's clothing, but the jailer was ultimately uncertain as to Gibbs' status. In the notice, he asks the "Master or Owner of the above Negro Man" to "take him away and pay charges" or Gibbs would be "released from confinement."[36] The jailer, therefore, believed that Gibbs was likely enslaved or a servant, but he could not be entirely certain, and was willing to release Gibbs

[34] "Advertisement." *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* (New York, New York), no. 474, February 17, 1752
[35] "Advertisement." *Weekly Advertiser of Reading, in the County of Berks* (Reading, Pennsylvania), no. 70, September 2, 1797
[36] "Advertisement." *Weekly Advertiser of Reading, in the County of Berks* (Reading, Pennsylvania), no. 70, September 2, 1797

if no one was willing or able to make a claim to him, including paying the costs of keeping Gibbs imprisoned. The arrest notice for Gibbs was also published with his last name, Gibbs, instead of leaving him without one, which also contributes to a sense that his status was not entirely determined.

A similar story is seen in the New York Gazette in 1769. The notice reports the arrest of a Black sailor "who calls himself Sam." While the notice says that "he says his master's name is Capt. Johnson," it ends by asking "his Master (if any he has) to come immediately, pay Charges, and take him away."[37] Clearly, the jailer believed that Sam was likely enslaved, but could not be certain of this. Another enslaved sailor, "who called himself BOATSWAIN," arrested in Jamaica, was supposed to set out on a journey to England, but was threatened by "some of his countrymen" who "suaded him, that if he went again [illegible] water he would be eaten" and so escaped.[38] None of these three cases of the arrest notice provide any information as to why the men in question had been arrested. None of the men were charged with a crime, they were simply detained and held for their "masters […] if any [they] had" to come and retrieve them. This lack of charges suggests strongly that these men, even though some of them may have been free, could be detained exclusively for being Black. A Black sailor named Tom Cuffee was "taken up" in Charleston, S.C., and held for "any person who can lawfully claim a right to the above described fellow," though Cuffee claimed that "he has no master in this country."[39] If they could not prove their freedom, any local jailer could seize them and wait days or weeks to release them, putting out notices in the local papers. This could even happen, as is the case with Sam, if

[37] "Advertisement." *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* (New York, New York), no. 1393, September 11, 1769: [4]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[38] *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega* (St. Jago de la Vega, Jamaica), January 17, 1782: 4. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[39] "Advertisement." *City Gazette* (Charleston, South Carolina) XV, no. 3104, July 14, 1797: [3]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.

the man in question was to claim servitude, if the claimed "master" was not present.[40] According to an entry from 1797 in the Baltimore Gazette, in Maryland, if an "owner" was not to "come and take him away" a detained Black person could be "sold for his gaol fee, according to law," though, as this wording is unique to Maryland, and contrasts with the planned release of Jeremiah Gibbs, it may have been unique to that colony (state, at that time).[41]

As demonstrated by these catch notices, even the status of a free Black sailor was hazardous in the 18th century. While white sailors had to fear the press gang, free Black sailors were unable to escape the threat of a return to slavery.[42] Frequently, free Black sailors captured on board a ship belonging to a hostile government would be re-enslaved and sold off, in order to make money for the captain and crew of the warship that had taken the prize.[43]

Olaudah Equiano, an enslaved Black sailor who managed to purchase his freedom and ultimately testified in front of the British Parliament against the slave trade, provides more insight into this real threat and constant source of terror in his autobiography. Equiano, possibly the most famous Black sailor of the 18th century, learned to read and write and was able to turn these skills towards producing testimony and *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, a memoir and autobiography describing his experiences in slavery at sea, and arguing against the continued existence of the slave trade.[44] Equiano personally was able to avoid re-enslavement, but he writes that free Black people "live[d] in constant alarm for their liberty; and even this is but nominal," shortly after witnessing the spectacle of a man generally regarded as a freedman being "carried away, and probably doomed never more in this world to see [his

[40] "Advertisement." *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* (New York, New York), no. 1393, September 11, 1769
[41] "Advertisement." *Federal Gazette & BALTIMORE Daily ADVERTISER.* (Baltimore, Maryland) VII, no. 1222, October 10, 1797: [2]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[42] Alan Gregor Cobley. "That Turbulent Soil" in *Seascapes.* Hawai'i UP, 2007. 157.
[43] "That Turbulent Soil" in *Seascapes,* 157.
[44] Olaudah Equiano. *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano.* Chapter 6.

wife and children] again."[45] The threat of re-enslavement did not, however, replace the threat of the press gang for Black Sailors. Instead, the threat was always doubled; both state-sponsored and individually organized gangs of armed men were given the authority and power to board ships and seize Black sailors for unfree labor.

Therefore, even though it was possible for Black people to win or be granted freedom, this freedom existed directly at odds with the understanding of the society that they lived in. In the 18th century Anglo-Atlantic, Black freedom could only ever be understood as an aberration, as an exception to the rule. A Black sailor could be "formerly a servant of," or otherwise marked explicitly as free, but to be Black in the text of a newspaper article without other qualification was to be marked as an enslaved laborer.[46]

In addition to the runaway and the catch notice, there existed a third type of notice, which was yet more explicit about the commodification of Black labor. This category was the sale notice, describing enslaved men and women who were to be sold at auction or by private sale. The sale notice eliminated even the first name of the sailor who was to be sold, providing only a physical description, a description of their skills, and, usually, an assurance that the enslaved sailor was being sold for "no fault whatever."[47] This was, in some way, the final development of the role of the "scrimp" and the "spirit." These men were responsible for coercively acquiring labor for ship captains and masters, which they did by convincing drunk or inexperienced sailors to sell their labor to the scrimp.[48] While the scrimp could target a free white sailor, and would in many cases seize a drunk sailor and carry him onto a ship, the sale of labor could be made even more systematic when it was applied to enslaved Black sailors.

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[45] Equiano, Ch. 6.
[46] "Dantzick May 16." *Maryland Gazette* (Annapolis, Maryland), no. 1006, August 16, 1764
[47] "Advertisement." *City Gazette* (Charleston, South Carolina) XVI, no. 3321, March 27, 1798: [3]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[48] Rediker. *The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. 81-2.

This system of renting out enslaved labor was common across the British colonies, but was particularly prominent in the West Indies.[49] This was the result of a severe shortage of free labor in the West Indian colonies, as the vast majority of the colonial population consisted of enslaved African laborers. This both increased wage pressure in the West Indies, meaning free sailors in the West Indies earned more than many contemporaries, but it also caused the West Indies to be the source of many of the enslaved sailors of the period.[50] From there, or from whatever port of origin they had, Black sailors could travel the whole span of the Anglo-Atlantic. Sam, for instance, was arrested in New York, but had come from Barbados.[51] The man who called himself "Boatswain" did not ultimately move far, but he had intended to set out on a substantial journey, far away from the American colonies to the other end of the Anglo-Atlantic world.[52]

Resistance

The ability to travel provided Black sailors and seafarers with a marked advantage in their efforts to resist the racial hierarchy to which they were subjected. To return to Keith Dawson's 2013 article "Enslaved Ship Pilots in the Age of Revolutions," Dawson demonstrates that some slaves, specifically, enslaved pilots, managed to use the green-water littoral as a transitional, liminal space, unbound by the either land-based or maritime forms of authority, and able to exert considerable influence over the ships that they were, for short times, able to control.[53] This framework of the transitional and liminal space, which Dawson draws from Greg Dening's work

[49] "That Turbulent Soil" in *Seascapes*. 155.
[50] Rediker. *The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*. 136.
[51] "Advertisement." *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* (New York, New York), no. 1393, September 11, 1769
[52] *Gazette of Saint Jago de la Vega* (St. Jago de la Vega, Jamaica), January 17, 1782
[53] Kevin Dawson. "Enslaved Ship Pilots in the Age of Revolutions". 71.

in *Islands and Beaches*, is useful not only for understanding the literal littorals, but also the entire zone of transition from land to sea, beginning with the coastal ports and ending with the maritime hierarchies and systems of the open sea, as a zone of negotiation and resistance for enslaved sailors.[54] The water removed many enslaved Black sailors from the direct control of their masters, even as it often left them subjected to the whims of capricious ship captains and masters. Even though the newspaper network could publish particularly shocking stories from across the British American colonies, most stories stayed local, and someone who was able to get away to another colony could become essentially undetectable. The runaway notices showcased the ways that those subjected to these systems of unfree labor were able to attempt escape. Those who were able to make it to the ports of the Atlantic world had access to plausible avenues of escape and economic self-sufficiency. The ports they sailed from marked the beginning of the liminal, transitional space of the littorals and ultimately the open ocean. Even if the maritime hierarchy of the open ocean was horrifically brutal, and even if sailors could be swept up by the press gangs of the Royal Navy or have their wages stolen from them, slaves and indentured servants trapped on land saw their chances at sea.[55]

This chance did not at all go unnoticed by those who wrote runaway notices. Especially for those slaves and servants with recognized connection to the ocean, but even for many of those without any initial connection to the ocean at all, runaway notices constantly sought to warn about the threat of escape to the sea. This was done in two key ways. First, all possible explicit connections were drawn between the fleeing slave or servant and the ocean. For those who had served aboard ship before, this was mentioned, either by referring to the experience and the quantity of it directly, or by referring to the man in question as a sailor. This set of

[54] Dawson, 74.
[55] *The Devil and the Deep Blue Sea.* 82, and Beckles "From Slave to Sea". 81.

connections included, in virtually all of these adverts, some sort of allusion to the level of sailing ability that the enslaver believed to be possessed by the runaway. In some cases, slaves and servants had their skills denigrated, or were assessed as not being actual sailors, seeking instead to "pass for a" or "affect [a]" sailor,[56] while in others, perhaps to emphasize their economic productive value, they were called out as "prime."[57] This section could alternately include a description of their duties, saying that a man "had been a privateer," or, for instance, had "come on the sloop *Mary.*"[58] The next step was to emphasize the likelihood of passing for a sailor being carried out successfully by reference to the man's clothing. While generally common, these formulations appear particularly frequently in cases where a runaway had not yet been described as a sailor. When one had, it was common for clothes to escape mention, whereas in cases where the man was described merely as having "come from a sloop," or those where the escapee appears to have been a landsman, sailors' clothing was brought up frequently.[59] Robbin, who ran away from the brigantine *Fanny*, was described as wearing "a sailors old frock and trousers, a dirty handkerchief around his head, and is bare-footed," but his occupation is not described as being that of a sailor.[60] Jordan, a "prime sailor," has his clothing described extensively, a "grey Coat, one white and one striped Jacket, two Pairs of Trowsers, one Pair of blue Cloth

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[56] "Advertisement." *Providence Gazette* (Providence, Rhode Island) I, no. 29, May 7, 1763: [4]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
"Advertisement." *Pennsylvania Journal, or, Weekly Advertiser* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), no. 464, October 10, 1751: [2]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[57] "Advertisement." *New-York Mercury* (New York, New York), no. 476, September 14, 1761: Supplement [2]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[58] "Advertisement." *New-York Gazette* (New York, New York), no. 134, August 3, 1761: [4]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[59] "Advertisement." *New-York Gazette* (New York, New York), no. 134, August 3, 1761
[60] "Advertisement." *New-York Mercury* (New York, New York), no. 668, August 13, 1764: [1]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
Robbin appears to have been particularly poorly treated by the author of the notice, Thomas Stevenson. The clothes he is described as wearing are far worse than what is normally described, and had earlier attempted to slit his own throat.

Breeches…" but his clothing is not described as that of a sailor, nor can it be identified as sailors garb with any certainty.[61]

In part, this may have been the result of attempted disguise among those who were able to run away. As some enslaved sailors were well known to the towns in which they escaped, wearing clothes indistinguishable from that of a landsman may have helped them, while landsmen may have sought to convey the opposite impression. The detail of the descriptions of runaway clothing suggests that slaveholders could be fairly certain of the clothes in which runaways had made their escape, though a few do note that the runaways were, of course, likely to seek to change their clothes as quickly as possible. In a few cases, it appears that the men running away also took with them multiple outfits, perhaps all of the clothing that they had, or potentially having taken more from the estate.[62] These connections to the sea were drawn because the sea was recognized as a place of escape, and the potential for a ship's captain or master to take on a runaway was certainly present, as shown by the second way in which slaveholders expressed their fear of the sea.

This second warning about the threat of escape to the sea was direct, legal, and addressed to other privileged members of colonial society. At the end of over half the runaway notices sampled for this essay is a postscript, a *nota bene*, to use the terminology usually employed in these notices, threatening legal action. For instance, in the Oct 18th, 1737 edition of the New England Weekly Journal, a runaway notice taken out against a "Negro Man Servant" by the name of Cuffee concludes with the following: "all Masters of Vessels are hereby warned against carrying off said Servant on penalty of the law in that Case made and provided."[63] This, or very

[61] "Advertisement." *New-York Mercury* (New York, New York), no. 476, September 14, 1761
[62] "Advertisement." *New-York Mercury* (New York, New York), no. 476, September 14, 1761
[63] "Advertisement." *New-England Weekly Journal* (Boston, Massachusetts), no. 548, October 18, 1737: [2]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.

similar phrasing, was used in 17 of the 30-some cases analyzed in this project. While Cuffee was described merely as "understanding something of the business of a sailor," these warnings extended to both those described as "good" or "prime" sailors and to runaways who were not sailors, or who slaveholders wished to portray as unskilled. [64]

The inescapable conclusion of this phrasing, therefore, is that, while fears of slaves being able to escape to sea and there gain employment as members of a free society, even if it was one that was harshly hierarchical, may have been overblown, cases of this occurring must have been known to the privileged of white society in the Anglo-American colonies. Ship captains were desperate for labor, and, once at sea, Black sailors could sail to an entirely different part of the Atlantic world and there disembark. Even though news articles would spread throughout the colonies, it would have been tremendously difficult for a slave owner to successfully recapture a man who had escaped to Jamaica from New York or the reverse, and the sea provided the best avenue available for such an escape.

The ocean was therefore a geographic, or perhaps hydrographic, space in which Black sailors could remove themselves from the racial hierarchies of the land, even as their white fellow sailors and officers attempted to reinstate these hierarchies. Black sailors were often given the worst jobs aboard ships, notably the position of ship's cook, but they also often earned wages in the same way as the white sailors around them, even as those wages were often taken from them.[65]

Newspaper catch notices showcase this reality even more plainly, by pointing out the cases of Black sailors who had been disconnected from the slave systems of their origins. Sam, from Barbados, had been disconnected from the systems of slavery that he had been enmeshed

[64] "Advertisement." *New-York Mercury* (New York, New York), no. 476, September 14, 1761
[65] "That Turbulent Soil" in *Seascapes*, 159, and Bolster, *Black Jacks*. 7.

in, and even though the racial system of the Anglo-American Atlantic prevented him from achieving full freedom, it could allow him to negotiate a transitory identity within it, no longer fully enslaved, if he was able to maintain his status as a sailor and "come in on a sloop."[66] While they were perhaps most visible in in-shore operations and the littoral environment, particularly as pilots and fishermen, Black sailors regularly traversed large stretches of ocean, and were able to use the distance put between them and their place of origin to loosen the restrictions placed upon them, making their exact status, as slave or free man, less clear to those who operated the systems in which they were enmeshed.[67]

On rare occasions, Black sailors used their positions to gain substantial influence in their own communities, or even to appear in front of the English Parliament. As discussed by Dawson, ship's pilots were particularly likely to be powerful, being required to navigate vessels through the extremely dangerous littoral environment in many areas, especially near islands.[68] These pilots could effectively negotiate their way to freedom or to a much greater degree of leeway than was common. While pilots were advantaged by the particular conditions of the inshore environment, other enslaved sailors were also able to succeed in negotiating the hierarchy that Anglo-American colonial society sought to impose.

Access to literacy was a key part of this resistance to the racial hierarchy. Bolster writes that the first six autobiographies written by Black people in English were written by Black sailors, including the work of Olaudah Equiano. Literacy among waged sailors has long been identified by historians of maritime history as an important skill, and tied to the emergence of a "proletarian" class. Literacy, while still a minority skill, was much more common among sailors than in the general population, and it allowed sailors to read the contracts that they were bound

[66] "Advertisement." *New-York Gazette, or Weekly Post-Boy* (New York, New York), no. 1393, September 11, 1769
[67] "That Turbulent Soil" in *Seascapes*. 156.
[68] Dawson 72, 76-77

by and negotiate them. While explicit contract negotiation was not an option for an enslaved sailor, it would have been for a free Black sailor.

More than that, however, English literacy allowed Black sailors to directly counter the narratives of white society, not just through the words written, but through their existence alone. Black sailing autobiographies, by their inherent individuality, provided a counter narrative to the commodifying narrative of the newspaper notices and advertisements. They also, sometimes quite explicitly, sought to prove that Africans were not a "barbarous people."[69] Equiano, for instance, repeatedly draws comparison between the religious practices of his people and that of the Jews. Equiano works to suggest that his people should be understood as a long-lost group of Jews, or as a Hebraic religious group separated from the rabbis and the temple.[70] In doing so, by linking the history and practices of the West Africans to those of the Jews, Equiano can be seen as rejecting the racial categorizations of England, preferring to align himself with a group that, though frequently oppressed, was recognized as literate, cultured, and tied to Christianity through history and holy texts.[71] Religious and presumably ethnic ties to Judaism would link the West African peoples to Adam and Eve, and, therefore, to the white population, a link which English writers sought to deny, often using reproduction and childbirth to do so.[72]

These forms of resistance to the racial hierarchy were not the only ones available to Black sailors. Black sailors not only participated in the work stoppages, strikes, and mutinies of white sailors, but also engaged more heavily in other forms of direct resistance to the hierarchy of Anglo-American colonial society.[73] In particular, the two options that were most often taken

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[69] Morgan. "Some Could Suckle Over their Shoulder," quoting Richard Jobson's *The Golden Trade or a Discovery of the River Gambra*. 182.
[70] Equiano, ch.1.
[71] Equiano, ch.1.
[72] Morgan, "Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder". 189. Morgan discusses how English (and other European writers) sought to deny that Africans were related to Adam and Eve at all, which would make them different from all other people and therefore uniquely enslaveable.
[73] *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 92.

by Black sailors were that of marronage, fleeing to a community of Black runaways in inaccessible areas, and that of piracy, seizing control of a ship at sea and seeking to operate completely unconstrained by the authority of Anglo-Atlantic society.[74]

Marronage and Piracy

The first option, marronage, existed throughout the history of slavery, both at sea and on land. Sailors, if they could manage to steal a boat, or, better, an entire ship, were well placed to take advantage of marronage at sea, fleeing to either the islands of other powers or to islands thought of by the European powers as not worth the investment, or still firmly under the control of native populations, such as the Caribs.[75] Marronage allowed Black sailors, and other Black runaways, to establish identities and communities almost totally separate from the racial hierarchy which controlled most of the Caribbean.

However, Black sailors and escapees also had a complicated relationship with the other distinct racial category of the 18th century: the Native American population. Black maroons often formed communities with indigenous peoples, in both the West Indies and in mainland North America. These maroon communities spoke their own languages and existed outside the rest of Anglo-American society, though both maroons and communities located near their communities engaged in trade. The story of maroon-indigenous integration was certainly not smooth, however. In the 1600s West Indies, for instance, Carib tribes on some islands ultimately requested intervention against maroon communities who were increasingly encroaching on Carib land.[76]

[74] Beckles, 79.
[75] Beckles, 86.
[76] Beckles, 90.

Both Black and indigenous sailors served aboard European ships as part of "the motley crew," a term developed by Rediker and Linebaugh in *The Multi-Headed Hydra* for the multiethnic proletarian seafaring labor community. On occasion, however, even as they often resisted the new racial and capitalist hierarchy, members of the motley crew could be brought into conflict with one another. For example, it was reported in the *Barbados Gazette* on Jan 9, 1733 that an "Indian" sailor had seized control of the ship he was on.[77] The particulars of the case appear tailor-made to encapsulate the fears of Anglo-American white society: the Native American sailor murdered the officers and then demanded to be treated with the respect due to a white captain, an aggravation against both the racial hierarchy and the maritime capitalist hierarchy The mutiny did not last however, and the ship was retaken by another English sloop. One of the men who joined with the Native American sailor was ultimately shot by a Black sailor aboard the sloop *Walter Parmiter*. The story, to a much greater extent than any notice, spread rapidly through the Anglo-Atlantic world, copies of the story being reprinted in the northern colonies. The story shows the important role played by Black sailors in the 18th century, and their presence aboard ships of all types. It also shows that Black sailors could be allowed more freedom than their fellows on land, as the man aboard *Walter Parmiter* was entrusted with a firearm.

While maroon communities were formed by escaped slaves, the place they occupied in the racial hierarchy of the 18th century in the Anglo-Atlantic was somewhat more complicated. Maroons were not perceived as quite the same as runaway slaves, even if their communities had begun that way. Maroon identity was often closely tied to the sea, and the idea of a desolate island, the newspaper record seeing many references to sailors being put ashore on a "maroon

[77] "From the Barbados Gazette, Jan. 9 1733." *Weekly Rehearsal* (Boston, Massachusetts), no. 128, March 11, 1734: [2]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.

key," but there was also a maroon presence on many of the major islands of the Caribbean. Maroons were, like Native American populations, separate from colonial society, though they did interact with it as outsiders.[78] They reverted, in the eyes of some colonial authors, to being "maroon savages" described as "wilder" than "Indian savages."[79]

While campaigns against the maroon communities were fairly common in the 18th century, it is also clear that maroon communities could make accommodations with the colonial racial hierarchy, in turn acquiring a separate status. For instance, the *Salem Gazette* reports a case in which an attempted slave revolt was put down by a combination of a white militia and a group of "maroon negroes, who, after arming themselves, proceeded to the estate to seize the insurgents."[80] It appears, therefore, that, while descended from rebellious slaves, maroons were able to acquire what was thought of as an 'indigenous' status, even if they remained the target of military campaigns against 'savages'.

The other option for escaping Black sailors, though it could be closely linked to marronage, especially in 'retirement,' was piracy. Rediker analyzes piracy as a response to the challenges of elite-imposed capitalist production, developing an entirely new system of organization at sea, unmoored from the wage labor system and instead tied to an equitable distribution of the profit and loot taken off of other merchant ships.[81] For those completely excluded from waged labor, that is to say, enslaved sailors, the attractions of piracy could be even greater, allowing them to break the system of brutal discipline applied both to slaves ashore and to sailors at sea. Black sailors appear to have been over-represented among pirate crews,

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[78] "Charles-Town, (South Carolina) March 2." *New-Hampshire Gazette* (Portsmouth, New Hampshire), no. 80, April 13, 1758: [1]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[79] "To Charles Yorks, Esq.." *Gazette of the United States* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) X, no. 1266, September 29, 1796
[80] "Kingston, (Jamaica) Aug. 28." *Salem Gazette* (Salem, Massachusetts) IV, no. 167, December 21, 1784: [2]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[81] *Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 82.

potentially the result of either the tendency of pirate ships to cruise the African coast or of the greater likelihood of Black inshore sailors and pilots escaping to sea, though more research is needed on this subject.[82] Over half of Blackbeard's crew was Black, and the trend was not limited to him, several other famous pirates having crews that were majority or plurality Black.[83] This was known, and commented on, by newspaper writers of the time period. In April of 1717, it was reported from Philadelphia that a "Pyrate Sloop of 10 Guns has for some weeks past been plying about the Capes of Virginia," and that this ship carried "about 40 or 50 hands, some of which are Negros and Molatos."[84]

Authorities were desperately afraid of these crews, because they believed that these pirate crews were likely to be a source for major slave revolts on the plantation islands of the West Indies or the plantations of the coast. In general, this did not prove to be the case, Black sailors preferred to escape and then avoid interactions with Anglo-American white society, instead of attempting to encourage revolt[85].

The constructed racial system of the 18th century, based around the commodification of African laborers, was both simple in its essence and complex on the margins. Black sailors and other workers were identified in their essence with enslaved labor, a status which Anglo-Atlantic society took extreme measures to maintain. Free Black workers were in constant danger of re-enslavement, either in the polities they called home or through their capture, and white society was continually suspicious of their status. Pass systems were created, and then treated with incredible suspicion, and fear that enslaved workers might acquire false passes.[86] At the margins, the situation became more complex, as maroon communities were approached in ways

[82] *The Many Headed Hydra*. 65, 170.
[83] *The Many Headed Hydra*, 166.
[84] "Philadelphia, April 24th." *Boston News-Letter* (Boston, Massachusetts), no. 681, May 6, 1717: [2]. *Readex: America's Historical Newspapers*.
[85] *The Many Headed Hydra*, 166.
[86] Beckles, 84.

substantially different from the commodified status applied to Black laborers. Ultimately, however, while Black sailors had much better opportunities to escape, and to join maroon communities, the great majority of the Black seafaring population was subject to the brutal construction of race that was continuous in the 18th century Anglo-Atlantic. Still, Black sailors used the opportunities of life at sea to escape from slavery and either establish themselves as members of the Anglo-Atlantic World, or escape from its boundaries. Black sailors resisted the Anglo-Atlantic environment through escape, literacy, piracy, and marronage, entering the records of the Anglo-Atlantic society they were enmeshed in.

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Imperial Concerns at the Heart of the British-Ottoman Rupture, 1914

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How does "historic friendship" turn sour?[1] How does a former protector become a "cruel enemy"?[2] This was the situation in which the British Empire found itself during World War I as they fought against the Ottoman Empire, a power with which they had enjoyed almost uninterrupted friendship since the sixteenth century. During that time, Britain had been the Ottoman Empire's principal defender against foreign incursions that threatened their territorial integrity, as seen in conflicts such as the Crimean War and the Second Egyptian-Ottoman War (1839-41). In 1914, when relations between the two empires seemed to be stronger than they had been in decades, the Ottoman Empire forsook their friendship with Great Britain and entered the Great War on the side of the Central Powers.[3] Yet this did not occur at the outset of the conflict; the British declaration of war on the Ottoman Empire occurred on November 5th, three months after the ratification of the German-Ottoman Alliance and the outbreak of the war in Europe. These three months saw the failure of the British Foreign Office to maintain Ottoman neutrality despite repeated efforts to do so. This resulted in the declaration of war (along with the rest of the Triple Entente) on the Ottoman Empire following their naval attack on Russia.

The fact that the Ottoman Black Sea attacks compelled Britain to declare war has often been taken for granted, part of the classic mindset that holds World War I as the "unintended consequence of treaty systems," rather than what it actually was: a war of empires, where

[1] Mallet to Grey, 2.10.14, tel. no. 141, in: *Correspondence Respecting Events Leading to the Rupture of Relations with Turkey* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1914). See enclosure, Mallet to Grand Vizier.
[2] Banu Turnaoğlu, *The Formation of Turkish Republicanism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 171.
[3] On how the relations were the strongest they had been in some time, see Feroz Ahmad, "Great Britain's Relations with the Young Turks 1908-1914," *Middle Eastern Studies* 2, no. 4 (July 1966): 324.

belligerent powers aimed "to reallocate populations and resources, in Europe and overseas, from another empire into their own."[4] With the imperial character of the war in mind, it is worth reconsidering the pivotal three months in which the British Empire, on the surface, attempted to keep the Ottoman Empire out of the conflict, only to find its hand forced by an Ottoman attack on their ally.

Through such reexamination, it becomes apparent that, contrary to conventional scholarship, British policy towards the Ottoman Empire in the months between August and November of 1914 was not characterized by deference to Great Power alliance systems, where Ottoman neutrality was necessary to prevent greater conflagrations on the Eastern Front, but rather by imperial concerns.[5] So long as territories held by the British Empire were left unthreatened, the Foreign Office was content to engage in the farcical neutrality debate with the Ottoman government. This is evident in the Foreign Office exchanges regarding Egypt and India, which reveal a British Empire ready to declare war *before* the Black Sea attacks, once the security of those territories came into question. Through these exchanges, it becomes clear that the integrity of their empire was of the utmost concern to the British, and not the alliance system of the Triple Entente. Building on scholarly work that reveals the British were well aware of the impossibility of Ottoman neutrality and using this lens to reevaluate Foreign Office exchanges from August to November of 1914, this essay will reveal that concerns of empire guided British policy towards the Ottoman Empire, as opposed to concerns of alliance. In these critical months leading up to the Ottoman war entry, imperial interests determined the British course of action.

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[4] Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 370-71.
[5] Joseph Heller, *British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire 1908-1914* (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1983), 134.

In August 1914, the Ottoman Empire was in a precarious situation. War had broken out in Europe, a war which could allow the Ottomans to reassert themselves on the international stage following the losses incurred during the Balkan Wars.[6] The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) Government, spearheaded by the triumvirate of Cemal Pasha (Minister of the Navy), Enver Pasha (Minister of War), and Talaat Pasha (Minister of the Interior), along with the Ottoman public, saw involvement in the war as a necessity.[7] These men believed that militarism was the path to modernization.[8] After overtures to the Entente powers proved fruitless, the Ottoman government settled for a German alliance, secretly concluding a treaty on August 2nd.[9]

The British Empire was not aware of this alliance until late October, by which point they had already been convinced of Ottoman collusion with Germany.[10] This conviction stemmed from the Ottoman allowance of two German cruisers, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, through the Dardanelles on August 10th. This was seen as a violation of neutrality, and the Ottoman government was immediately ordered to either send the ships away or to intern them and repatriate their German crews.[11] They did neither, instead arranging a fictitious purchase of the two ships while keeping the German crews, a scheme of which Britain was well aware.[12] This was, in part, retaliation for the British requisition of two warships - the *Sultan Osman* and the *Reşadiye* - meant for (and paid for by) the Ottomans at the outbreak of war.[13]

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[6] Mustafa Aksakal, "War as the Savior? Hopes for War and Peace in Ottoman Politics before 1914," in *An Improbable War? The Outbreak of World War I and European Political Culture before 1914*, ed. Holger Afflerbach and David Stevenson (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 287-90.
[7] The CUP triumvirate is commonly known by the name "the Three Pashas."
[8] Mustafa Aksakal, "The Limits of Diplomacy: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 7, no. 2 (April 2011): 197-98.
[9] Ahmad, "Great Britain's Relations with the Young Turks," 325.
[10] Mallet to Grey, 23.10.14, tel. no. 164, *Correspondence.*
[11] Grey to Beaumont, 11.8.14, tel. no. 6, ibid.
[12] Mallet to Grey, 27.8.14, tel. no. 41, ibid.
[13] Mustafa Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War in 1914: The Ottoman Empire and the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 109.

For three months following the warship affair, multiple British warnings were sent for German crews to be sent home and for the ships to not be allowed into the Black Sea, warnings which were all ignored. Even after the discovery of the German-Ottoman agreement, the Foreign Office remained obsessed with neutrality, promising the CUP government "disastrous consequences" should they act against the Entente.[14] Despite all signs pointing towards imminent Ottoman involvement in the war (with Britain knowing full well that they were simply stalling for time), the Foreign Office pursued a relatively hands-off strategy, providing hollow warnings until their hands were finally forced by Russia, who first declared war on the Ottoman Empire following the Black Sea attacks.[15]

The historiography surrounding these three months has focused heavily on the personalities of Sir Edward Grey, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Sir Louis Mallet, British Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire.[16] Grey, ever concerned with preserving the delicate European balance of power, had long treated the Young Turk government with a degree of indifference, supporting them so long as they pursued some form of constitutionalism and reform and helped to preserve a geographic status quo.[17] At the outbreak of war, Grey had no illusions as to the intentions of the Ottomans and was simply waiting for the inevitable, having given Mallet the choice to leave Istanbul as early as August 16th.[18] Mallet, a figure widely criticized for his failure to rein in the Ottoman government, spent most of the critical three months meeting with

[14] Mallet to Grey, 24.9.14, tel. no. 90, *Correspondence.*
[15] For British knowledge of the stalling tactic, see Mallet to Grey, 27.10.14, tel. no. 170, ibid. Russia declared war against the Ottomans on November 2nd, joined three days later by Britain and France.
[16] For examples, see Geoffrey Miller, *Straits: British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire and the Origins of the Dardanelles Campaign*" (Hull: University of Hull Press, 1997) and Heller, *British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire*.
[17] Ahmad, "Great Britain's Relations with the Young Turks," 314-15. "Reform" typically referred to constitutionalism, financial reform (in the form of more responsible spending and taking out loans from Entente-sponsored banks), and reform in the treatment of Christian subjects, particularly in the Balkans. All of this is covered in Heller, *British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire*.
[18] Heller, *British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire*, 138 & 140.

the CUP triumvirate, Grand Vizier, and even the Sultan, constantly insisting on neutrality.[19] Older scholarship has criticized Mallet for his ignorance of the German-Ottoman agreement and for the "misinformation" he relayed back to Grey concerning the strength of the anti-German, anti-war faction within the CUP.[20] Since the 1970s, scholarship has tended to portray Grey as tied up by the Foreign Office's hands off position, leaving it to Germany and the triumvirate to take up the initiative and bring the Ottoman Empire into the war.[21]

The Foreign Office's patient neutrality in the matter of the Ottoman war entry, simply bracing for the inevitable, coupled with Mallet's restricted range of actions, essentially made the months of August through November a waiting game, a game which finally ended on November 5th. It is practically unchallenged that Britain was waiting for the Ottomans to provoke a declaration by the Entente and that all attention was on the navy and the Black Sea.[22] It is taken for granted that Britain would not have taken the initiative to declare war without the wider Entente having already been drawn in, as they had been given ample opportunity to since August but only did after Russia had made the first declaration.[23]

This is an incomplete understanding of the months August through November, one which subscribed to the to the antiquated idea that World War I was little more than a war of alliances. The war was a war of empires; this cannot be forgotten or overlooked. When viewing the Foreign Office correspondence from those three months with this in mind, a new discovery is made. Britain was concerned chiefly with its empire and with maintaining its holdings. These imperial interests could have driven Britain to preemptively declare war, but it just so happened

[19] For a summary of these criticisms, see Ibid, 133.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Joseph Heller, "Sir Louis Mallet and the Ottoman Empire: The Road to War," *Middle Eastern Studies* 12, no. 1 (January 1976): 36-38.
[22] Miller, *Straits*, 332-35.
[23] Inari and Efraim Karsh, *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East, 1789-1923* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 122-23.

that the Ottomans attacked Russia first. Rather than waiting for the alliance system to pit them against their old Ottoman friend, they actively worried about potential attacks on Egypt and the possibility of increasing unrest in India. It has been argued that this was a folly on Britain's part, that they ignored the Black Sea developments, instead focusing on an Ottoman "distraction" meant to lure their attention away.[24] I argue that not only were the British completely aware of the Black Sea designs, but that it was of secondary interest to them. The British were primarily concerned with their imperial holdings and would have pursued war against the Ottoman Empire without an Entente-related *casus belli* if provoked. While this may seem obvious, it challenges the traditional, hands-off portrayal of the British at this time. They were *not* hands-off, but instead actively engaged in the defense of their imperial holdings, concerned chiefly with their own self-interest. Additionally, when it came to issues of their empire, the Foreign Office pushed for genuine action by the CUP government, rather than issuing slap-on-the-wrist warnings as they did in the case of the Black Sea plans.

What follows will be an analysis of the British Foreign Office exchanges from August 3rd to November 4th, collected in the *Correspondence Respecting Events Leading to the Rupture of Relations with Turkey*, a series of diplomatic exchanges presented to Parliament in November of 1914. In the first half of the analysis, I will examine the exchanges related specifically to the *Goeben* and *Breslau* and the Black Sea threat, highlighting British passivity in line with the scholarly understanding that the Foreign Office knew that the Ottomans were planning on entering the war on the side of the Central Powers. Here, the British demonstrated a genuinely hands-off approach, indicating the secondary importance given to the Black Sea affairs which threatened Russia. In the second half of the analysis, I will examine the exchanges related to Ottoman designs on Egypt, India, and the Middle East, and show the heightened attention given

[24] Ibid, 135-36.

to these developments. Here, it will become apparent that the British Empire was *not* a hands-off spectator, but that they were actively considering taking the initiative to make war on the Ottoman Empire to protect their holdings.

The Foreign Office was first made aware of the August 10th entrance of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* the day after.[25] That day, Grey commanded Henry Beaumont (the stand-in for Mallet, who was on leave until August 16th) to direct the Ottoman government to either release the ships back into the Mediterranean or to disarm and intern them, imploring him to "point out to the Turkish Government that these are the duties entailed upon them by their neutrality, and that His Majesty's Government expect that they will act up to their obligations."[26] It is worth noting that, despite his politeness and stated expectation that the Ottomans would uphold their neutrality, Grey was already convinced that the die had been cast, and that Ottoman entry on the side of the Triple Alliance was inevitable.[27] Preparations were already being made for the evacuation of British ships from Ottoman ports, seen as an urgent matter following the temporary detainment of British merchant vessels in the Dardanelles, and Grey was even considering enlisting the United States to take over British interests in the Empire once hostilities inevitably broke out.[28] On the very day that Mallet returned to Istanbul, he was given the authority to leave whenever he saw fit.[29]

Mallet, however, was not as fatalistic as Grey, trapped, in the words of historian Geoffrey Miller, "by the belief that his good offices still carried weight at the Porte."[30] Given his recent absence and the good relations enjoyed with the Ottoman government before the July Crisis, this

[25] Beaumont to Grey, 11.8.14, tel. no. 7, *Correspondence.*
[26] Grey to Beaumont, 11.8.14, tel. no. 8, ibid.
[27] Heller, "Sir Louis Mallet and the Ottoman Empire," 8.
[28] Ibid; Beaumont to Grey, 11.8.14, tel. no. 10, *Correspondence*; Heller, *British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire*, 140. The US would have been in the best position to maintain British interests since they were expected to be a neutral power in the war.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Miller, *Straits*, 281.

belief may not have been entirely unfounded.[31] Mallet was able to talk Grey down from evacuating British ships, following his resolution of their detainment, arguing that such an action would be perceived by the Ottomans as a sign that Britain was preparing for a war declaration.[32] Though Grey acquiesced to Mallet's plea, it was indeed true that Britain was making war preparations. Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, had on August 17th proposed sending a British torpedo flotilla through the Dardanelles, only to be talked down by other Cabinet members who favored patience, letting the Ottomans strike first as to not upset Britain's Muslim subjects (who would not respond well if Britain made the first move, attacking the empire of the Caliph).[33] Thus, patience became the *modus operandi* of the British Empire. Convinced of an inevitable war entry by the Ottomans, Britain simply bode their time, bracing for the inevitable. This left Mallet to, for lack of a better phrase, dither around in Istanbul, pursuing the official line of neutrality while knowing full well that neutrality was all but impossible.[34]

This explains Mallet's seemingly contradictory correspondence regarding the prospects of Ottoman neutrality. Despite accurately predicting the CUP's plan to use the fictitiously-purchased *Goeben* and *Breslau* to attack Russia on the Black Sea as early as August 27th and constantly reporting on the influx of German militants into the Empire, Mallet stuck to the official line and spent most of his time through November meeting with Ottoman officials and imploring them to remain neutral.[35] These meetings usually amounted to little more than wrist-slapping the Grand Vizier, who Mallet explicitly recognized as holding very little power

[31] Heller, "Sir Louis Mallet and the Ottoman Empire," 4-5.
[32] Miller, *Straits*, 281-82.
[33] Ibid, 282.
[34] Heller, *British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire*, 141.
[35] For the prediction of the attack, see Mallet to Grey, 27.8.14, tel. no. 41, *Correspondence*; For the earliest instance of the reporting on the militant influx, see Mallet to Grey, 23.8.14, tel. no. 31, ibid.

within the Empire, which was entirely concentrated in the hands of the triumvirate.[36] When Mallet reported back to Grey on the strength of the anti-war and pro-neutrality faction within the Young Turks, something which he has faced immense criticism for in the older historiography, he was merely parroting the words of the Grand Vizier, someone whose influence and control over the situation he doubted completely.[37]

That Grand Vizier Said Halim Pasha was attempting to deceive Mallet, in fact being in cahoots with the rest of the triumvirate and actively preparing for a war entrance on the side of the Central Powers, is largely irrelevant here.[38] So too is the fact that the Grand Vizier would have had little actual influence within the government of the CUP, something Mallet has similarly been criticized for not understanding.[39] Regardless of the Grand Vizier's deception, Mallet did not trust him, and despite his frequent telegraphs to Grey regarding the strong possibility of Ottoman neutrality, Mallet knew fully just how vacuous those promises of neutrality (usually made by Halim) were.[40] Mallet's apparent aloofness was in fact a calculated play to prolong a tenuous neutrality for as long as possible, with the Foreign Office knowing full well it would not last. Mallet realized that his office no longer carried any weight and he engaged in a farcical pursuit of neutrality to, on the one hand, delay an Ottoman war entry so the British could focus on the western front, and on the other hand, make it clear that, when the war entry happened, it was the Ottomans who struck first.[41]

With patience as the name of the game, the Foreign Office fell into a familiar pattern: Mallet would report on troubling developments regarding a potential Ottoman war entry on the

[36] For the earliest instance of this recognition, see Mallet to Grey, 27.8.14, tel. no. 42, ibid.
[37] Heller, "Sir Louis Mallet and the Ottoman Empire," 12. Heller's paper contains an overview of this historiography.
[38] For more on Said Halim's role with the treaty, see Aksakal, *The Ottoman Road to War*, 152. Said Halim had in fact been the one to sign the treaty with Germany.
[39] Heller, "Sir Louis Mallet and the Ottoman Empire," 37.
[40] See, for instance, Mallet to Grey, 20.9.14, tel. no. 83, *Correspondence*.
[41] On the delaying tactic, see Heller, "Sir Louis Mallet and the Ottoman Empire," 37.

Black Sea and Grey would write back urging Mallet to implore the Grand Vizier to remain neutral. Mallet would do just that and receive an empty promise, which would be relayed back to Grey.[42] The cycle would then repeat, even once the Turkish fleet entered the Black Sea on October 12th and the secret German alliance was discovered on October 23rd.[43] Even then, Grey's response would be the same: remind the Ottomans about their duty to stay neutral.

The traditional historiography has focused entirely on this pattern, lambasting Mallet for misinforming the Foreign Office about the strength of the pro-neutrality faction within the CUP and criticizing Grey for doing nothing to preempt the Black Sea attacks.[44] Yet, Mallet and Grey were simply playing their parts knowing full well that neutrality would never be maintained. They were simply stalling until the Ottomans made the first move, for both practical and image-related reasons. Contrary to the established historiography, the Black Sea situation was not mishandled, but rather was handled exactly as intended by the British. Missing entirely from the historiography is the fact that the Black Sea developments were of secondary concern to the British, with their conclusion seen as an inevitability. Ignored is Britain's primary concern: the developments in the Middle East as they pertain to the holdings of the British Empire.

After the Cabinet meeting on August 17th in which Churchill was rebuked and the decision was made to let the Ottomans attack first, Prime Minister H. H. Asquith wrote to British socialite Venetia Stanley. In his letter, he stated that the Ottoman Empire "threatens vaguely enterprises against Egypt, and seems disposed to play a double game about the *Goeben* & the *Breslau*."[45] Important is the fact that Egypt, as early as August 17th and before the first correspondence from Mallet informing Grey as to Ottoman designs on the territory, was the

[42] For an example of this chain, see telegraphs 84, 88, and 94 (20.9.14, 23.9.14, and 25.9.14) in *Correspondence*.
[43] Mallet to Grey, 12.23.14, tel. no. 164, ibid.
[44] As detailed in Heller, "Sir Louis Mallet and the Ottoman Empire."
[45] Mallet to Grey, 12.10.14, tel. no. 119, ibid; Miller, *Straits*, 282.

Prime Minister's chief concern, listed *before* the Black Sea intrigues.[46] This interest was shared by the Foreign Office, as correspondence reveals, becoming their primary concern in regard to a potential Ottoman war entry. This interest has been overlooked and taken for granted in the traditional historiography, despite the fact that telegraphs regarding imperial threats in the Middle East make up over one-third of the August-November correspondence.[47]

On August 25th, Mallet informed Grey about the seizure of camels from Egyptians in Gaza, laden with food and supplies. Mallet believed that Ottoman officials, acting on the wishes of the Germans, were preparing for an attack on Egypt and were attempting to stir up unrest. Mallet brought his concerns to the Grand Vizier, who insisted that the British had nothing to worry about, and that the Ottoman Empire would not pursue any action that would lead to war.[48] Mallet reported back to Grey that he was convinced of Said Halim's sincerity, but just two days later he wrote that he was no longer confident that the Grand Vizier had any power, stating that he "was not the master of his own house."[49] If British imperial interests were to be defended, they would need to take it upon themselves to push for action. The Grand Vizier could no longer be relied on.

Indeed, Mallet did go above Said Halim when Egypt continued to be threatened. On September 24th, Mallet wrote to Grey that he had just met with three CUP officials, among them triumvirate-member Talaat Pasha, in which he warned them of "disastrous consequences" should they continue in preparing for an Egyptian attack.[50] While this may seem like more wrist-slapping, akin to the Black Sea warnings, it is noteworthy that Mallet went above the

[46] The first correspondence concerning Ottoman designs for Egypt occurred on August 25th; see Mallet to Grey, 25.8.14, tel. no. 35, *Correspondence*.
[47] 65 of the 184 letters/telegraphs included in the *Correspondence*.
[48] Mallet to Grey, 25.8.14, tel. no. 36, ibid.
[49] Mallet to Grey, 27.8.14, tel. no. 42, ibid.
[50] Mallet to Grey, 24.9.14, tel. no. 90, ibid.

Grand Vizier and spoke directly with one of the Three Pashas, as he never did this in regard to the looming Black Sea attack.

On October 6th, Mallet reported to Grey regarding an interview with Enver Pasha, the Minister of War who the British saw as the leader of the pro-war movement within the CUP.[51] The interview notably failed to mention the *Goeben* and *Breslau* and the Black Sea designs; it was entirely about Egypt, with Enver being pressed to explain Ottoman actions and cease Bedouin mobilization.[52] That such an interview would occur without the British bringing up the Black Sea situation is striking, and it reveals Britain's true concern: their empire. The security of the Triple Entente is *not* what mattered here.

These imperial concerns were reflected elsewhere as well. On September 29th, Grey sent Mallet a telegraph in which he spoke of the "imminence of war," relating it not to a Black Sea attack, but to the arming of Arabs, the dispatch of men to call for jihad in India, and the ammunition shipments dispatched to Basra on the Persian Gulf.[53] Recalling the Cabinet's position on preventing Muslim unrest, the Foreign Office would undoubtedly be incredibly averse to any unrest in India, and thus would take a keen interest in a potential call for jihad. Mallet shared Grey's worry, having one month earlier highlighted a call for jihad in Egypt and India as his chief concern regarding Ottoman war preparations, and not the *Goeben* and *Breslau* "purchase."[54]

Regarding Basra, the Shatt al-Arab (the river which runs alongside the province, constituting the Iraq-Iran border and emptying into the Persian Gulf) proved to be another focal point of imperial concerns. On September 18th, Mallet reported to Grey that the British

[51] Mallet to Grey, 20.9.14, tel. no. 83, ibid.
[52] Mallet to Grey, 6.9.14, tel. no. 109, ibid. The Bedouins are a desert-dwelling nomadic Arabic people. The Ottomans would have been able to mobilize them informally, avoiding the suspicion that would have followed a mobilization of official Ottoman troops.
[53] Grey to Mallet, 29.9.14, tel. no. 100, ibid.
[54] Mallet to Grey, 30.8.14, tel. no. 48, ibid.

man-of-war H.M.S *Odin* had been ordered to leave the river, after sealing "wireless apparatus."[55] Grey, understanding the importance of Basra (the city was a de-facto British protectorate after 1899 and was a hub for economic and maritime activities in the Gulf and on the Shatt), refused to accept this and successfully pressured the Ottoman government into backing down, allowing the *Odin* to remain on the river.[56] Rather than meekly warning the CUP about neutrality and letting things play out, Grey and Mallet took decisive action, forcing the government to stand down. When the Ottoman government again tried to close the Shatt to foreign ships at the start of October, Grey maintained his position, refusing to evacuate. Again, the Ottomans were pressured into standing down.[57] When the Ottomans began to mine the Shatt in late October, Grey dispatched a telegraph to Mallet ordering him to deliver an ultimatum to the CUP government: stand down or prepare for retaliation.[58] When the ultimatum was ignored, Grey telegraphed on October 23rd that the Ottoman Empire was acting "in open hostility and provocation to this country [Britain]," and threatened that Britain would be "taking their own measures" to reopen the river.[59] Short of a formal declaration, war was all but guaranteed. Six days later, the Black Sea attacks occurred, after which Britain joined Russia in declaring war on the Ottoman Empire. Had those attacks not happened, it is possible that war would have broken out elsewhere, such as the Shatt al-Arab, where Britain was bracing for the possibility that she would have to defend her imperial interests.

Returning to the topic of Egypt, we see what could have well been the flashpoint that would instigate war in the absence of the Black Sea attacks. After a month of reporting on Bedouin mobilization in preparation for an attack on the Suez Canal, British High Commissioner

[55] Mallet to Grey, 18.9.14, tel. no. 80, ibid. "Wireless apparatus" refers to communications gear.
[56] Grey to Mallet, 29.9.14, tel. no. 101, *Correspondence*. For more on the importance of Basra, see Heller, *British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire*, 146-47.
[57] Mallet to Grey, 7.10.14, tel. no. 113, *Correspondence*.
[58] Grey to Mallet, 17.10.14, tel. no. 137, ibid.
[59] Grey to Mallet, 23.10.14, tel. no. 159, ibid.

of Egypt Milne Cheetham sent a copy of an interrogation to Grey. The interrogated subject was Lieutenant Robert Mors, a German in the service of the Alexandria City Police, who had been arrested after returning from Istanbul. Mors had been caught smuggling explosives and initially acted aloof, pretending to have accidentally gotten mixed up in something he did not understand.[60] When interrogated again, Mors confessed to aiding the Ottoman government, in particular Enver Pasha and his retinue, in smuggling explosives into Egypt, after which he would aid in the training of Bedouins for an attack on the Suez Canal.[61] This information was dispatched on October 20th but Grey did not receive it until November 2nd, after the Black Sea attacks and the Russian declaration of war, which had already sealed British involvement in a fight against the Ottoman Empire.

Even without the full knowledge of Mors' activities and the Ottoman plan for Egypt, Grey was still ready to actively defend the province. Following months of troubling reports, Grey ordered Mallet on October 24th to inform the CUP that if preparations for an Egyptian raid continued, war would be declared on the Ottoman Empire.[62] The telegraph in which he did this is especially noteworthy, as it is the only telegraph dispatched prior to the Black Sea attacks that specifically uses the word "war" in regard to British retaliation against Ottoman actions; previous exchanges warned of "consequences" and "measures" to be taken. The severity of Grey's warning cannot be understated. Had Grey been made aware of the full Mors conspiracy at this time, it seems almost certain that a formal declaration of war would have been made, but alas he was not, and the Black Sea attacks just five days later overrode the Egyptian *casus belli* and provided a less self-oriented, pro-Entente justification for war.

[60] Cheetham to Grey, 30.9.14, tel. no. 125, ibid. See all three enclosures.
[61] Cheetham to Grey, 20.10.14, tel. no. 181, ibid.
[62] Grey to Mallet, 24.10.14, tel. no. 166, ibid.

In the cases of both Egypt and the Shatt al-Arab, we see Britain acting very differently when compared to their response to the looming Black Sea catastrophe. Rather than remaining passive and wrist-slapping while bracing for an inevitable conflict, Britain actively engaged in the defense of their imperial interests, pressuring the Ottoman Empire into standing down in the case of the Shatt, something they never truly tried to do in regard to the Black Sea, and overtly threatening the Empire with war over Egypt. Had the events of October 29th happened later, it is highly likely that Britain would have unilaterally declared war on the Empire over the mining of the Shatt or the Suez Canal plan. The fact that the Black Sea attacks happened first is merely a coincidence, but one that has cast a long shadow over the three months of correspondence covered in this paper. As such, historians have tended to read the correspondence with only the Black Sea events in mind, ignoring the very real possibilities of war in the Middle East, war ignited not by the solidarity of the Triple Entente but by the imperial interests of Britain alone.

In conclusion, British-Ottoman diplomatic correspondence from August through November of 1914 was characterized not by passivity and a deference to the Triple Entente, but by imperial concerns. The developments in the Black Sea were of secondary interest to the Foreign Office, with their conclusion seen as inevitable. The British were chiefly concerned with their own imperial holdings and interests, particularly in Egypt, India, and on the Shatt al-Arab, and there is evidence that Britain would have declared unilateral war on the Ottoman Empire over these imperial concerns had the naval attack on Russia happened later. That the Black Sea attacks occurred first was incidental, yet it has led historians to examine this period with only the Black Sea in mind. Examining the correspondence through the lens of imperial interests reveals a very different Britain than what is presented in the traditional historiography, one far more self-interested and proactive.

It is important to appreciate this new characterization of Britain for what it reveals about World War I as a whole. As mentioned earlier, the war was a war of empires, where imperial concerns reigned supreme. That these concerns have taken a backseat in the traditional analysis of these three critical months is unfortunate, and it contributes to the fallacious idea that the war was nothing but the "unintended consequence of treaty systems."[63] Britain, in many ways seen as *the* model empire, would surely have been guided by imperial interests in World War I.[64] We must remember this for the lesson it teaches us about both empire and war. Where empires exist, they will strive to maintain themselves and their holdings. When war breaks out among empires, it is undoubtedly a war of reallocation, where the lines between them are redrawn. In an age of empires, imperial interests reign supreme over all else.

[63] Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 370.
[64] By "model empire," I am not assessing the quality of the British Empire, but rather referencing its ubiquity and the fact that it is often perceived as the most important modern empire; see Antoinette Burton, *The Trouble with Empire: Challenges to Modern British Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

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The Gender and Sexuality of Cotita de Encarnación: The Importance of Continued Analysis of Spanish Colonial Documents for *Proto-Queer* Themes

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Glossary of Relevant Terminology[1]

Cisheteropatriarchy: A social system in which those deemed to be at the highest echelon of social strata are cisgender, heterosexual men, typically Peninsulares and Criollos, fostering a patriarchy where those gender and sexuality practices are viewed as normative (cisheteronormativity).

Compulsory Heterosexuality: A form of social control where a system of oppression denies people's sexual self-determination by constructing heterosexuality as the *only* natural and acceptable model of sexual and romantic relationships.

Gender Parallelism: A social and cultural framework that recognizes and values equal, yet oftentimes distinct or separate, roles and responsibilities of men and women or other gender presentations in the context of the society or social system by which they exist in.

Machismo: A form of cisheteropatriarchical thought traditionally defined by religiously backed hypermasculinity, compulsory heterosexuality, forced cisgenderism, and strict adherence to binary notions of gender roles.

[1] These definitions I have attached are of my own interpretation and terminology that I deem relevant to contextualizing and interpreting protoqueerness in early colonial Mexico, especially in the case of Cotita de Encarnación that I discuss in this paper. Although I do not go in-depth on why I chose all these particular definitions (See 'Definitions & Language), further information on these definitions and the restrictions and redefinitions of this terminology can be found at the following website: Bowling Green State University Queer Studies Faculty, Queer Glossary, 2022, https://www.bgsu.edu/content/dam/BGSU/multicultural-affairs/documents/queer-glossary.pdf.

Novohispanic: Relating to or having to do with New Spain.

Proto-Queer: Peoples whose early perceptions of oneself as non-heterosexual and/or transing gender contrast with the sociocultural image of the ideal Novohispanic man and woman, often rooted in a connection to Indigeneity.

Sodomitical Subculture: Oftentimes secretive or subaltern social systems in which peoples who were deemed to practice sodomy, whether that be viewed through the lens of gender transgressions or illicit sex, would present themselves in their genuine gender and sexuality-related identities. This term was coined by Scholar Zeb Tortorici.[2]

Spanish Settler: Anyone born in Spain (Peninsulares) or a Creole descendent of those same peoples (Criollos) that actively took part in the colonization of the New World by assisting the Spanish colonial project. This includes Rroma, Conversos, and Moriscos that were loyal to Iberian causes. [3]

Subaltern Selfhood: The tendency for peoples at the margins of society to articulate their own identity in relation to another group of people also on the margins.

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[2]See Zeb Tortorici, "'Heran Todos Putos:' Sodomitical Subcultures and Disordered Desire in Early Colonial Mexico." Ethnohistory 54, no. 1 (Winter 2007) for more information.

[3] I use the double-r spelling in alignment with spelling in the Roma language. Conversos were primarily Jewish converts to Christianity, although they could be Muslim. Moriscos were predominantly North African Muslims that converted to Christianity. See Jane S. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience* (New York: The Free Press, 1994) for more information.

The Case of Cotita de Encarnación

In the year 1657, in San Lázaro, Mexico City, a mestiza laundress named Juana was washing clothes in a nearby river. A tedious yet necessary job, it was reserved for women in Novohispanic households. Suddenly, she was disturbed by a boy who ran to her for help. He was horrified and exclaimed that "there [were] two men riding each other like if they were on horseback!" She then ran to the site and witnessed the sexual act, deciding that local authorities were needed to assess the crime. The perceived sodomite in question was someone who referred to themself as "Cotita de la Encarnación."[4] They were originally born a mulato named Juan Galindo de la Vega. In the case of Cotita's trial, they were charged with cross-dressing and engaging in anal intercourse with young boys, adults, and older gentlemen of all castes and social backgrounds engaging in anal intercourse with them. This offense was the crime of *pecado nefando*, or sodomy, the worst of the offenses possible under the sin of lust in Catholic religious doctrine.[5]

In the *proceso*, or processus, for this trial, a good number of neighbors and locals were asked to give testimony on Cotita's character. Each of these testimonies depict images of them wearing a headscarf, cooking tortillas by hand, and caring for men of all ages, sometimes even referring to them as *mi amor* (my love) and *mi vida* (my life) *como si una mujer* (like a woman). Of the fifty-one people tried for engaging in the action of sodomy with Cotita, some of them also preferred to be called by names such as "Mariquita (from "ladybug"); Sangariana (unknown, possibly having to do with blood); Conchita (diminutive of Concepción, having to do with the

[4] I have used the ending "-@" in words typically gendered to refer to Cotita to differentiate between the binary "-a/o" endings set within the Spanish language that may not provide the necessary linguistic space to represent Cotita's gender expression. The word "Cotita" itself derives from the word *cota*, or breast armor in Spanish, which implies feminine origin. Scholars must depict these grammatical intricacies of identity responsibly and accurately.
[5] AGI, México, 38.N57C, exp. 57.

Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary); Luna ("moon"); Rosas ("roses"); Martina De Los Cielos ("Martina of the skies," "dreamy"); and La Amorosa ("the loving one")," all of which had feminine themes and doubled as slurs in their communities.[6]

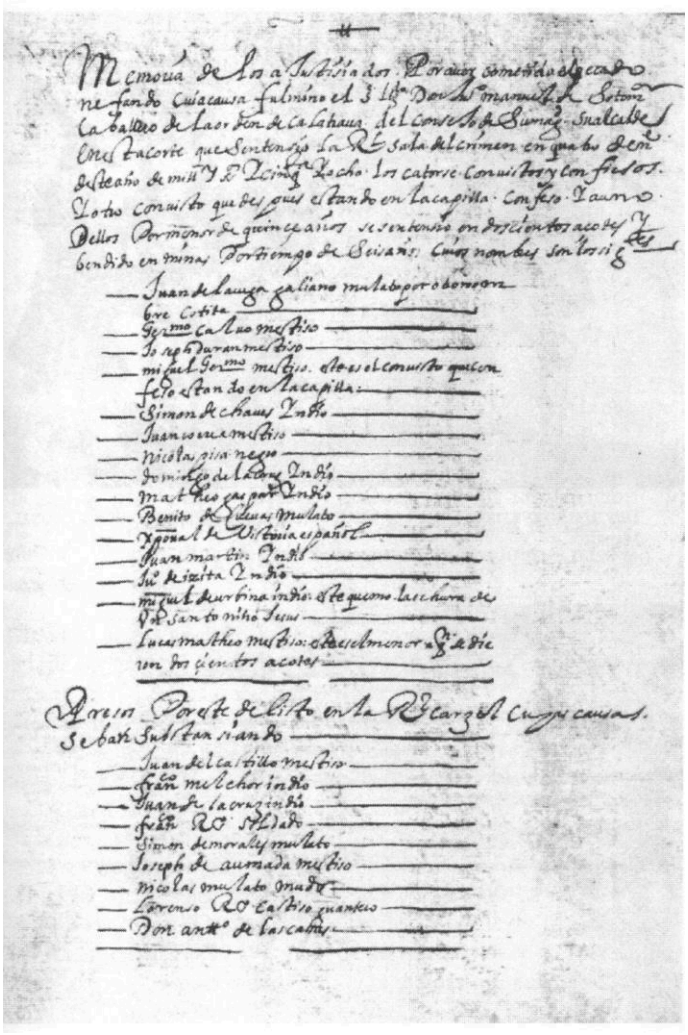

Fig 1. Archivo General de la Nación, Inquisición 38.N57C, 1657, Exp. 57.

A fact even more shocking to the inquisitors was that the people who admitted to sexual intercourse with Cotita were members of every caste in early Mexican society. See the list of

[6] Sergei Gruzinski, "Ashes of Desire: Homosexuality in Mid-Seventeenth-Century New Spain," in *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Pete Sigal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 205.

some men accused in this proceso (figure 1, above) transcribed below with their castes written beside their name:

Juan Correa "la Estampa" (Mestizo)

Joseph Durán De Puebla (Mestizo)

Geronimo Calbo Y Cuebas De La Ciudad De Mèxico (Mestizo)

Miguel Gerónimo (Mestizo)

Simón De Chavez (Indio)

Domingo De La Cruz (Indio)

Juan Martín (Indio)

Miguel De Urbina (Indio)

Juan De Ycita (Indio)

Juan Correa (Mestizo)

Cristobal De Vitoria (Español)

Nicolás Pisa (Negro)

Benito De Cuevas (Mulato)

Mateo Gaspar (Indio)

Lucas Mateo (Mestizo)

Cotita, as a mulato, slept with Peninsular Spaniards (*Españoles*), Native Mexicans (*indios*), Africans (*negros*), and other mixed-race *casta* peoples (caste peoples, like *mestizos*), despite being a poor mulato living in a poorer area of Mexico City. Gender and sexuality-related transgressions against Catholic cisheternormativity was therefore exemplified through Cotita's case to be present in *all* people groupings of colonial Mexico, including the Iberian-born Spaniards, meant to be creating and supporting the status quo in New Spain. As a result, gender

and sexuality-related transgressions saw no ethnic, political, or socioeconomic boundaries in colonial Mexico. Further exploration of the scope of these boundaries should be conducted to understand the limits of these realms of domination.

The Spaniards contributed to the peopling of Mesoamerica and the Atlantic Basin following the rediscovery of the Americas. The Spanish brought West and Central African slaves, Filipinos and other Asians, and their own peninsular families to immensely populated Indigenous American lands. In consequence, New Spain was a site of social, cultural, and political borderlands. Many ways of thinking and living were brought together in non-normative circumstances. The views of gender roles, gender presentations, sexual practices, and sexualities that were Indigenous to these groups were then supplanted by Iberian Christian views of chastity, family, and gender.

The peopling of early colonial Mexico under Spanish conquest led to the deconstruction of Indigenous non-binary gender presentations and 'illicit' sexualities, like homosexuality. Then, new societal norms on 'deviant' sexualities and gender were (re)constructed as the Spanish imposed their legal system through the Mexican Inquisition. The Mexican Inquisition doubled as a Christian and Iberian cultural body that reaffirmed the superiority of Iberian-descendants and guided the process of acculturation in Mexico. This resulted in a racialized and evangelized paradigm of gender and sexuality in early colonial Mexico.[7]

In this paper, I propose topics and methods that historians, queer theorists, and other interdisciplinary scholars could employ to reevaluate the role of proto-queers in early colonial

[7] There is no agreed upon periodization by what scholars deem to be the early colonial period. The Baroque Period, or Colonial Middle, is agreed upon as being somewhere within the start of the 16th century to mid-17th century. Since I am analyzing the development of laws and attitudes towards protoqueerness as they developed in New Spain, I was restricted to understanding these changes with the periodization of my sources. As a result, my work starts in the Conquest Era – roughly starting in 1519 with the start of the Spanish-Aztec War and ending in the 1580s/1590s with the end of the Chichimeca War – although the conquest of the Maya in Chiapas and Yucatán ended in 1695. See Ross Hassig, *Mexico and the Spanish Conquest* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006) for more information.

Mexico. In doing so, I hope to illuminate how cases within the inquisition, like Cotita's, could offer extraordinary insight into how Spaniards reacted to third-gender presentations and sexual practices associated with Indigenous peoples in early colonial Mexico. By analyzing these documents, they may reveal the extent of the boundaries of appropriate gender and sexual behavior Spaniards established for their colonial subjects during the early colonial period of New Spain and the various ethnoracialized anti-sodomy laws based on traditional Christian ideologies and understandings of intimacy. In order to address a lack of research on these peoples, historians should read Mexican Inquisitorial documents to uncover sources and other court materials that discuss the criminalization of proto-queers currently unexplored. By explicitly delineating Indigenous sexualities and gender roles, I believe that further evaluation of these documents could reveal that "sodomitical subcultures" began to form despite Spaniard-prescribed ideologies of home-building within the viceroyalty of New Spain in the 16th and 17th centuries. I aim to provide a basis for future historians, queer theorists, and other interdisciplinary scholars to include the roles of non-binary genders and sexual practices linked to Indigenous cultures when researching colonial period body politics.

A Brief Background of the Borderlands of New Spain, Physical and Intangible

The territory of New Spain spanned over three continents at its maximum territorial extent. Consequently, the viceroyalty was a land of frontiers constantly shaped by interactions of Indigenous peoples at its borderlands. The Northern frontier of its contiguous domain are the contemporary American states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas.[8] This project views New Spain with its heartland as the modern-day Republic of Mexico. I examine the sexual

[8] David Weber, *Myth and the History of the Hispanic Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990).

practices and gender performances of these peoples within its borders and consider the extent of the interactions of those in its periphery on defining normativity and non-normativity within the viceroyalty. Without this consideration, there cannot be holistic studies on the nuances of the social, political, and cultural climates of New Spain.

In its entirety, New Spain also included the Philippines [1565-1821], Florida [1513-1763; 1783-1821], and even Venezuela [wavering periods in the 16th - 18th centuries]. These were discontinuous domains of the empire that, by themselves, also consisted of many peoples in various corners of the world. The demographics of New Spain were constantly shifting and highly dynamic. By the early 19th century, the totality of New Spain had over 6 million people. This Amerindian population was immensely diverse, consisting of groups from the Comanches, Semínolas, Purépecha Empire, Mexica, Maya, Inka, Chibcha, Taínos, and the Caribs.[9] It is estimated that within the first century of Spanish rule, the Indigenous American population of the American continental lands fell from 25 million to only 1 million.

Indigenous populations drastically decreased through warfare, disease, and mixed-race family-building processes. African and Asian slaves from the Slave Coast of Africa and the Asian regions of Japan, India, China, Malaysia, and the Philippines were brought over to work once this Indigenous population decreased and, conversely, the Spanish and Portuguese populations increased sharply. The largest groups were the Catholic Spanish, Basque-speaking Spaniards, and Indigenous Americans with their respective religions and languages. African and Asian populations centered around Costa Chica and other coastal colonial port towns. An increasingly mixed-race population began to emerge in the second half of New Spain's history as a result of marriages used for status and securing land-tenure – especially in the context of

[9] William Taylor, *Iberian Colonies, New World Societies: Essays in Memory of Charles Gibson* (State College, PA: Private Printing, 1985).

nobility – Christian family-building morals, peace treaties, and, to an extent, sexual assaults.[10] For this reason, an increasingly inter-ethnic society began to form in colonial Mexico that welded together Indigenous practices of Asians, Africans, and Amerindians living in close contact in New Spain. It is relevant to understand the dynamic role of these cultural views of gender and sexuality in this era, especially in the context of how interculturality.

Necessary Historiographic Interventions

Historians have studied the extent of Spanish early colonial control over a pluralistic society in Mexico for decades. Often, non-binary gender relations and 'illicit' sexualities are left out of this discourse on Spanish colonial rule. The handful of recent studies on these topics place heavy emphasis on relations between Spanish colonists and Native American tribes within the imperial project, especially in context of homemaking, economy, political semi-sovereignty, social stratification through caste, and Christian religious doctrine. These studies heavily emphasize Spanish official perspectives and center the Criollo and Peninsular populations. As a result, a shift in focus from the Spanish-Amerindian dichotomy on gender relations and sexuality to include perspectives from all Indigenous peoples, including African and Asian peoples, should be done. In particular, a shift to the totality of Indigenous peoples engaging in what were considered sodomitical acts on the margins of society would benefit the discipline since colonial Mexican queer history is an emergent field. This field is in need of more critical research on the intersection of an inclusive-indigeneity (including African and Asian Indigenous practices) and proto-queerness, and therefore, would greatly benefit from this approach.

[10] Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

The field of Queer History is a relatively new area of study, created about 30 years ago, relying on the incorporation of Queer Theory into identity history. Queer Theory, the underlying ideology behind the discipline of Queer studies, was originally developed as a framework for the field in the 1990s by Teresa de Laurentis in her work *Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities*.[11] This theory synthesized the theories and works of authors and historians such as Michel Foucault, Gayle Rubin, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Judith Butler to create a field of study surrounding her pioneering the concept of *heteronormativity*.[12] De Laurentis defined *heteronormativity* as a worldview that establishes heterosexuality as the societal norm, placing those with same-sex desire in a position of disadvantage since heterosexuality is delineated as a privileged within this worldview. The discipline is still in a fledgling state of existence and literature on the history and theory of sexuality is emerging and dynamic.[13]

Current understandings of Latin American history, on the other hand, arose from the field of Latin American Studies as it originated in the 1930s with the creation of the *Handbook of Latin American Studies*, turning towards social history concurrent with the rise of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s and 1970s.[14] Scholarship on Latin American History from this period lacks the perspective of Queer Theory due to predating the concept; however, historians began to engage with queerness before this development. Early scholarship in this field focused on Spanish-Indigenous encounters, later adding Africans into the mix and only recently drawing attention to the presence of people from the Philippines and elsewhere in Asia. Scholarship

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[11] Theresa De Laurentis, *Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), iv - xiii.
[12] See Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 1990); Gayle Rubin, *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1990); and Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1990).
[13] Theresa De Laurentis, *Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), iv - xiii.
[14] Thomas Skidmore, "Studying the History of Latin America: A Case of Hemispheric Convergence," *Latin American Research Review* 33, no. 1 (Fall 1998): 105-27.

dedicated to the intersection of these two fields arose in the decade following the creation of Queer Theory, the 2000s, with scholars such as Pete Sigal who pioneered modern Colonial Queer Mexican discourse.

There are three distinctive generations of scholarship surrounding the subject of Queer Mexican identities within the colonial period. The first significant wave of scholarship arose in the 1960s and 1970s in conjunction with the rise in social histories that came out of the Civil Rights Movement. Although most scholarship with attention to Queerness arose in the 2000s, there were a few early texts that touched on this subject. Charles Gibson's "The Aztec Aristocracy in Colonial Mexico" (1960) and Richard E. Greenleaf's "The Mexican Inquisition and the Indians: Sources for the Ethnohistorian" (1978) were among the pioneering works of this field. Gibson argued that the independent Aztec society, including Proto-Queer individuals, following Spanish conquering, saw those within the lower classes of Aztec society becoming further subjugated than previously because of this Aztec-Spanish alliance.[15] Meanwhile, Greenleaf argued that The Holy Office of the Inquisition utilized religion in tandem with the tribunal court system to enforce a *heteropatriarchy* through the casta system, trying Proto-Queer peoples and idolaters as criminals for their non-normative practices. Greenleaf's major contribution was identifying these legal records as the most expansive source base for ethnohistorians and queer historians to conduct research.[16]

These works were seminal as they were among the first to acknowledge the Mexica (or Aztec) Confederation's disdain towards proto-queer peoples and the Spanish Empire's attempts to weaponize this disdain to actively eliminate them. This is evident from the fact that sodomy

[15]Charles Gibson, "The Aztec Aristocracy in Colonial Mexico," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2, no. 2 (Summer 1960): 170-87.
[16] Richard Greenleaf, "The Mexican Inquisition and the Indians: Sources for the Ethnohistorian," *The Americas* 34, no. 3 (Winter 1978): 315-30.

was tried as a capital offense. This generation's scholars focused their attention on Aztec disdain of Proto-Queer people and the Spanish policies that oppressed them. Although seminal, Gibson and Greenleafs' works only focus on Indigenous and Spanish sexualities, leaving out the intermingling of African and Asian slaves. These works are also elite-centered and focused on policing and social control rather than sexual and gender expression.

This lack of academic interest in Indigenous sexualities was noted by scholars associated with the second generation of major scholarship from the early 2000s and 2010s. Works such as Pete Sigal's "Gender, Male Homosexuality, and Power in Colonial Yucatan" (2002), Lynn Stephen's *Zapotec Women: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in Globalized Oaxaca* (2005), and Irene Lara's "Goddess of the Américas in the Decolonial Imaginary: Beyond the Virtuous Virgen/Pagan Puta Dichotomy" (2008) forefront this generation.[17] These scholars are heavily influenced by the legacy of decoloniality associated with Chicanx/e and Latinx/e activists seeking to combat the legacy of machismo associated with Spanish colonization. Additionally, these scholars also seek to avert the legacy of cultural theft from settler colonialism.

Pete Sigal argues that the Maya viewed homosexuality in a positive light, only changing their cultural views on proto-queerness once the Spanish began to establish an Iberian Christian-based culture amongst them.[18] In essence, the Spanish viewed gender and sexuality as intrinsically linked while the Maya did not. Lynn Stephen takes a similar approach and argues that the link between gender and sexuality within the colonial era makes it difficult to separate the two in historiography. She claims that analyzing both gender and sexuality as complementary but distinct in the colonial era of Mexico can develop a better view of how Africans,

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[17] See Pete Sigal, "Gender, Male Homosexuality, and Power in Colonial Yucatán," *Sage* 29, no 2 (Summer 2002); Lynn Stephen, *Zapotec Women: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in Globalized Oaxaca* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); and Irene Lara, "Goddess of the Américas in the Decolonial Imaginary: Beyond the Virtuous Virgen/Pagan Puta Dichotomy," *Feminist Studies* 34, no. 1 (Spring 2008).
[18] Pete Sigal, "Gender, Male Homosexuality, and Power in Colonial Yucatán," *Sage* 29, no 2 (Summer 2002): 24.

Amerindians, and Spaniards defined them amongst themselves and in relation to each other.[19] Stephen's work also focuses specifically on women within these historical sources, situating her argument within a feminist take on reclaiming female sexuality. Irene Lara further explores this feminist take on Indigenous Mexican queerness and claims that the Catholic church created the dichotomy of the pure virgin and pagan whore based on the hyper sexualization of female bodies.[20]

This body of scholarship demonstrates a shift into analyzing Queer sexualities amongst the various groups of New Spain both at an individual level and in relation to each other. These works explicitly claim to focus on queerness and non-binary gender systems. More attention is brought to women in this generation and more focus on protoqueerness is also underlined. Anti-machismo politics are explicitly present within these works, especially in relation to how decolonizing machismo, patriarchal social control, allows space for other identities, such as Chicanx/e or Afro-Mexicanx/e, to thrive. These scholars also acknowledge the role of Africans in colonial society in contrast to the previous generation of scholars focused on the Spanish-Amerindian dichotomy but do not pay attention to Proto-Queer Africans. Once again, this focus is on sexuality defined by heteronormativity with attention to how the customs and traditions of the respective homelands of these peoples may have factored into this creation of anti-sodomy laws. Although demonstrating progress towards incorporating Queer sexualities as they were understood by each respective group and how the Spanish dealt with this variance, this scholarship lack focus on the multi-ethnic indigenous non-normative sexualities and gender roles of New Spain's many inhabitants.

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[19] Lynn Stephen, *Zapotec Women: Gender, Class, and Ethnicity in Globalized Oaxaca* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005): 24-56

[20] Irene Lara, "Goddess of the Américas in the Decolonial Imaginary: Beyond the Virtuous Virgen/Pagan Puta Dichotomy," *Feminist Studies* 34, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 99-127.

This question of intersectionality and uplifting narratives of those living at the margins brings the history of such scholarship to the emerging third generation of work. This body of scholarship, beginning in the late 2010s and early 2020s, incorporates modern Queer Theory into its conceptual framework. The past decade has seen rising interest in narrating the early peopling of New Spain as a process of regulating such non-normative sexualities and gender practices. The most prominent works from this generation are Pete Sigal and Zeb Tortorici's 2020 work *Ethnopornography*; Z. Tortorici's *Sins against Nature: Sex and Archives in Colonial New Spain* (2018), and Monica Martínez's "Toxic Masculinity: An Outcome of Colonialism and its Effects on the Latinx/Chicanx LGBTQ+ Community" (2021).[21] The primary scholars leading this frame of thought are Zeb Tortorici and Pete Sigal. Sigal's incorporation of Queer Theory into his writing, influenced by shifts in academic focus and Tortorici's thesis written under his guidance, signals a shift in focus for Sigal from just looking at colonial sexuality as it existed to a focus on the dynamics of indigeneity within this context.

Tortorici and Sigal's *Ethnopornography* builds on Tortorici's work *Sins against Nature: Sex and Archives in Colonial New Spain*, which argues that when researching queerness in the 300 records of these cases, it must be considered how the Spanish cataloged them under the phrase "*contra natura*."[22] They mainly argue that the widespread use of various forms of pornography in pre-colonial times by different peoples in West Africa, the Americas, and Australia resulted in the sexualization of these peoples during the colonial era.[23] Similarly, Martínez claims that the result of this hyper-sexualization of ethnic people within the Spanish

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[21] See Pete Sigal and Zeb Tortorici, *Ethnopornography: Sexuality, Colonialism, and Archival Knowledge* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019) and Monica Martínez, "Toxic Masculinity: An Outcome of Colonialism and its Effects on the Latinx/Chicanx LGBTQ+ Community," *McNair Research Journal* 17, no. 11 (Spring 2021).
[22] Zeb Tortorici, *Sins against Nature: Sex and Archives in Colonial New Spain* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018): 60-82.
[23] Pete Sigal and Zeb Tortorici, *Ethnopornography: Sexuality, Colonialism, and Archival Knowledge* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 199-223.

Empire was the Catholic church criminalizing proto-queerness to protect values of heterosexual homemaking necessary to build the economy since perceived homosexuals and lesbians could not produce children.[24]

The scholarship of this emerging third generation opens conversations surrounding the roles of Queer sexualities and ethnic peoples in New Spain within the framework of colonial rule. These scholars begin to consider Proto-Queer sexualities as they apply to Indigenous American, native African, and Asian non-normative sexualities in the colonial period. However, they do not provide thorough research on non-normative sexualities and gender practices in early colonial New Spain but merely provide introductions to this research. A substantive work that synthesizes these texts and adds additional research to provide a scholarly take on the role of Proto-Queer sexualities within these minoritized ethnic groups has yet to be produced.

To conclude this historiography, it is evident that the subfield of Queer Mexican Colonial History is still in a fledgling state of existence with a lack of substantive bodies of work dedicated to queer sexualities among ethnic lines during the peopling of New Spain. The works that do discuss that topic touch on the issue at face value, acknowledging the existence of Indigenous American, African, and Asian peoples and their respective queer sexualities but do not provide a critical eye on how the existence of such people shaped the public sphere of New Spain in the early days of governance. These scholarly works lack the perspective of those living on the margins of society, existing as both people of color and as queer people, forced to coexist under a singular Spanish-led governance.

[24] Monica Martínez, "Toxic Masculinity: An Outcome of Colonialism and its Effects on the Latinx/Chicanx LGBTQ+ Community," *McNair Research Journal* 17, no. 11 (Spring 2021): 139-164.

Some Challenges to Studying Colonial Mexican Queer History

Academic approaches to analyzing proto-queerness in colonial projects, especially within the Spanish-speaking world, are often limited to a select few sources regarding non-heteronormative sexualities and gender nonconformity. The largest source base for identifying proto-queer peoples are the inquisitorial records due to their infamous criminalization within New Spain. The Mexican Inquisition, which began in 1571, was the main apparatus of legal justice at this time. Iberian colonizers brought the Spanish Inquisition, used to convert non-Christians in Iberia, to Mexico for a similar purpose. Mesoamerica had millions of Indigenous Americans who practiced native religions. Iberians then created the Mexican Inquisition to enforce Spanish Christian authority over these peoples and assimilate them into colonial society. People could be tried under the inquisition by someone known as an *inquisitor* for a wide range of criminal activity. These offenses included sodomy, heresy, crypto-Judaism, devil-worship, blasphemy, and other crimes such as thievery and murder. As a result, the inquisitorial records contain over 500 testimonies of peoples indicted for sodomy and are the most comprehensive archive for this research.[25]

Most of the people attested in the records could not themselves write. The letters and works of Amerindian elites to whom the Spanish granted high-ranking titles within the viceroyalty in Spanish and languages such as Maya and Nahuatl speak on their tribes' gender roles and sexual practices. Maya and Nahuatl-language records have largely been translated into Spanish or English. These records serve as one of the largest source bases for my research. As a

[25] It is important to note that through a process of negotiation, Indigenous Americans could not be tried under the Inquisition for many offenses for decades. Colonizers wanted Mesoamericans as new Christian subjects to be incorporated into the empire. Therefore, Iberians knew that conversion and assimilation was a process, not a singular event, and granted leniency onto them for retaining traditions from their religions and cultures. With the ambiguities of race at this time, however, certain peoples labeled as *indios* could be tried under a different ethnic/casta category. See R. Douglas Cope, "The Significance and Ambiguities of Race," in *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebeian Society in Colonial Mexico City, 1660–1720* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 49-67.

result, historians are limited to reading colonial judicial sources and the writings of colonial and Indigenous elites. For this reason, it is critical to extrapolate information regarding plebeian society from these sources based on the accounts presented by the common folk and proto-queer peoples mentioned in these records.

Although scholars of this sexuality in early Mexico are still limited to the same archives used in previous decades of academic research, new possibilities from digitization have expanded the number of sources available within these archives online. To shift perspective towards proto-queers, it is also vital to analyze what these Inquisitorial sources reveal about society and culture. Questions of where and how suspected proto-queers were being arrested; what situations brought them to court; where they were going; what they were doing; who they got caught with; and who reported them are especially relevant. Personal accounts of the arrested are rare, but asking these questions can still reveal how practicing their Indigenous gender and sexual customs in New Spain had direct cultural and societal implications on Spanish governance.

All the aforementioned factors take on an additional level of complexity when one also considers the possibility of flux in a time of rupture while analyzing these implications. The colonial subjects considered proto-queers were living in non-traditional contexts. Thus, they may have practiced familiar customs while also developing new ones in a cross-cultural colonial context. As a result, these archives can aid in excavating the voices of those who practiced “illicit sex” and gender nonconformity despite being written by the Spanish and Native American elite.

Definitions & Language

A variety of distinctions regarding terminology and definitions must be demarcated within this research. This paper defines the Spanish settlers as anyone from the Iberian Peninsula, and their *criollo* (creole) descendants, who adhered to Spanish common law and were participants in the Spanish colonial project. This means that I also consider Rroma and Sefardí *conversos* and formerly Muslim North African or Arab *moriscos* active participants in the Spanish colonial enterprise within this context of New World colonization, as well as their mixed-race descendants through *mestizaje española*, or Spanish mestizaje in Iberia. Spanish mestizaje was the culmination of Iberian, North African, Rroma, Arab, and Jewish peoples living within proximity of each other for hundreds of years. Iberians welcomed conversions as Christianity was sacrosanct in the Iberian Peninsula following the Reconquista, but not all Christians welcomed like those born into Christian families following the colonization of the Atlantic Basin. As a result, I conclusively consider Rroma, Sefardí Jewish, and North African peoples who engaged in colonization, despite having lived under extreme xenophobia, part of the high society within the scope of this research unless otherwise delineated by their origin.

I have coined the term *proto-queer* in this particular context to identify the group of peoples I am studying since modern identity label language is often too limiting. These modern identities are not inherently untranslatable, but rather, it is difficult to represent the cultural and political fabric they maintain today. Scholars must consider the historicity of such identities and rely on the language available to these people in their contemporary society. The term "queer" is a recent invention that denotes a specific connotation of belonging to a sexual or gender identity that is the "opposite" of cisgender heteronormativity. The type of sexualities and gender identities I am researching are Indigenous to Amerindian, Asian, and African groups. Many of

the societies in which these peoples lived did not strictly adhere to the dichotomies of "heterosexual vs. homosexual" or "cisgender vs. transgender" as are often imposed in the West. Therefore, "queer" is not the appropriate label for analyzing these peoples in retrospect. I propose "proto-queer" as the English language categorical grouping for these identities since eventually Spanish colonial society would strip away these Indigenous identities and the practices leftover become labeled as forms of queerness in Novohispanic society.

The predominant language used to describe people engaging in sodomitical acts during the 16th and 17th centuries in Mexico were "*sodomitas*" (sodomites), "*maricones*" (faggot), and "*culones*" (ass-fucker). Phrases for the action of engaging in these practices included "*pecado nefando*" (the nefarious sin), "*vestirse como una mujer/un hombre*" (to dress like a woman/man), and "*para hacer tortillas*" (to make tortillas). It is not uncommon to see words like "*abominabl*e" (pertaining to being an abomination) or "*afeminado*" (effeminate) within these accounts too.[26] Contemporary Spanish speakers, and English speakers, consider all these words slurs and they were certainly used in derogatory manners within these accounts too. Regardless, this is the language associated with these accounts that I have encountered and believe should be integrated into analyses of the cultural, social, and political dimensions of early modern Spain and New Spain.[27]

[26] Laura A. Lewis, "From Sodomy to Superstition: The Active Pathic and Bodily Transgressions in New Spain," *Ethnohistory* 54, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 129–57.

[27] I use the suffix -@ to signify those genders that reaffirm the binary but might not strictly refer to a male or female person and the -e suffix for non-binary genders when referring to Latin@/x/e peoples. I use they/them pronouns for those whose genders were indeterminate based on current archival records. Those that transed gender will be referred to by their preferred pronouns and names and only referred to by their pre-transition pronouns or appellatives when discussing their transition and colonial implications. I also use the term *novohispanic* to refer to the practices or peoples existing within the context of New Spain.

Sociocultural Context in a Time of Flux

Cotita's trial offers insight into the ways that proto-queer peoples subverted societal norms of gender and sexuality, articulated their own identities according to emergent concepts of race at the time, as well as how the Spanish used the Mexican Inquisition to place these 'deviances' into the context of the Christian society they were creating. I am analyzing this particular record because it encapsulates the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality within the early colonial era that I am analyzing in this paper. It provides a detailed account of the ways proto-queers interacted with each other in a society that favored a white, Christian, cisheteropatriarchical structure. The aforementioned social dynamics are vital to generating a holistic picture of how proto-queer peoples shaped early colonial Mexican society.

Cases like Cotita's are windows into how the Spanish used the Mexican Inquisition to affirm traditional Christian views of normative sexuality and gender roles. In colonial Mexico, Indigenous peoples' non-binary genders and sexualities challenged Iberian concepts of what was considered natural. Scholars can gain insight into how Spaniards regulated these Indigenous practices and reshaped them to conform to Iberian norms by analyzing these legal cases. What inquisitors deemed to be the metaphorical scissors cutting the social fabric of their lives is visible in these documents. We can also gain information on how Indigenous peoples viewed gender and sexuality in this era of dramatic change.

Sodomy, or *pecado nefando* [the nefarious sin], was a word used in the 16th to 18th centuries within New Spain and other Spanish colonies to refer to a wide variety of 'illicit' sexual actions and could refer to cross-dressing, women refusing to have sex with their husband, bestiality, anal intercourse between any people, female same-sex actions, masturbation, and any

sexual actions between two men.[28] Which acts were included in the term varied by location and time-frame. It is unknown whether Cotita identified as a man, woman, or a different gender expression. For this reason, I refer to them with the gender-neutral 'they/them' pronouns in this paper. While these people cannot be called queer since there was not an overarching queer community, there were instead proto-queer subcultures. These subcultures were based on early perceptions of oneself as non-heterosexual or as someone who transitioned their gender and contrasted the sociocultural image of the ideal Novohispanic man and woman.

It could be argued that Cotita's choice to forgo their birth name and be referenced solely by their chosen name functioned to change the referral of self and would therefore push their birth name to be a deadname; however, we must be careful in assuming the correlation between such actions and contemporary forms of identity-making as language usage was not always precise enough to account for this. Spanish is a heavily gendered language, and although queer argots developed in Colonial Mexico, same-sex acts often were described in terms of gendered acts of sexuality, such as *pasivos* being women and *activos* being men. Gender parallelism was not understood in colonial Mexico, and as a result, Indigenous genders were deemed interchangeable with and indicative of a sexual preference. Therefore, any third-gender presentation was understood as a person engendered by their birth-sex seeking same-sex desires.

The sociocultural conditions that fostered homosexual and transgender representations being inspired by female models included the usage of certain attire, gestures, and gendered tasks performed by woman that imitated contemporary prostitutes. Descriptions of Cotita's female features are persistent across all accounts:

[28] Pete Sigal and Zeb Tortorici, *Ethnopornography: Sexuality, Colonialism, and Archival Knowledge* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020).

> "This Juan de la Vega…was an effeminate mulatto…they used to call him Cotita (which is the same as mariquita [pansy] and…the said mulatto would move his hip and usually tied on his forehead a little cloth called "melindre" (narrow ribbon) that women use and in the openings of the sleeves of a white bodice that he had, he would other most wear many hanging ribbons and…he would sit like a woman on the floor on a platform and…he would make tortillas and wash and cook."[29]

Historian Sergei Gruzinski suggests that the origin of this naming convention among proto-queer people was the use of prostitutes and other people deemed to practice illicit sex, as a "model of misbehavior."[30] Prostitution was especially popular among a creole clientele in Mexico City.[31] These peoples associated themselves with these perceived sexual outliers and affirmed that connection by creating names for themselves that reclaimed their sexuality from those social persecutors. Their "deviation" from the sexual norm could be noticed by others in their subculture or community by naming themselves in this way. Another aspect to consider in the social realm of this naming convention is how Cotita, as a person with evident Indigenous roots, could become closer in proximity to a creole woman through acting in a manner associated with the lifestyle of an upper-class Iberian woman.[32]

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[29] AGI, México, 38.N75C, exp. 57.
[30] Sergei Gruzinski, "Ashes of Desire: Homosexuality in Mid-Seventeenth-Century New Spain," in *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Pete Sigal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 206.
[31] Fernanda Nuñez and Pamela Fuentes, "Facing a Double Standard: Prostitution in Mexico City, 1521–2006," in Selling Sex in the City: A Global History of Prostitution, 1600s-2000s, eds. M. Garcia, L. van Voss, and E. van Nederveen Meerkerk (Leiden, NL: Brill Publishers, 2017), 442.
[32] Susan Migden Socolow, "Elite Women," In *The Women of Colonial Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 84–96.

The Source as an Event

A creole or peninsular woman would have been the idealized image of a woman at the time. They enjoyed certain privileges that lower-class casta peoples did not have. The inquisitors for this case write that "he [Cotita] was visited by some boys whom he called my soul, my life, my heart, and they would sit by him and would sleep in his dwelling."[33] The use of these phrases *mi amor* or *mi vida* were a manner of speaking associated with upper-class creole women in New Spain.[34] Peninsular or creole women also enjoyed the luxuries of wealth and relative leisure due to their proximity to Iberian Christian origins. They were born in New Spain and of "Novohispanic stock," so to speak, but they still held the privileges of their association with Iberian ethnicity that allowed them to enjoy privileges of upper-class existence, a reality many Indigenous or casta people, also born in New Spain, could only hope to experience.[35]

This depicts the implications of the racialization of gender and sexuality and how upper-class *criollidad* was contrasted with lower-class ethnic identity. Certain poor non-Iberian peoples aspired to have sexual freedom and the gender roles of upper-class Iberians. In this case, non-binary and trans non-heterosexuals, as well as prostitutes, used the gender performances of creole women to articulate their genders and sexualities. This demonstrates the interconnected nature of race, gender, and sexuality in early colonial Mexico. These forces often shaped each other, and by analyzing the effects of these intersections, a greater understanding of the formation of Novohispanic societal norms can be formulated.

The part of San Lázaro that Cotita lived in was close to an area that housed many students from nearby schools. These would have been richer men that were living in all-male dorms or

[33] AGI, México, 38, exp. 57.
[34] Sergei Gruzinski, "Ashes of Desire," in *Infamous Desire: Male Homosexuality in Colonial Latin America*, 206.
[35] Susan Migden Socolow, "Elite Women," In *The Women of Colonial Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 84–96.

dwellings. This explains how prostitutes were able to make a living here as these men mad been seeking sexual satisfaction from women. What this also means, however, is that non-heterosexual people would have been living with many heterosexual Christian males that maintained masculine and monosexual social circles. They could have been seeking sexual satisfaction outside of that local area to avoid social suicide. This would have been obvious to Cotita and another reason why Cotita could have been well-known or sought after by so many proto-queer people. Hence, this is important context to consider when analyzing this record for sexual deviance from the societal norm because it underlines that peoples across all castes and classes would have actively considered the intersection of gender and sexuality in the social consciousness of New Spain.

This *proceso*, or processus, primarily addresses Cotita's behavior which indicates the perceived danger of their proximity to creole womanhood despite there being three mestizos and two Spaniards who would have been considered closer in proximity to whiteness involved in this case. Cotita's status as an Indigenous person imitating a creole woman is emphasized over the fact that actual Iberians decided to have homosexual relations with an Indigenous person. As a result, it can be safely deduced that this source subtly nods to the significance of 'acting your race and class' in colonial society when commenting on the subversion of gender and sexual norms at the same time.

While Christian-derived inquisitorial tribunals and ecclesiastical records acted as an apparatus to curb the manifestation of these identities in the public sphere, they still were functional to a great extent in the private sphere and were practiced amongst all members of society. Regardless, there were modes of traversing a subaltern world where peoples deemed the

sexual and gender-transgressing outcasts of society could maneuver in these identities while occupying public-facing identities aligned with the norms of that time in the "overworld."

The role of language in encapsulating perceptions of oneself as part of a local "underground" community furthers the concept of *subaltern selfhood*. Cotita and the many people that slept with them, whether prostitutes or not, recognized the importance of a name in generating identity. They articulated their own identity in relation to others in their social sphere – specifically prostitutes – and understood themselves in relation to these peoples. By changing their names to objects, plants, animals, and seductive traits associated with women and oftentimes slurs for homosexuals, those that practiced same-sex relationships understood their sexuality in terms of a gender-binary. Where they used terms that encapsulated associations with femininity that they enjoyed, civil and ecclesiastical officials used other heated terms like *sodomitas* (sodomites); *cochinada* (filth); *malign@s* "cancer" (malignant, referring to cancer, which did not enter the Spanish language until the 17th century), *plaga* or *peste* (plague); *basura* (garbage); *jot@s* (faggot); and even *contaminaciones* (contaminations).[36]

This proceso is important because it expresses two seminal facts. The first fact is that Cotita's home was well-known in their community and by men of all backgrounds as a place where sodomitical actions occurred. This indicates the idea of Cotita's home as a safety zone for proto-queers was spread discretely. Since these people ranged from *españoles* to *mulatos* to *mestizos* and *indios*, it suggests that an exclusive social network, a proto-queer subculture, was shared amongst these peoples. This subculture was present in all social classes and castes of society during this time. The second fact is that Cotita actively presented themself in female attire despite public scrutiny. Neighbors that testified expressed seeing Cotita outside or from the

[36] *La Historia de Sexualidad en México*, episode three, "Pecado Nefando en la Época Colonial," directed by Gabriel Garcia, aired 2013, on Canal 22 Cuidad de México, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r71qt-UCUwo&list=PLHXFQrHFFd_UQH9AOsbsp5GvT03SQsugS&index=3.

windows of their home doing housework in female attire, suggesting that Cotita did not necessarily feel the need to hide their identity in all circumstances. Further analysis of what factors could have led Cotita to them publicly expressing their identity should be conducted.

In summation, previous academic works discuss queer sexualities in colonial Mexico only as it related to Amerindian and Spanish elites and fail to include people of African and Asian birth and descent. Neither do they look at the social and cultural implications of the existence of varied sexualities among divergent populations. Going forward, scholars should, by contrast, include Asian and African sexualities as targets of colonial regulation and discuss the development of public sentiment towards different forms of sexualities. Additionally, further investigation into uncovering more documents telling of proto-queer lifeways and subcultures, like Cotita's, should be conducted to provide an expanded source base for scholars to utilize. Consequently, further research should also examine how such a process interlocked with the creation of racial and colonial hierarchies in early colonial Mexico.[37] Without this plurality, a lack of variability in perspective of how proto-queers reacted to the Spanish colonial regime is maintained. Overall, additional research on the importance of gender and sexuality in the early colonial era can pluralize the lived experiences of those in the early colonial era of Mexico.

[37] For additional information, this essay will be featured in adapted formatting within my upcoming undergraduate thesis tentatively called "Transgressing Normativity. Global Indigeneity, Gender Presentations, And Sexual Practices in Colonial Mexico, 1519-1670," set to be completed and published in Spring or Summer 2024.

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Turning a Blind Eye: The Implications of Failing to Recognize the Cambodian Genocide

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"The Khmer Rouge legacy should not be neglected or overlooked because it was the past. It should be a monumental lesson for our future generation. Such an atrocity should never be allowed to reoccur. But it should never be forgotten."

– SISOWATH DOUNG CHANTO, SON OF GENOCIDE VICTIM

Sisowath was one of the millions of Cambodians who lost family members when the Khmer Rouge held power from 1975 to 1979. In this time, the Khmer ethnic group committed hundreds of crimes against humanity and murdered between 1.2 and 2.8 million people, which was between 13 and 30 percent of Cambodia's population.[1] Sisowath was horrified when he learned that "the brutality of [his father's] punishment was so extreme that even the executioner himself could not speak of it without shock."[2] Atrocities like these under Khmer rule traumatized but simultaneously inspired people like Sisowath to dedicate their lives to unearthing the horrors that the regime committed.[3]

The Khmer Rouge, which originated from a small group of communist Cambodians in 1960, came to power when Khmer forces launched a campaign against the capital city, Phnom

[1] Heuveline, Patrick, "The boundaries of genocide: Quantifying the uncertainty of the death toll during the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia (1975–79)," A Journal of Demography, no. 2 (January 2014): 201–218. Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.1080/00324728.2015.1045546.
[2] Digital Archive of Cambodian Holocaust Survivors. "Survivors Stories: Sisowath Doung Chanto." Accessed November 20, 2023. https://www.cybercambodia.com/dachs/stories.html.
[3] Digital Archive of Cambodian Holocaust Survivors. "Survivors Stories: Sisowath Doung Chanto." Accessed November 20, 2023. https://www.cybercambodia.com/dachs/stories.html.

Penh, in 1975.[4] One of the first acts the regime took was to forcibly empty all cities and relocate its people to rural areas. Those who disobeyed the orders to abandon their homes were murdered indiscriminately.[5] The families who made it to what became known as "The Killing Fields" gradually died off due to starvation, disease, or at the hands of Khmer Rouge leaders.

While the Khmer Rouge was removed from power when communist Vietnam entered the country in 1979, it took more than 20 years for the international community to put the perpetrators into custody.[6] In the decades between the genocide and the repercussions that regime leaders faced, Cambodians were tasked to cope with this dark history and to rebuild their fractured society. Focusing on the extent to which world powers were aware of the atrocities occurring in Cambodia, this paper explores how the lack of recognition of the genocide specifically by the international community has impacted the country's socioeconomic development.

Historical Context

After almost a century of French colonization, Cambodia gained independence in 1953 and installed King Norodom Sihanouk as the monarch of Cambodian society. In the next decade, Cambodia reached a population of between six and seven million people, 95% of whom identified as Buddhist.[7] Wealthier Cambodians resided in urban areas and lived a relaxed and comfortable lifestyle; however, the majority of Cambodians lived in rural communities. This centralization of capital among urban elites caused immense income inequality across the

[4] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Cambodia Before 1975" Accessed November 20, 2023. https://www.hmd.org.uk/learn-about-the-holocaust-and-genocides/cambodia/.
[5] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979."
[6] Holocaust Museum Houston. "Library: Research: Genocide in Cambodia." Accessed November 20, 2023. https://hmh.org/library/research/genocide-in-cambodia-guide/.
[7] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Cambodia Before 1975."

nation.[8] This division of socioeconomic status paved the way for political unrest among those who felt this imbalance of income was unjust. One of these displeased citizens was Cambodian Pol Pot, who grew to become the face of the Khmer Rouge.

While Cambodian society appeared to be advancing into a state of peace and prosperity since gaining independence from the French, this era was short-lived. In 1970, 17 years after King Sihanouk was installed as monarch, he was overthrown and exiled to China, and the Cambodian Prime Minister Lon Nol came to power. In China, Sihanouk aligned with Pol Pot, the head of a communist guerrilla movement starting in 1962.[9] This movement, which became known as the Communist Party of Kampuchea, otherwise known as the Khmer Rouge, or "Red Khmers," expanded in the 1960s with Pol Pot and his advisor Nuon Chea heading the movement."[10] Angered by the capitalist practices that preserved the wealth of the few while seemingly disregarding the less fortunate, Khmer Rouge guerrillas were determined to create change in Lon Nol's Cambodia through force. In April 1975, Communist forces launched a campaign against the capital city, Phnom Penh, and defeated the Lon Nol army.[11] This marked the beginning of the genocide in Cambodia and the political unrest that would remain for several decades.

Before Khmer Rouge guerrillas invaded Cambodia, it is important to note exactly how Pol Pot and his forces were able to come to power. The history of Cambodia is "inseparable" from United States interventionist policies in Southeast Asia, specifically its bombing campaign in the region.[12] Since the Cambodian government was already fragile, given leaders were forced

[8] University of Minnesota. "Holocaust and Genocide Studies: Cambodia." Accessed November 20, 2023. https://cla.umn.edu/chgs/holocaust-genocide-education/resource-guides/cambodia.
[9] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Cambodia Before 1975."
[10] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Origins of the Khmer Rouge."
[11] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Cambodia Before 1975."
[12] Morris, Brett S. "Nixon and the Cambodian Genocide." JACOBIN, April 27, 2015. https://jacobin.com/2015/04/khmer-rouge-cambodian-genocide-united-states/.

to tackle the demands of various political parties—including the American, Chinese, and Vietnamese—Cambodia was especially susceptible to the United States' air raids from 1970 to 1973.[13] This made opponents of the United States' actions in Cambodia who saw the destruction firsthand inclined to unite against American encroachment in the region. Hence, the United States' bombing campaign in Cambodia directly correlated with increased support for the Khmer Rouge regime among Cambodians. This contributed to strengthening the Khmer Rouge's military and diplomatic support, which was necessary to overthrow the Lon Nol army.

The Khmer Rouge was a radical communist group with devout nationalism that aligned with Mao Zedong's interpretation of communism.[14] Guided by the belief that educated city dwellers were corrupted by Western ideals of capitalism and democracy, the Khmer Rouge was quick to put a halt to Western advancements by persecuting those who posed a threat to the classless society they hoped to install. The Khmer Rouge targeted the educated, including doctors, engineers, lawyers, military, police, and those who were seen wearing glasses or speaking a foreign language.[15] In addition, all factories, hospitals, schools, and universities were shut down.[16] Minority religious groups like Christians, Buddhists, and Muslims were also targeted due to heightened Khmer nationalism.[17] To remove all traces of Western influence from Cambodia to strengthen Khmer nationalism, the Khmer ethnic group effectively eradicated the majority of the educated population and minority groups. The regime did this to make room for their classless society in which all members of society would be rural agricultural peasants who obeyed Khmer rule. This effectively redesigned the country to align with the political interests of the Khmer Rouge.

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[13] Morris, "Nixon and the Cambodian Genocide."
[14] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Khmer Rouge Ideology."
[15] Holocaust Museum Houston. "Library: Research: Genocide in Cambodia."
[16] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Khmer Rouge Ideology."
[17] Holocaust Museum Houston. "Library: Research: Genocide in Cambodia."

By claiming they were creating "Year Zero" and returning to Cambodia's "golden age" in which the government tightly managed the state's production, the Khmer Rouge demanded that all towns and cities be abandoned.[18] All persons were expected to comply—including the ill, disabled, old, and young—otherwise they were to be executed on the spot. Of those who survived traveling to the countryside, the majority were forced to work as agricultural slave laborers on farms headed by the Khmer Rouge. Due to the countless families who perished from harsh working conditions, long work days, and executions, these farms became known as the "Killing Fields."[19] Removing all persons from the city created an agricultural society that depended on the Khmer Rouge for its survival.

In addition to creating a classless society, the Khmer Rouge worked to break people's ties to family. Understanding that children were crucial to maintaining power in Cambodia, Khmer Rouge forces sought to indoctrinate them into believing that anyone who failed to conform to the principles of communism were deemed to be enemies of the state. For instance, beginning in January 1977, children eight years or older were stripped from their parents to be placed in labor camps, where they were instilled with the notion that the state was their "true" parent.[20] These camps pushed the idea that those who did not conform to Khmer ideology were "corrupt enemies."[21] These camps, therefore, worked to break children's ties to family and other external forces to allow the Khmer Rouge to raise a generation of children who would respect and fight for the regime without resistance.

The Khmer Rouge worked to eliminate all signs of democracy by subjecting its people to severe regulations on religion, private property, and other civil rights. Minority ethnic groups

[18] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Khmer Rouge Ideology."
[19] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Khmer Rouge Ideology."
[20] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Khmer Rouge Ideology."
[21] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Khmer Rouge Ideology."

such as Chinese, Thai, and Vietnamese communities were considered enemies of the regime and were executed indiscriminately. Additionally, half the Cham Muslim population and 8,000 Christians were murdered, resulting in "barely any functioning Buddhist monasteries" by 1977.[22] Another notable change made by the Khmer Rouge was its demolition of banks, national currency, free markets, and private property.[23] Through these initiatives, the Khmer Rouge cast out all remnants of democracy by establishing a society void of freedom of expression and capitalist practices. This worked to create a society committed to the principles of communism.

Through the Khmer Rouge's erasure of social classes and eradication of anything that posed a threat to its development—including institutions and people—the regime transformed the country of Cambodia. During Pol Pot's rule, the death toll was estimated to be between 1.2 and 2.8 million, which was between 13 and 30 percent of Cambodia's population.[24] The destruction impacted the everyday lives of Cambodians across the nation. As survivor Denise Affonço described, "Every day, people died in the village. Every morning, they were hauling away a corpse."[25] In addition to the murders that occurred in the "Killing Fields," the regime committed executions on an industrial scale notably at the concentration camp at Tuol Sleng, which became known as S-21. It was estimated that 20,000 men, women, and children were imprisoned in S-21 and were interrogated, tortured, and killed.[26] In the "Killing Fields" and concentration camps during the four years the Khmer Rouge maintained control, millions were murdered while millions of others were left to deal with a country in ruins.

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[22] University of Minnesota. "Holocaust and Genocide Studies: Cambodia."
[23] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Cambodia 1975–1979." Accessed November 20, 2023. https://www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/countries/cambodia/cambodia-1975.
[24] Heuveline, Patrick, "The boundaries of genocide: Quantifying the uncertainty of the death toll during the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia (1975–79)," A Journal of Demography, no. 2 (January 2014): 201–218. Taylor & Francis Group. https://doi.org/10.1080/00324728.2015.1045546.
[25] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Cambodia 1975–1979."
[26] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Khmer Rouge Ideology."

The Khmer Rouge regime finally came to an end in January 1979 when Vietnamese forces invaded the capital Phnom Penh and established a new pro-Vietnamese government. Many Cambodian refugees fled to camps in Thailand.[27] While the Khmer Rouge was removed from the capital, its forces retreated to other parts of the country to continue fighting a civil war that would last into the late 1990s. Although Pol Pot and his second in command were tried in absentia by the Cambodian government—which made the outcomes virtually meaningless—it took over 20 years and support from the international community for Khmer Rouge leaders to be punished for their atrocities. Pol Pot died before facing any repercussions. This begs the question of how the indecisiveness of the international community toward the Khmer Rouge's atrocities has shaped the development of this Southeast Asian country.

International Intervention in Cambodia

While instances of international intervention were narrow in scope, there were efforts by the international community to aid Cambodian refugees following the violence. Following the Khmer Rouge's loss of power in 1979, the international community, specifically the UN Refugee Agency, provided humanitarian assistance to the thousands of refugees fleeing to Thailand. From 1978 to 1993, Cambodian refugees successfully migrated to countries including the US, Australia, France, and Canada.[28] The UN Border Relief Operation also began aiding Cambodian displaced persons along the Thai-Cambodian border.[29] As the first instance of international intervention amid the genocide in Cambodia, these humanitarian efforts proved effective in helping displaced persons along the country's border.

[27] Holocaust Museum Houston. "Library: Research: Genocide in Cambodia."
[28] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Rescue and Rebuilding Lives."
[29] United Nations: Cambodia. "The United Nations in Cambodia." Accessed November 20, 2023. https://cambodia.un.org/en/about/about-the-un.

The international community's support, however, was done only to aid Cambodian refugees as opposed to recognizing the genocide itself to properly achieve justice for its victims. It took another decade after the UN Refugee Agency's efforts for the international community to install peace-keeping initiatives in Cambodia and acquire any sort of justice for the atrocities committed during the genocide. For instance, in January 1990, over 10 years after the Khmer Rouge lost power, five permanent members of the Security Council called for the UN to play a major role in bringing peace to the region. A year later, in 1991, Cambodian forces signed the Comprehensive Cambodian Peace Agreement, commonly known as the Paris Peace Accords, to implement a ceasefire and install democratic elections.[30] This agreement ended the region's civil war, and the UN Transitional Authority in Cambodia helped set up the first free election in more than 20 years in 1993.[31] The UNTAC temporarily governed the nation to aid reconstruction efforts.[32] While this election appeared promising to its citizens, interference by the Khmer Rouge who disapproved of the election outcomes created challenges in dissolving political unrest in Cambodia. The most detrimental flaw in these efforts was that the Khmer Rouge was to maintain a legitimate role in the UNTAC process. This led to a "total failure" in reducing security concerns during and after the UNTAC's initiatives, which can be seen when the regime refused to allow UNTAC to enter its territory throughout these efforts.[33] Despite the work by the international community to support the victims of the genocide, agreements made with the guilty parties led to failed attempts at achieving justice for their atrocities.

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[30] United Nations: Cambodia. "The United Nations in Cambodia."
[31] USC Shoah Foundation. "Cambodian Genocide." Accessed November 20, 2023. https://sfi.usc.edu/collections/cambodian-genocide.
[32] Harper, Theo J. "Cambodia's Triumph and Tragedy: The UN's Greatest Experiment 30 years on." Harvard International Review, February 13, 2023. https://hir.harvard.edu/cambodias-tragedy-and-triumph-the-uns-greatest-experiment-30-years-on/.
[33] United Nations. "UN Chronicle: The Spectre of the Khmer Rouge over Cambodia." Accessed November 20, 2023. https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/spectre-khmer-rouge-over-cambodia.

Only in 1997 when the Cambodian government made a formal request to the UN asking for support in preparing a tribunal for Khmer Rouge leaders did justice for the victims of genocide seem possible.[34] The process of installing the court was lengthy and full of debate, but in 2001, the Cambodian government established the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, or the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, to sentence the leaders of the regime.[35] Eight years later, the Khmer Rouge trials began, yet only three convictions were made, including that of S-21 prison commander Kaing Guek Eav.[36] He was charged with crimes against humanity including persecution on political grounds, extermination, enslavement, imprisonment, and torture, in addition to "grave breaches" of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 such as the willful killing and unlawful confinement of a civilian.[37] While three leaders of the regime were charged with crimes during this trial, the vast majority of offenders were never held accountable for their role in the genocide even in the present day.

Although the tribunal proved encouraging to the survivors of the genocide, the effectiveness of the sentencing served as a source of controversy in Cambodia.[38] While the court appearance of the perpetrators acted as the "best proof that justice, denied for so long, would at last be achieved," there continued to be Khmer Rouge offenders roaming the country for decades without punishment.[39] Due to the court's limited jurisdiction and its combination of both Cambodian and international judges, former Khmer Rouge associates and survivors were forced

[34] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Rescue and Rebuilding Lives."
[35] USC Shoah Foundation. "Cambodian Genocide."
[36] USC Shoah Foundation. "Cambodian Genocide."
[37] Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. "Kaing Guek Eav." Accessed November 20, 2023. https://www.eccc.gov.kh/en/indicted-person/kaing-guek-eav.
[38] University of Minnesota. "Holocaust and Genocide Studies: Cambodia."
[39] United Nations. "UN Chronicle: The Spectre of the Khmer Rouge over Cambodia." Accessed November 20, 2023. https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/spectre-khmer-rouge-over-cambodia.

to live side by side with one another.[40] The minimal progress seen from these trials—even with the help of the international community—was disappointing to many survivors in the region. Despite debates over the international community's efforts and its perceived effectiveness, there remains the question of why the international community failed to intervene sooner in Cambodia.

Why International Community Delayed Intervening

To unearth why the international community delayed intervention, the first criterion to evaluate is to what extent world powers were aware of the atrocities occurring in Cambodia. In the early 1970s, diplomats from the US raised concerns about mass atrocities in Cambodia and compared them to the violence seen in Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.[41] In 1976, a memo from National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft to President Gerald Ford outlined "detailed knowledge" of the regime's harsh approaches.[42] Two years later, President Jimmy Carter declared the Khmer Rouge to be "the worst violator of human rights in the world today."[43] However, no affirmative steps were taken by President Carter to try to halt ongoing crimes against humanity in Cambodia.[44] This can be attributed to the US' experience in facing major casualties during the Vietnam War, causing a reluctance to return to Southeast Asia for further entanglement in foreign affairs.[45] Therefore, the US effectively turned a blind eye to the atrocities occurring in Cambodia, despite having a detailed understanding of the genocide.

[40] Cochran, Nicole, and Andrew Wells-Dang. "Never Again? The Legacy of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge Trials." United States Institute of Peace, October 3, 2022. https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/10/never-again-legacy-cambodias-khmer-rouge-trials.
[41] University of Minnesota. "Holocaust and Genocide Studies: Cambodia."
[42] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "International Response to Khmer Rouge Rule."
[43] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "International Response to Khmer Rouge Rule."
[44] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "International Response to Khmer Rouge Rule."
[45] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "International Response to Khmer Rouge Rule."

In addition to the US, other world powers in the UN such as India were also well aware of these atrocities. In 1979, once the genocide in Cambodia became international news available to the public, India proposed an amendment to the UN resolution which called for the Cambodian seat on the council to remain vacant.[46] In the end, India's proposal was rejected and the UN continued to allow Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot to fill Cambodia's seat, in place of the newly-established, pro-Vietnamese Cambodian government. Pol Pot remained in this international position of power until 1993, long after the regime's crimes had been verified.[47] The US, therefore, was one of various world powers with knowledge of these atrocities but chose to continue holding an ambivalent attitude toward intervention.

It is also important to recognize that the international community's delayed response was a cause of ongoing alliances between the Khmer Rouge and foreign governments, which enabled the Khmer Rouge's continued authority. Due to the West's and China's fear of the former Soviet Union and its allies expanding its influence across Southeast Asia, the US sided with the Khmer Rouge to halt further expansion.[48] In 1975, Secretary of State Henry Kissinger described to Thailand's foreign minister that the US "bear[ed] no hostility towards [the Khmer Rouge]. [The US] would like them to be independent as a counterweight to North Vietnam."[49] It wasn't until 1989 that the US even labeled the events in Cambodia a genocide.[50] Despite knowing about the atrocities occurring in Cambodia, the US ignored the Khmer Rouge's actions to advance their own agenda against North Vietnam. Additionally, China's alliance with the Khmer Rouge was a prominent reason regime leaders were able to keep their seats at the UN.[51] According to a report

[46] United Nations. "UN Chronicle: The Spectre of the Khmer Rouge over Cambodia."
[47] Harper, "Cambodia's Triumph and Tragedy: The UN's Greatest Experiment 30 years on."
[48] United Nations. "UN Chronicle: The Spectre of the Khmer Rouge over Cambodia."
[49] Kissinger, Henry. "Secretary's Meeting with Foreign Minister Chatchai of Thailand," November 26, 1975. https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB193/HAK-11-26-75.pdf.
[50] Morris, "Nixon and the Cambodian Genocide."
[51] University of Minnesota. "Holocaust and Genocide Studies: Cambodia."

from the Associated Press, it was estimated that China supplied the Khmer Rouge with $100 million of military assistance every year during the 1980s.[52] Through increased financial aid and tolerant relations with the regime, the international community effectively aligned with the Khmer Rouge and allowed the perpetrators of the genocide to escape without punishment. Therefore, international alliances with the Khmer Rouge posed an immense obstacle in obtaining justice for the survivors of the genocide.

It is important to consider what motive the US had in uncovering the atrocities in Cambodia. Since the US and its bombing campaign from earlier decades had immensely aided the Khmer Rouge in coming to power in the first place, the US was reluctant to provide an "honest accounting" of how the Cambodian genocide came to be.[53] For instance, even when the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia were established, the trials intentionally ignored crimes committed by the US that directly contributed to the Khmer Rouge's actions.[54] This made it increasingly difficult for Khmer Rouge leaders to be sentenced for their crimes since the US purposefully hid parts of the Cambodian genocide that may have expedited survivors receiving justice. While some US officials had publicly condemned the atrocities, domestic perceptions toward US motives in Southeast Asia were largely skeptical given the US' recent involvement in Vietnam. By failing to recognize the brutality and severity of the genocide, the international community disregarded the urgency of the humanitarian crisis in Cambodia. This decelerated and halted the process of punishing perpetrators of the genocide for crimes against humanity.

To evaluate why the international community delayed intervention, it is important to note why the Khmer Rouge leaders were ever put into custody after the international community

[52] Morris, "Nixon and the Cambodian Genocide."
[53] Morris, "Nixon and the Cambodian Genocide."
[54] Morris, "Nixon and the Cambodian Genocide."

denied justice for the Cambodian people for so long. It was argued by idealists that the international community hoped to "bring peace to a land that had suffered two decades of war and genocide." However, it was said that the realists' reason for intervention was to remove the "Cambodian Problem" from the international agenda.[55] Nonetheless, the international community only chose to work toward bringing justice to Khmer Rouge victims when it best aligned with their own objectives in the region. During the decades between Khmer rule and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal, world powers like the US intentionally supported and shielded the perpetrators of the genocide from conviction. Since world powers were aware of and enabled the atrocities occurring in Cambodia but chose not to take action until long after the genocide, this begs the question of how Cambodia and its socioeconomic development would be different had the international community intervened sooner.

Implications of International Community Delaying Intervention

Faced with a country in ruins and little international support for years after the genocide, Cambodians were tasked with rebuilding the country's cultural, economic, and social infrastructure. The country was left to deal with destroyed Buddhist temples, abandoned and ransacked cities, and displaced survivors unaware if their loved ones were alive. Those who survived the "Killing Fields" struggled to return to a sense of normalcy.[56]

One of the greatest challenges to rebuilding Cambodian society was the minimal number of skilled survivors whose resources and capacities would have proved beneficial for social development. After the genocide, it was estimated that 75% of all teachers and 96% of all tertiary

[55] Etcheson, p. 40.
[56] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Rescue and Rebuilding Lives."

students were executed.[57] This created an immediate impact with an unequal teacher-to-student ratio which left many students without schooling. The lack of facilities and funding resulting from the Khmer Rouge's condemnation of education created further hardships for post-Khmer society. For instance, Cambodian refugee Teeda Butt Mam described school yards, among other institutions, having been turned into killing fields and virtually all books having been burned.[58] This lack of resources and proper infrastructure for development made the country ill-equipped to rebuild its society. Illiteracy rates reached 40% after the genocide. In 2001, according to an International Labor Organization report, only 25% of people had completed secondary school or higher with 20% saying they never received any schooling at all.[59] With minimal factors required to construct a highly educated society, post-Khmer Cambodia struggled to build a strong foundation for socioeconomic development.

Given this dramatic decline in educated persons, this poses the question of what the teacher-to-student ratio would have looked like had the international community intervened sooner. If the international community intervened in 1976—as noted by Scowcroft's letter to President Ford—the people of Cambodia would have been able to advance more quickly since the deficit of teachers and facilities would have been less prevalent with immediate international aid.[60] Since the Khmer Rouge regime was able to execute educated and skilled persons without repercussions, Cambodians were left to rebuild the country with a population made up primarily of unskilled persons. This made it more difficult for Cambodians to work to advance past the country's dark history.

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[57] Headley, Tyler. "The Lingering Effects of the Cambodian Genocide on Education." The Diplomat, September 7, 2018. https://thediplomat.com/2018/09/the-lingering-effects-of-the-cambodian-genocide-on-education/.
[58] Pran, Dith. "Worms From Our Skin." In Children of Cambodia's Killing Fields: Memoirs by Survivors, edited by Kim DePaul, 10–17. Yale University, 1997.
[59] Headley, "The Lingering Effects of the Cambodian Genocide on Education."
[60] United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "International Response to Khmer Rouge Rule."

Another limitation of socioeconomic development caused by the genocide included the great number of refugees who left Cambodia, thereby causing the country to be increasingly ill-prepared for advancement. It was estimated that one million refugees fled from Cambodia, with a large portion traveling to Thailand and later to the US. Between 1975 and 1985, over 130,000 refugees settled in the US.[61] While this led to greater opportunities for these refugees, it also left those who remained in Cambodia to have to rebuild their society with a smaller workforce. In addition to labor, available agricultural land became sparse due to the presence of landmines remaining from the Khmer Rouge's rule. The abundance of remaining landmines made Cambodia the country with the highest amputee rate, according to Human Rights Watch.[62] This restricted the cultivation of land in Cambodia, where 85% of the population relied on agriculture to survive. This greatly inhibited the community's ability to develop and inhibited the growth of the population.[63] Having to progress with less agricultural land and subsequently less opportunity to advance its economy, Cambodia's land and labor may have differed had the international community intervened earlier.

Aside from reduced labor and less available agricultural land, a major constraint on the country's socioeconomic development was the lingering memory of the genocide among the people of Cambodia. In 2006, over 30 years after the Khmer Rouge came to power, 60% of the Cambodian population suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).[64] Almost 50 years after the genocide, Cambodians suffer from intergenerational transmission of trauma, a condition in which the survivors' children inherit their parents' traumatic experiences.[65] Whether in

[61] Um, Khatharya. "The Cambodian Diaspora: Community Building in America." Asia Society. https://asiasociety.org/cambodian-diaspora#:~:text=During%20the%20Khmer%20Rouge%20reign,settling%20in%20the%20United%20States.
[62] "The Cambodian Genocide and the Continuing Effects of War after Conflict Resolution," 12:26.
[63] "The Cambodian Genocide and the Continuing Effects of War after Conflict Resolution," 12:26.
[64] Harper, "Cambodia's Triumph and Tragedy: The UN's Greatest Experiment 30 years on."
[65] Harper, "Cambodia's Triumph and Tragedy: The UN's Greatest Experiment 30 years on."

Cambodia, the US, or another country, studies revealed that the descendants of genocide survivors experience increased ailments caused by their parents' PTSD.[66] Not only does PTSD impact the emotional state of survivors, it can also impact a person's ability to work and perform activities.[67] Cambodian survivor Sophari Ashley, who lost her family during the genocide, described "still bear[ing] the scars. [She] suffer[s] from anxiety and nightmares when reminded of what [she] went through."[68] This created additional obstacles for the people of Cambodia who were rebuilding their society. the Khmer Rouge not only traumatized millions of Cambodian survivors but also inhibited the country's cultural and socioeconomic development.

The Necessity of International Intervention amid Genocides

Once the people of Cambodia received direct assistance from the international community decades after the genocide, the country was successful in recovering from its fractured post-Khmer state, which highlights the influential role international intervention played during reconstruction efforts. Since the late 1990s, Cambodia received international aid to enact institutional reconstruction. In the next century, the UN continued to focus on post-conflict reconstruction and strengthening the country's democratic values.[69] With this support from world powers, Cambodia's economy grew exponentially as poverty fell sharply, from 50% of the population in 2005 to 13.5% just nine years later.[70] Additionally, the UN worked to rebuild the country's democratic values through the establishment of the United Nations Transitional

[66] Kidron, Carol A. "Alterity and the Particular Limits of Universalism: Comparing Jewish-Israeli Holocaust and Canadian-Cambodian Genocide Legacies." Current Anthropology 53, no. 6 (2012): 723–54. https://doi.org/10.1086/668449.
[67] Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (US). "Understanding the Impact of Trauma."
[68] Holocaust Memorial Day Trust. "Cambodia: 1975–1979: Sophari Ashley."
[69] United Nations: Cambodia. "The United Nations in Cambodia."
[70] Furusawa, Mitsuhiro. "The Cambodian Economy: Outlook, Risks and Reforms." International Monetary Fund, June 7, 2017. https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2017/06/06/sp060717-the-cambodian-economy-outlook-risks-and-reforms.

Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) which deployed over 3,000 UN personnel in Cambodia.[71] The organization came to an end in 1993 only after the Constitution for the Kingdom of Cambodia came into effect and a new, democratically elected, Royal Government of Cambodia was installed.[72] Since this new government was supervised by the UN, the election outcome was validated as UNTAC controlled the country's administrative structures including foreign affairs, national security, finance, and communications.[73] The head of UNTAC said the elections were "free and fair," with over 4.2 million people, or almost 90% of the registered constituents, voting in favor of electing a Constituent Assembly.[74] This socioeconomic development, as a result of international assistance in Cambodia, demonstrated the necessity for the international community to intervene and promote reconciliation. Therefore, this calls into question how the socioeconomic status of Cambodia would have differed if the international community assisted immediately after the genocide instead of years after Khmer rule.

The genocide in Cambodia in the late 20th century parallels other atrocities that occurred throughout history, including the mass killings and forced dislocations seen during the Rwandan, Bosnian, and East Timor genocides.[75] As atrocities across the globe continue to occur in the present day, it is essential to learn from past instances of international intervention in order to understand the urgency of world powers to intervene amid ongoing genocides. Instead of turning a blind eye to atrocities across the globe as seen with Cambodia, world powers must instead be swift in recognizing crimes against humanity and take measures to counter such acts of violence.

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[71] "United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) - Background (Summary)."
[72] United Nations: Cambodia. "The United Nations in Cambodia."
[73] "United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) - Background (Summary)."
[74] "United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) - Background (Summary)."
[75] Gruspier, Katherine, and Michael S. Pollanen. "Forensic Legacy of the Khmer Rouge: The Cambodian Genocide." Academic Forensic Pathology, no. 7 (September 2017): 415–433. https://doi.org/10.23907/2017.035.

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