The Undergraduate Scholar

Fall 2010

Hutton Honors College
Indiana University
The Undergraduate Scholar welcomes submissions from current Indiana University students in all areas of study. Papers of any length are accepted, but submissions should have implications broader than an individual assignment or course. The entries are judged by the undergraduate editorial staff based on attention to mechanics, style, content, clarity, and contemporary appeal. The staff reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity but also welcomes the author’s participation in this process. The Undergraduate Scholar also accepts artwork, including prints, photographs, paintings, and works in other media.

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The Undergraduate Scholar
Indiana University Hutton Honors College
811 E. Seventh St.
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Cover painting by Hena Ahmed
Dear Reader:

University life remains one of the most unique experiences young adults have the opportunity to take part in. Participating in classes, finding friends, and discovering more about our interests quickly fills up the hours, and we suddenly realize that among the homework, jobs, and other activities, another semester has gone by. *The Undergraduate Scholar* taps into a specific vein of that experience: the tricky necessity of learning to communicate our thoughts in the written word. From the paper pulled together overnight to the research-oriented thesis that takes all semester, students at IU develop prose on a variety of topics --- everything from scientific reports to musical dissertations to essays of literary interpretation. *The Undergraduate Scholar* is designed to present these works to the student body so that these efforts of learning can be further shared.

This semester *The Undergraduate Scholar* staff has the pleasure to present the following student essays. They have worked diligently to bring this issue to its current form for your reading. We hope that the ideas contained within help to display the breadth and depth of the learning taking place here at IU.

Happy Reading!

Lauren Conkling
Coordinator, *The Undergraduate Scholar*
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Ecological Impacts of Invasive Species
Rachel Irvine
Invasive species are a leading threat to biodiversity worldwide. The introduction of a non-native species to a region is very different from the natural expansion of a native species’ home range over the course of evolutionary time. Introduced species have a high potential for exceeding environmental limits and expanding unchecked because they have not evolved within that ecosystem, and therefore will not be subject to the same growth constraints that restrict population explosions of native species. This means that species that are able to successfully live in habitats to which they are not native can have extensive ecological impacts, with a range of influences from the genetic level to the level of entire ecosystem processes and function. Invasive species have the potential to cause local extirpations, extinction of entire species, and changes in community structure and function that unequivocally affect proper functioning of whole ecosystems.

Human contributions to the spread of invasive species

Invasive species are of foremost concern not only because of their far-reaching ecological impacts, but also because of the rapid rate of increase at which invasions are taking place. Humans are a key factor in the dramatic rise in and spread of instances of species invasions. Increased globalization, including trade, extensive tourism, and increased transport opportunities, among others, greatly contribute to the movement of species from one region to the next. Seeds, insects, pathogens, and various small vertebrates and invertebrates are unintentionally transported on agricultural products, wood shipments, and shipments of sand, gravel, or other natural resources. This unintentional transportation of species puts countries with free trade policies at high risk of species introductions due to the quantity of materials from other countries that pass over their borders. Poor and developing countries in which minimal (or no) systems of inspection and regulation exist to check for unintentional species introductions are also at great risk for unintentional species introductions.

Increased levels of tourism, as well as the availability of more travel options, have also increased the quantity of potential incidences of unintentional introductions. There are more than 650 million international tourists each year, and as they move from country to country they may carry various insects, pathogens, plants, and animals that, if released into non-native ranges, can become invasive. The increased availability of travel options, which now encompass not only a wide range of terrestrial and aquatic vehicles, but also air travel options, allow humans to visit more rural areas than ever before and to cover greater distances. This significantly increases the extent and range of areas that can potentially be influenced by the introduction of non-native species.

Common attributes of invasive species

There is no single list of attributes that can define the characteristics of all invasive species: the success of a non-native species is determined by an intricate web of interactions between the ecological system into which it is introduced and the introduced species’ ability to adapt to and exploit its new environment. What makes one species able to successfully thrive in its non-native habitat may not provide the same path to successful invasion for another species that has to cope with different environmental pressures.
Furthermore, the majority of introduced non-native species do not actually become invasive. According to the “rule of tens,” only a very small proportion of introduced species succeed to such an extent as to become pests; the theory states that only 10% of introduced species escape into the wild, of which only 10% are able to successfully establish themselves, and of those that are able to live in their new environments, only 10% succeed at such a level as to be deemed invasive. For example, in the Plains Region of the United States, almost 11% of plants are considered to be non-native species (a value that does not include in its estimate crop-plants such as corn, which is itself not native to the area), although only a tiny fraction of those introduced plants are considered to be invasive.

Despite the fact that characteristics beneficial to invasive species may differ, and that the majority of non-native introductions do not establish themselves in an invasive manner, a general list of attributes that may aid species in successfully invading a new region is important to conservation activities. Management of invasive species is most successful when preemptive actions are taken to prevent an invasion. It is a boon to conservation scientists to be able to identify species that exhibit attributes that may allow them to successfully invade a new region, and to subsequently monitor those species to prevent possible invasion outbreaks.

Several common features among invasive species include high rates of reproduction, quick growth and maturation, efficient dispersal systems, and high adaptability. Species that exhibit r-reproductive patterns are better suited for successful invasion than species that employ k-reproductive patterns. This occurrence is because the production of high numbers of offspring in each generation and a short period of time between subsequent generations allows a population to grow rapidly and provides a buffer against possible stochastic events that may have a more dramatic affect on smaller populations. Asexual methods of reproduction, such as vegetative and clonal reproduction in plants, are also characteristics that prove beneficial for invasive species; it is easy for various animals, including humans, to unknowingly act as vectors for segments of plants, thereby spreading the plants from region to region, which also makes vegetal reproduction an example of an efficient dispersal system employed by some invasive plant species.

High adaptability at multiple levels is another key feature exhibited by invasive species. It is common for successful invasive species to demonstrate high genetic variability that can easily produce a broad range of phenotypic results within each generation. This allows natural selection to work on the population and strengthen the invading species’ ability to succeed in its new environment by selecting those individuals that express phenotypes most suited for that habitat. Looking at species at another level of adaptability, species that have high flexibility in their dietary or nutritional needs are more likely to be successful invaders than species that rely on rare or region-specific food sources. Species that can act as effective predators in their new habitats will also be more likely to be successful invaders. This same principle of high adaptability is true regarding a species’ ability to tolerate a wide range of habitats and environmental conditions. Species that fill a relatively small, specialized niche within a community are less able to become inva-
sive in a new region than species that are habitat generalists that can thrive in a variety of habitats. However, exceptions may exist if a niche-specific species is introduced into an ecosystem in which no organism fills that specific niche, in which case it is likely that the introduced species will be able to succeed because it will face little or no competitive forces.

Attributes of ecosystems highly susceptible to invasive species

Just as there can be no specific list of attributes that necessarily define an invasive species, there can be no definitive list of ecosystem characteristics that necessarily make it susceptible to invasions; given the right conditions, any non-native species has the potential to become invasive. However, introduced species have a higher chance of becoming invasive if the ecosystem into which they are introduced lacks predators to keep the introduced population in check. Additionally, if a predator of the invader does exist in the ecosystem but does so at levels that are too low to fulfill its ecological function, it is relatively easy for a non-native species to become invasive. Furthermore, if the ecosystem into which a species is introduced lacks sufficient competitors, it enables the introduced species to shoot beyond the limitations by which it is normally bound in its home range. Some studies suggest that lack of competition ultimately results in the reallocation of how an introduced species uses its resources, with its use of resources shifting away from self-defense and preservation towards a focus of resources that aid in growth and reproduction, a shift that further contributes to the species’ ability to act in an invasive manner.

Having low alpha-diversity, or species richness, is a second characteristic that makes ecosystems highly susceptible to invasive species, an idea that is in some ways a corollary to the previous suggestion that a lack of predators and/or competitors proves beneficial for invasive species. According to the biotic resistance hypothesis, systems in which there is relatively little diversity of species and in which there is a low degree of interaction among species are more susceptible to species invasions than systems in which species richness is greater. Diversity within an ecosystem helps provide stabilization and acts as a source of natural management that could potentially control an introduced species and prevent it from becoming invasive.

Another characteristic that may make an ecosystem more susceptible to invasions is a recent disturbance to the system, whether from a natural cause or human-induced. Hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and any number of other natural events can cause disturbances in an ecosystem that may negatively affect the ability of native species to survive or adapt to the altered habitat while simultaneously providing good opportunities for invasive species to take hold and prosper. The reason for this is that the native species have been selected for over a long period of evolutionary time so that they are well suited to their specific environment. As a result of their fitness to their specific habitat, native species may lack the ability to rapidly adapt to disturbance-caused changes in their environment. On the other hand, as mentioned previously, invasive species tend to be highly adaptive and often act as pioneer species that are highly capable of colonizing areas that have recently been disturbed.
While natural disturbances may provide the opportunity for invasive species to enter an ecosystem, it is far more likely that human-caused disturbances make an ecosystem more susceptible to invasions. Agriculture, clear-cutting of forests, suburbanization, and even war and reconstruction are some of the main ways in which humans degrade natural ecosystems and thereby provide opportunities for invasive species to colonize. Human-caused habitat destruction typically alters the complex interactions of native species, often eliminating one or more links in the system that consequently reduce the stability of the system as a whole, which leaves it susceptible to opportunistic invasive species.  

Human contributions to global climate change, via the burning of fossil fuels and release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, are another example of human-related disturbances to ecosystems that can make an ecosystem particularly vulnerable to species invasions. As climate change occurs and global temperatures rise, there is an increasing alteration of species’ ranges or even the extinction of species that are unable to tolerate the effects on their habitat. Warmer temperatures pose an especially significant threat of increased incidences of invasion in temperate regions, where cold temperatures previously have been the primary limiting factor of a number of invasive species. Furthermore, for the many introduced species in ecosystems that previously were not considered to be invasive, climate change poses the potential to increase the ability of such introduced species to thrive and eventually become invasive. Also, if an increase in numbers of invasive species coincides with a decrease in numbers of native species that are less fit to adapt to climate changes, the relative impact of invasive species in a given ecosystem will dramatically increase, further contributing to the cycle of invasive species perpetuation.  

Illustration of invasive terrestrial plant species’ environmental impacts

Like all invasive species, the impact of invasive terrestrial plant species can be seen at multiple levels in the environment, with influences that reach all the way from the individual species and local population level to influences that impact the functioning of the entire ecosystem. At the individual species level, invasive species are capable of causing extinctions or local extirpations of native species, and some have even been shown to hybridize with native species. Hybridization is of concern to the conservation community because the alteration of the native species’ gene pool may make the native species less fit for survival in its environment, or alternatively, may make the invader more fit for the conditions of its new habitat. In either scenario, the invasive species stands to benefit while the native species suffers to some extent, thereby contributing to the overall success and propagation of invasive species.  

An example in which such hybridization has occurred is the case of the invasion of San Francisco Bay by smooth cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*). Smooth cordgrass, which is originally from the eastern US, has in some instances hybridized with the native cordgrass in San Francisco Bay and has produced a hybrid plant that is able to outcompete the native species. The hybrid cordgrass grows in thick mats, can live in deeper water than the native cordgrass, has changed the structure of the soil, and has expanded into the surrounding mudflats where cordgrass previously did not grow. Not only has
the hybrid successfully outcompeted the native species of cordgrass, it has also taken over mudflat habitat that algae and a number of invertebrates relied upon for their survival. The hybrid cordgrass has directly impacted the survival of the native specie, and has also negatively impacted other species within the community. Such a “cascade effect” is common when an invasive species establishes itself in an area because of the inherent connectivity of ecosystems; when one link in the system is altered there will inevitably be consequences at some other point(s) in the system.19

While the invasive cordgrass had a direct impact on a specific native species’ ability to survive, purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) provides an example of an invasive species that disrupts the community structure indirectly. The plant’s purple flowers are more attractive to pollinator insects than the flowers of native species, and consequently, the invasive species is able to indirectly affect native species’ ability to reproduce.20 Florida’s invasive population of purple loosestrife is able to prosper and expand its range at the expense of the native flowers’ reproductive success, thereby leading to a decrease in species diversity, an increasing level of homogenization, and an overall loss of biodiversity.

Invasive terrestrial plant species are also capable of altering a habitat or ecosystem to such an extent that the entire function of the system is radically changed. Invasive terrestrial plant species can change the structure of soils, cause erosion problems, and alter the availability of resources such as water or other minerals – changes that again have cascading effects that are felt throughout the ecosystem.21 The paper bark tree (Melaleuca quinquenervia), for example, is an invasive plant in Florida that has impacted water availability and soil structure to such an extent that scientists predict that all of the wetlands in the area will be degraded significantly within half a century.22 Similarly, the salt cedar tree (Tamarix spp.), through a combination of its ability to sequester large quantities of water and to form dense groupings along riparian zones, has altered the entire hydrological system in areas throughout the southwestern U.S. where it is found, and negatively impacts wildlife because it outcompetes native plant species which wildlife rely on for habitat.23

Invasive terrestrial plant species can also greatly impact disturbance regimes, specifically fire cycles, because they can drastically change the fuel properties of an ecosystem. Fire cycles are a natural part of many plant’s ecologies, but when invasive species enter an ecosystem they can change the fuel supply greatly so as to change how fire cycles take place. For example, in the northwestern US, the native shrub-steppe ecosystem has been altered dramatically because of changes in the system’s fire frequency, a change that is a direct result of the invasion of the grass species known as cheatgrass (Bromus tectorum). The cheatgrass invasion increases the surface area of flammable materials per unit area while at the same time suppressing the growth of the native shrub species. These changes have led to an increase in fire frequency and a decrease in fire intensity, which has in turn led to changes in the soil’s structure and composition. These changes may be difficult to remediate because the frequency of fires prohibits the recovery of the native species, while the changes in soil composition and structure now make the ecosystem less hospitable to the native species.24
Conclusion

Not all introduced species become invasive, but those that do greatly impact the ecology of the ecosystems into which they spread. Invasive species are usually able to succeed in large part because their new habitats lack predators or significant competitors, which enables them to expand virtually unchecked by environmental constraints. Consequently, invasive species are a leading threat to biodiversity worldwide and have the potential to cause local extirpations, extinction of entire species, and changes in community structure and function that unequivocally affect proper functioning of entire ecosystems.

Endnotes

Rachel Irvine is a junior in the School of Public and Environmental Affairs and is working towards a B.S. degree in Environmental Science, with a minor in Biology. She hopes to pursue her interests in the environment and human interactions in some capacity in the future as an ecologist or conservation biologist. She is currently the co-director of environmentalism at Collins Living Learning Center, where she works to increase awareness of environmental issues and implement sustainable practices amongst its residents.

Title photo by Erin Boland
U.S. Policy Toward Venezuela
by William Pennycoff
Recently there has been growing concern as personalistic Latin American leaders seek to rewrite their countries’ constitutions and make their democracies candidates for democracy’s Third Wave Reversal. Throughout the region populist, plebiscitary leaders have steadily worked to consolidate power for themselves with promises of economic reforms aimed at leveling the playing field and increasing the quality of life for ordinary citizens who have long been excluded from political participation by oligarchic inertia. Whether it is through the aid of political cronyism or even democratically sanctioned reforms of state constitutions, neo-caudillos such as Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez threaten the countries they head with a democratic backslide into authoritarianism. Indeed, Venezuela now appears to be most appropriately classified not as an electoral democracy but rather as a hybrid regime if we are to work within the minimalist definition of democracy as consisting of free and fair elections. Although Venezuela does hold regular, free elections, financial and media resources unfairly favor the incumbents. This unfair distribution of resources has eroded democratic institutions in Venezuela, leaving a competitive authoritarian state on the verge of pure authoritarianism.

In this essay I aim to show why United States policy toward Venezuela should primarily adhere to a developmental approach aided in part by the political approach to democracy promotion. The developmental feature relies on democratization via the economic theory as a driver of broadening economic equality as discussed by S.M. Lipset. I propose a U.S. investment in non-governmental organizations leading to increased urbanization, which results in economic and social equality undermining the patriarchal society and augmenting democracy development. I begin by describing how the historic political culture of caudillismo has helped Chávez create a personalistic, competitive authoritarian state. I will then lay out the proposal which has as its endgame the disrobing of the personalistic quality of the “Emperor’s” regime through the cultivation of popular support for legitimate democratic actors challenging the host government.

The Age of Caudillismo (1830-1958)

In order to understand why a policy prescription composed of the developmental approach aided by a political approach to democracy promotion has the best chance of nurturing a democratic society and preventing a complete democratic backslide in Venezuela, we must first take into consideration the historical cultural context. A brief history of Venezuela from the 1830s forward illustrates how exclusion of indigenous peoples and lower class mestizos from the political process, first under caudillismo and then military dictatorships, has contributed to the rewriting of the Venezuelan Constitution to allow their president Hugo Chávez the opportunity to serve indefinitely. This has, in effect, ushered in a New Age of Caudillismo: virtually unchallenged governmental control by a military strongman with a democratic façade cosmetically legitimizing the competitive
Beginning in 1830 shortly after Bolívar’s resignation and the subsequent breakup of Gran Colombia, Venezuela entered the Age of Caudillismo, in which military strongmen called caudillos ruled the country as an oligarchy, beginning with José Antonio Páez. Unfortunately for the indigenous and mestizos (races of mixed European, Amerindian, and African descent), little changed: these campesinos were unable to participate due to the economic constraints of a feudal, subsistence society. Moreover, campesinos were not permitted to own land which disallowed them fair shares of revenue generated from coffee and other Venezuelan export crops. Though they were cultivating and maintaining state / oligarchy-owned land, they did not share in the profits, thus reinforcing their relegation to the outer margins of Venezuelan prosperity.

Páez ruled dictatorially on and off with other caudillos, and generally sided with the oligarchs as long as prices for coffee, a major Venezuelan export controlled by the elites, remained high. After a brief power struggle among the caudillos known as the Federal War, Antonio Guzmán Blanco came to power in 1870 and ruled for 18 years. The first half of the 20th century saw a series of military dictatorships as well as Venezuela’s first democratically elected president, Rómulo Gallegos Freire, in 1948 during a brief experiment in democracy known as the treinio. However, Freire was overthrown after only 10 months in office by military strongman General Marcos Pérez Jiménez.

The military dictatorships of the first half of the 20th century promoted the oil industry and allowed some social reform, but not enough to prevent the return of democracy in 1958 during the Second Wave of Democratization. At this time, a coalition of various political groups ousted Jiménez and facilitated the inauguration of Rómulo Betancourt as president. The prospect for a consolidated democracy flowered in the brickyard of nearly 150 years of post-independence authoritarianism with the adoption of a new constitution in 1961.

Flowering Democracy Cut Back: Democratic Erosion into Neo-Caudillismo

The nationalization of the Venezuelan oil industry in 1974 led to widespread corruption within the bureaucracies of the democratic republic. This corruption and the 1989 event known as the Caracazo riots emboldened a group of army lieutenant colonels led by Lieutenant Colonel Hugo Chávez Frías, an outspoken paratroop commander, to mount an unsuccessful coup attempt.

The Caracazo riots were an uprising of middle and lower class peoples in response to the Pérez implementation of free-market reforms, which included the privatization of previously state-operated entities. These reforms, suggested by the International Monetary Fund and perceived by many as a move toward globalization, resulted in a 100% increase in oil prices and a 30% increase in transportation costs. Chávez pointed toward the riots as an example of government serving the private, elite-held corporations at the expense of the people, and used the example as a justification of the coup attempt. Following the impeachment of Pérez on corruption charges, the incarcerated Chávez at-
tained folk-hero status and was pardoned by newly elected president Rafael Caldera.

“Democracy consists of choosing your dictators, after they’ve told you what you think it is you want to hear.” -Alan Coren

In December 1998, Hugo Chávez won the presidency in Venezuela with 56% of the popular vote. Chávez’ presidential bid owed its success to his fiery populist rhetoric and campaign platform, which mobilized primarily the indigenous poor and working class. Chávez’ victory hinged on two campaign promises. First, Chávez promised that he would begin his presidency by abolishing Venezuela’s old political system, which he condemned as corrupt and not representative of the people’s interests. Similar to the old Caudillismo political system, transfers of power since 1958 had always occurred between two main political parties, and Chávez pledged to open up political power to independent and third parties. Second, Chávez’ promise to end corruption and eradicate poverty resonated with the middle and underclass citizens who had long felt left out of the Venezuelan political system.

Contrary to his own pronouncements, Chávez has since systematically consolidated power for himself, effectively creating and maintaining a competitive authoritarian state. Chávez has accomplished this in two ways. First, he has fashioned a political pitch of uneven resources, both in financial terms and with media outlets. Regarding the unfair advantage in monetary resources, Chávez controls much of Venezuela’s lucrative oil industry which affords him a virtually unlimited cash flow to spend on political propaganda which saturates day-to-day life. Crucial to this saturation is his own television station. When not airing items favorable to the administration or absolving its blame via scapegoating of various nebulous quantities such as globalism or United States imperialism, the television station broadcasts a four-hour television program entitled “Alo Presidente” in which Chávez orates extemporaneously, generally without challenge or counterpoint. Second, as a result of this and other political corruption, Chávez has been able to stack the congress with political cronies, who subsequently passed a referendum allowing him to be elected indefinitely to the presidency.

Political Unlearning and the Patriarchal Culture

As we have seen, the Venezuelan political experience has consisted of power changing hands early in post-independence between caudillos and then later between two main political parties of a competitive oligarchy. Citizens have grown accustomed to a corrupt government working for elites while largely ignoring the poor and indigenous peoples. Scholarship by Almond and Yerba has shown that democracy can emerge only from a participatory culture, and that previous historical experience signals the type of culture a country has, and whether that culture is likely to participate in politics – means crucial to the end of an emerging stable democracy. Generally, Venezuela has not had a
broad participatory culture given the exclusion of poor and indigenous peoples, and could be accurately described as a patriarchal society given its dominance by military strongmen.

In addition to the Venezuelan patriarchal, non-participatory culture, political learning contributes to undermining the prospect of democratic consolidation: Przeworski and colleagues\textsuperscript{15} argue that the absence of a democratic, participatory culture is detrimental to the stabilization of new democratic institutions, and is therefore susceptible to erosion and subversion via military coups. Indeed, a history of successful coups demonstrates that subverting democracy is possible, thus anti-democrats learn that undermining future democracy experiments is possible. But in recent times, military coups in Venezuela have failed, as seen first with the Chávez coup attempt of 1989, and later a coup attempt toward the Chávez regime in 2002. This is evidence of political \textit{unlearning}, in which the civil society leaves behind past political methodology and favors allowing for democracy to work as a result of having participated in democratic politics.

On the other hand, it could be argued that the failed coup attempt of 2002 is not evidence of political unlearning, but rather the power of the personalistic nature of the Chávez regime. Let us remember that Chávez gained the presidency not only through populist policy platforms, but also in large part through his elevation to folk hero status. Therefore (perhaps counter-intuitively), what is at stake here is democracy itself, given the subsequent executive power grab and changes to the constitution allowing Chávez to potentially serve indefinitely as president. Venezuelan tolerance heretofore of democratic backslide toward competitive authoritarianism is vestigial to the historic patriarchal and oligarchic culture of Venezuela, and testament to Chávez’ charisma as a political leader. Indeed, Chávez may be moving toward \textit{neo-caudillismo}, but he is the people’s caudillo.

\textbf{Unlearning the Patriarchal Culture}

Previous events show that a policy prescription for the United States toward Venezuela would do well to have the intent of first delegitimizing the personalistic regime, thus neutralizing Venezuelan democratic erosion. Secondly, this policy should actively work to aid the consolidation of the Venezuelan democracy. Such a policy prescription must draw from both theories of democracy promotion as discussed by Thomas Carothers.\textsuperscript{16} First, a developmental approach would work to build business networks and subsequent political affiliations, thus increasing trust and common interest in mutually beneficial outcomes among citizens, a concept identified as “social capital” by Robert Putnam.\textsuperscript{17} Next, once these groups and associations have established self-sufficient bureaucracies independent of the host regime, the political approach would seek to identify and support the resultant emerging democratic actors to challenge for political leadership.

To begin, the developmental approach for democracy promotion will deter further democratic erosion by creating a greater participatory culture in two ways. Financial support disbursed directly to entrepreneurs leads to business networks within the country, which will have vested interest in economic policies implemented by the host govern-
ment. This in turn mobilizes democratic actors wanting to influence economic policy, a phenomenon to be utilized later by the political approach. Additionally, an investment in the development of an independent media apparatus increases political awareness and highlights host regime shortcomings.

The first feature of the developmental approach broadens economic equality and social equality, which undermine the patriarchal culture as a result of concurrent urbanization. The personalistic nature of Chávez’ regime is neutralized, thus buttressing democratic institutions through the following mechanism: support for fledgling business networks frees up investment capital and allows for new ventures with businesses across international boundaries. This in turn creates increased capital development (both social and venture) and the need for new infrastructure. The pieces continue to fall into place as the need for new infrastructure accommodating burgeoning interstate commerce creates jobs and developing urban centers. As urbanization overcomes rural areas and revitalizes impoverished population centers, economic and social equality broaden, affording citizens an affluence that permits them to be more involved in political life and thus more informed. As a result of urbanization and broadening equality, the patriarchal culture is unlearned, since citizens have opportunity to expand their political vocabulary, which may not assign as much importance to personalistic governmental leaders.

Let us continue with the second feature of the developmental approach, which pivots the policy prescription toward the political approach. United States investment in an independent media apparatus will work to neutralize the advantage of host government media resources by providing a voice to opposition viewpoints. This component is developmental in the sense that once again, social capital is created as groups organize to staff media source offices including television and radio stations. Economic equality broadens as staffs are paid and new media construction creates jobs. Should the construction of broadcast media outlets within the boundaries of Venezuela prove difficult by dint of host regime interference, the problem is circumvented by high-powered radio and television stations transmitting from U.S. ally soils proximal to Venezuela, such as Colombia. Additionally, Internet news sources are an easy and effective way to discredit host government propaganda. Of course, the likelihood of Chávez’ supporters owning computers or even living in an area outfitted to deliver Internet remains low. The long view then sees an investment in communication infrastructure, such as a fiber optic network capable of delivering Internet and phone transmissions. Again, construction of infrastructure creates jobs and improves economic prospects. The interim sees a third element of the media apparatus as being required: a door-to-door grassroots campaign armed with literature illuminating the true nature of the state of political affairs within Venezuela. The key to success here is that the campaign will be spearheaded and operated by local civic-minded democrats, elements crucial to neutralizing host regime propaganda sloganeering U.S. involvement into its illegitimacy.

Let us move on to the second component of the policy prescription for democracy promotion in Venezuela: the political approach. While the developmental approach works gradually to augment political involvement via broader economic and social
equality, the political approach seeks to identify democratic actors and provide support in the way of training and financing with the end of challenging the anti-democratic host regime. As alluded to previously, such actors emerge from the non-governmental organizations created and nurtured through the developmental approach. Not only that, the developmental approach will by then have established new, independent media construction and staffing which function to combat regime propaganda. The host government advantage of media monopoly diminishes while the probability that power will transfer to parties outside the hybrid authoritarian regime increases, thus halting democratic erosion. In this fashion, repeated transfers of power enhance the prospect of democracy consolidation.

In conclusion, the developmental approach to democracy promotion greatly diminishes democratic erosion: it elevates civic culture and undermines the patriarchal society by creating stable, independent bureaucratic organizations, and it generates widespread social capital which in turn broadens economic equality in a positive feedback loop. Successful execution of the developmental approach gestates democratic actors with vested interest in governmental policy. Such democratic actors are developed via the political approach to challenge the host regime, thereby making the eventuality of democracy consolidation much more likely.

Endnotes


*William Pennycoff will earn a B.A. in Spanish in December 2010. He hopes to continue his studies in graduate school, where he will examine how sociopolitical pressures and inequality have affected the literature of colonial and neocolonial Latin America. Pennycoff holds a B.S. in Biology from Indiana University, and currently works as a molecular biologist for The Drosophila Genomics Resource Center, a National Institutes of Health initiative that provides genetic constructs for the Drosophila melanogaster research community.*

*Title photo by Erin Boland*
The Post-lingual Mestiza in Coppola’s *Lost in Translation*  
by Josh Hall
From the opening sequences of her 2003 film *Lost in Translation*, Sofia Coppola demarcates her protagonists Bob and Charlotte as outsiders. Bob, played by Bill Murray, an American actor shooting a commercial in Tokyo for a few days, stands noticeably taller than the Japanese citizens of Tokyo. He can neither grasp the Japanese lifestyle nor give the smallest effort to care about the family he has left behind in California. Charlotte, played by Scarlett Johansson, is a blond college graduate who mopes around her hotel room waiting for her husband who is working all day in the city, rarely venturing out and continually questioning her marriage to a man she thought she knew. Through the course of a few days, Bob and Charlotte meet, strike up a quiet friendship, and eventually leave the hotel, to experience the city and its inhabitants thereby temporarily relieving themselves of conflicted feelings.

These two characters, who eventually embrace the juxtaposition of two cultures in which they feel equally out of place, seem perfect examples through which to read Gloria Anzaldúa’s theory of the new mestiza. In these protagonists, there is a “clash of voices” that “results in mental and emotional states of perplexity.” They become comfortable with ambiguity, choosing to step outside of their comfort zones rather than simply existing in a constant state of conflict. However, the two protagonists are not the only mestizas stuck between two worlds; director Coppola is the true mestiza behind this film. She creates an artistic landscape wherein she demonstrates the brief, often random encounters that help build bridges between these “rigid boundaries.” Through her film, Coppola forces both her audience and her characters to develop “a tolerance for contradictions,” showing the meaningful possibilities of being a new mestiza in everyday encounters and demonstrating that traditional linguistic barriers may not be so divisive after all.

Before moving back to the film it is essential to first decipher exactly what a new mestiza is, utilizing Anzaldúa’s text, *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. This reimagining of mestiza came from the cultural collisions Anzaldúa identified in her own life; she found herself constantly torn between her identities as a lesbian, chicana, and feminist, among others. Rather than forcing herself to pick one identity, she theorized a new one, a new *mestiza*, who embraces the many cultural forces at work within her and works to build bridges between the dualities that exist in her life. Indeed, shattering opposing binaries is at the heart of Anzaldúa’s argument. As she puts it, “A massive uprooting of dualistic thinking in the individual and collective consciousness is the beginning of a long struggle, but one that could, in our best hopes, bring us to the end of rape, of violence, of war.” Though she discusses the mestiza in terms of her own lesbian and chicana identity, Anzaldúa by no means isolates those traits as the only kind of mestiza. Individuals who first recognize the different collisions at work within themselves are on the path towards becoming a new generation of mestizas. As Anzaldúa says, “nothing happens in the ‘real’ world unless it first happens in the images in our heads.”
Coppola plays out her own mental images on the screen, showing what mestiza bridge building and ambiguity embracing can look like. For her, these are often momentary, random encounters that do not necessarily require mutual knowledge of one language. Truly, Coppola is most interested in the ways humans communicate cross-culturally without the aid of language. The pivotal ending scene shows Bob running from his taxi to say a few last words to Charlotte. The audience sees their expressions and senses how much the interaction means to both of them, but hears only an unintelligible whisper. The actual spoken words, Coppola implies, are less important than most people might originally assume. What the audience should recognize is the meaningful communication without language that has taken place between Bob, Charlotte, and Tokyo over the course of the past week.

Coppola does, of course, recognize that language can be a barrier. An uncomfortably funny scene at the beginning of the film finds Bob on the set of his commercial, trying uselessly to make sense of the Japanese instructions the director shouts at him. Coppola chooses not to include subtitles in this scene, leaving English-speaking audiences just as befuddled as poor Bob. Through the course of the film, however, Coppola demonstrates that meaningful encounters without language are possible, but her characters and her audience must first embrace the discomfort that comes with not knowing a foreign language. Though learning it may be uncomfortable (as it was for Bob), in Coppola’s worldview, cross-cultural communication must occur sublingually. Like a new mestiza, Coppola forces her characters and the audience to “surrender all notions of safety, of the familiar” and instead look for non-linguistic routes of meaningful communication.  

Anzaldúa, like Coppola, frames her text multilingually, stressing that language must not always be a barrier to understanding. Though Anzaldúa’s medium relies on linguistic understanding more than Coppola’s, she still acccents Borderlands / La Frontera with passages in Spanish, immersing readers in her culture, and challenging them to grapple with the alienation those passages may present. In all of her writings, Anzaldúa uses “a unique blend of eight languages, two variations of English and six of Spanish.” Like Coppola, she does not always offer footnotes to translate foreign passages, provoking in non-bilingual readers “the very emotions [she] has dealt with throughout her life, as she has struggled to communicate in a country where non-English speakers are shunned and punished.” Thus, this initial confusion gives way to understanding, as readers are forced to understand and engage with Anzaldúa’s cultures despite the inherent contradictions at work within them. Though readers may not speak Spanish, by simply immersing themselves in the foreign text, they understand more of Anzaldúa’s point than, if she were writing exclusively in English. Coppola’s work with linguistic boundaries, therefore, becomes especially appropriate to compare with Anzaldúa precisely because the two both create multilingual texts in which linguistic knowledge is downplayed as a necessity to understanding.

Charlotte’s first moment of linguistic surrender occurs without the aid of language. As she wanders the hotel lobby, she passes a banquet room where an American actress named Kelly, played by Anna Faris, is speaking to the press in promotion for
her new action film. She gushes about her experience in Japan, saying that she is “like, really inspired by Buddhism...especially with its close connection to nature and stuff.”

Charlotte, annoyed by Kelly, moves to the next banquet room where a few older Japanese women are milling about in traditional kimonos while arranging flowers all over the room. Charlotte observes silently for a few moments before one of the Japanese women places some flowers in her hands, inviting her to help arrange the flowers. Charlotte obliges, and this becomes her first “new mestiza moment.” Without the aid of language or even any explanation of the significance of flower arranging, Charlotte engages in a world outside of her own, building a bridge that makes her “willing to share...vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking.” Coppola places Kelly in sharp contrast to Charlotte. Rather than attempting to simply experience and understand, Kelly gives the audience a cursory view of Japanese culture, assimilating the hip spiritual side without ever understanding or engaging the culture completely.

Bob, too, has key moments where he finally immerses himself in the city, becoming comfortable with the out-of-place feeling that had plagued him whilst shut up in the hotel. He and Charlotte head into the city to meet some of Charlotte’s friends who live nearby. They spend the evening together at a bar, and later at someone’s apartment. Though some of the friends speak English, most of the interaction is shown through dancing and music. Coppola uses music and dance as non-linguistic methods of cross-cultural communication in the movie. In the bar scenes, she drowns the soundtrack in the clubs’ music, mostly obscuring the dialogue and once again emphasizing that language is unimportant when engaging with a culture. These encounters are often random, but Coppola nonetheless implies that intent is necessary for the new mestiza. The mestiza must let her guard down and embrace the cross-cultural opportunities that are presented to her. Bob, finally unconcerned with the bewildering linguistic and cultural borders, takes the plunge in these city scenes, whether he is dancing wordlessly, singing karaoke, or attempting to speak broken French with a new Japanese friend at a club. Though the audience knows Bob does not understand much of what is transpiring, they see his worried, confused expressions disappear as he and Charlotte lose themselves in the city.

In many ways, Tokyo becomes a main character in *Lost in Translation* because it stages many of the film’s cultural collisions in which the protagonists eventually immerse themselves. The entombed world of the Park Hyatt hotel where the characters begin is cold, sleek, and sterile. Bob frames his stay there in terms of a prison stay. “It’s our incarceration,” he smirks. Coppola frames the city as a contrast. She endlessly milks the natural cacophony of city sights and sounds to create an overwhelming primary soundtrack that swallows audience and characters whole. The musical soundtrack is similarly lush; haunting tunes by bands like Air and My Bloody Valentine accent the aquarium-like milieu that Coppola creates. Thus, scenes of Bob, Charlotte, and friends running through the city, visiting bars, and hopping cab after cab are ways in which Coppola’s characters become comfortable with the cultural collisions. In some small way, the audience partakes in genuine mestiza moments simply by submerging themselves in the film, experiencing a wordless encounter through the eyes of two characters that are also
becoming comfortable with their own new mestiza identities.

Some critics criticized Coppola for trafficking in easy, stereotypes of Japanese culture rather than challenging audiences to overcome them. Ken Fox, for instance, writes that her characters “see the Japanese as cartoonishly infantile, infatuated with asia-nine TV shows, karaoke and silly video games.” It can be amusing, he says:

but the humor is too often based in stereotypical perceptions of Asians (they’re short, they’re laughably polite, they eat weird food), and Coppola shamelessly invites us to laugh along with Murray’s character, who, believe it or not, thinks it’s hilarious when his bobbing and bowing hosts get their ‘r’s and ‘l’s switched.\footnote{11}

Fox posits that Coppola engages with Japanese culture in what Anzaldúa calls a “counterstance,” which “locks one into a duel of oppressor and oppressed,” never allowing two cultures to coexist in ambiguity.\footnote{12} While Bob’s linguistic and cultural mishaps are certainly played for laughs, Fox and others who attack Coppola for propagating an “our-culture-versus-theirs” mentality are missing the point. A critique of stereotypes is, inherent in Coppola’s portrayal of the Japanese. These bumbling stereotyped characters are present at the beginning of the film while Bob and Charlotte are still unaccustomed to and confused by Japanese media, people, and traditions. Coppola does not leave her portrayal at that, however. As her characters develop a mestiza “tolerance for contradictions,” Coppola’s portrayal of Japan grows and expands. She shows Tokyo and its citizens in a wider scope than a postcard view, demonstrating that Bob and Charlotte’s, and by extension the audience’s, previous images of Japanese culture were misunderstood and incomplete.

Bert Cardulo still takes issue with Coppola’s depiction of Japan, asserting that her portrayal of the Japanese is all the more shallow because it bears “little thematic connection to the bittersweet relationship between Bob and Charlotte.”\footnote{13} This conclusion seems rather misguided, and the opposite actually seems to be true: Coppola’s portrayal of Japan is essential to the way the audience understands Bob and Charlotte’s relationship. Their relationship mirrors the way the characters and the film relate to Tokyo. As the two grow to understand the city and its people, Charlotte and Bob grow closer, wordlessly interacting with each other in the same way they interact with the city and its inhabitants. Just as Charlotte and Bob have initial differences with each other, such as age, generation, and profession, that they overcome, they also confront and reconcile their differences with a culture that was initially alienating and uncomfortable.

If Anzaldúa’s \textit{Borderlands / La Frontera} theorizes a new mestiza able to embrace cultural collision and ambiguity, then Coppola’s film puts the theory into action. Though I cannot speak for Coppola individually, her characters certainly experience the narrative arc of the mestiza, as they grapple with the cultural collisions at work in and around them. Charlotte and Bob begin trapped and distraught by the alien culture outside the hotel’s cocoon, but as they let down their guard, they become tolerant and even strengthened by the chaos, \textit{los choques}, in their relationship, in the city, and in themselves. More
importantly, perhaps, Coppola creates a distinctly nonlinguistic work of art, inviting her audience to embrace the often-confusing collisions of post-national, post-lingual culture. Though talking and writing can be key in crossing cultural borders, Coppola affirms Anzaldúa’s assertion that language is not the most important aspect in facilitating communication. Anzaldúa believes that the “work of the mestiza...takes place underground – subconsciously. It is the work that the soul performs.”¹⁴ However momentary and random, Coppola might reply, the work of the new mestiza is available to all who embrace it.

Endnotes

2 Ibid., 2213.
3 Ibid., 2214.
4 Ibid., 2220.
5 Ibid., 2216.
7 Ibid.
8 Lost in Translation, directed by Sofia Coppola (2003; American Zoetrope), DVD.
9 Anzaldúa, 2216.
10 Lost in Translation.
12 Anzaldúa, 2213.
14 Anzaldúa, 2213.

Josh Hall is an ambling cinepheliac with an unhealthy interest in Korean pop music. After graduating in May 2011, he plans to put his English major and Hungarian minor to good use by wandering the world and taking odd jobs to pay off the inevitable piles of graduate school debt.

Title photo by Erin Boland
Voices, Spaces & Bodies: The Border Narrative of Moroccan Immigration in Spain

by Richard Scinteie
Introduction

It is the summer of 2007, and Aranjuez, with its unusually mild temperatures and sunny weather, has been a gracious host. The host families provide a comfortable and safe environment for tasting Spanish culture, along with trips into town and outlying areas planned and executed by our professors and Spanish hermanas and hermanos. We clutch cameras close to our chests as we tour old streets and gather near ancient sites of history. In class, our discussions of immigration and history work within the confines of newspapers, scholarly articles and class discussions; our worlds are intact with our preconceptions of Europe and Spain contained in a bubble of touristic academia.

But today, a change sweeps the class. Our breaths are barely audible over the soft murmurs of the guest sitting at our conference table. Certain peers exchange nervous glances and fidget with their notebooks, never meeting the gaze of this brave girl as she details her traumatic nights spent in jail as a result of working illegally as a housemaid at a Spanish residence. She plans to one day attend a university and study business entrepreneurship, but a commitment to send money to her impoverished family in Morocco temporarily outweighs these dreams. Today’s class does not entail scholarly articles and newspaper clips but a direct discussion with a human witness to the immigration injustices suffered by Moroccans in Spain. We all sit in stunned silence when she asks for questions, absorbing the reality of a conflict that spans countless individuals and innumerable conflicts. After three weeks of tests, assignments and power points, the testimony of a Moroccan immigrant has shattered our safe world in the quaint town of Aranjuez, forcing us to encounter face-to-face the deep, malignant cancer of xenophobia and racism that spreads past Aranjuez’s historic palaces and fragrant gardens to encompass the whole of Spain.

Indeed, the reality of immigration in Spain is hard to ignore. From 1980 to 2002, the number of legal resident foreigners exponentially rose from 183,000 to 1,200,000. Amnesty International further estimates the presence of over 300,000 immigrants without valid residence permits in Spain, though numbers are difficult to gauge given the lack of documentation by these ‘irregulares.’ More than 51 percent of legal resident foreigners originate from other countries in the European Union, and their “citizenship” affords them the privileges of both living and working in Spain. Treaties and regulations, not immigration law, negotiate their rights as Europeans, a clear indication of their privileged status amongst immigrants. Outside of Europeans, Moroccans compromise the largest group of foreigners with over 235,000 legal residents; 27.5 percent of legal residents come from Africa, while the Americas and Asia provide 27 percent and 8 percent of legal residents, respectively.

This paper will first contextualize the modern-day immigrant phenomenon in Spain, paying particular attention to the contemporary economics and legislation con-
cerning immigration. Though it will address the larger immigrant phenomenon both in Spain and within the broader context of Europe, this paper focuses on the peculiar role of Moroccan immigrants in Spain. Characterized as “Moors,” Moroccans assume the identity of the medieval Arab and Berber Muslims who conquered and settled in Spain and “Arabized” the Iberian Peninsula in AD 711. Spaniards view their return, then, as the reconquista by Christian Spain’s traditional enemy; as part of the African continent, Moroccans are also simultaneously weighed by the stigma associated with black colonization and post-colonial return to the homeland. This paper will analyze both Andrés Sorel’s Las Voces del Estrecho (Voices of the Strait) and Rachid Nini’s Diario de un Ilegal (Diary of an Illegal), examining how fictional representations of immigrants in Spain within literature give voice to and also re-humanize Moroccan immigrants, thereby supplanting the Spanish border narrative.

Spain and Immigration: The Institutionalization of Illegality

In Spain today, the vast majority of third-world immigrants work in construction, services, or agriculture - relegated to the lowest echelons of the economy, typically remaining there for at least three or four years. Though wages vary based on region and occupation, such immigrants consistently earn less than Spaniards in any given economic sector or region.

This economic discrepancy is invariably tied to Spanish legislation and policy. When Spain joined the European Community in 1985, five EC countries passed the Schengen Agreement, which led to the disintegration of internal borders throughout Europe. That same year, Spain passed the ‘Ley Orgánica sobre Derechos y Libertades de los Extranjeros en España’ (Organic Law on the Rights and Liberties of Foreigners in Spain, abbreviated as LOE). In Spain, organic laws like this walk the line between the ordinary law and the constitution itself, requiring a majority of the Congress of Deputies to pass them. This particular legislation defined the first legal category of immigrants, which simultaneously created illegal immigrants. As Kitty Calavita argues, Spain also produced irregularity, the condition of being an illegal, in far more nefarious and subtle ways, including the “temporary and contingent nature of status.”

To begin with, in order to obtain citizenship in Spain, one must be born with Spanish ‘blood’ under a legal concept known as jus sanguinis (law of blood). In other words, children born on Spanish land are not automatically Spanish citizens (or jus soli, law of soil). Depending on the status of their non-Spanish parents, these children may even lapse into illegality. Even individuals who marry a Spanish citizen need three years of residency before Spain grants them citizenship. Beyond birth from a Spanish parent or marriage to a Spanish citizen, only one option for gaining citizenship exists. Prior to 1996, one had to reside in Spain legally for 10 years before permanent residency. While ‘Real Decreto 155’ (the Regulatory Reform of 1996) reduced that period to six years, providing proof of both residency and uninterrupted work for six years is no small feat, which is why few apply for permanent residency.
The extremely limited opportunity to obtain citizenship factors into Calavita’s argument that Spain essentially regulated illegal immigration. LOE created several regularization programs throughout the late 1980s and into 1996, and a quota guest worker system conceived in 1993 for construction, domestic services and agriculture sectors also allowed for regularization of illegal immigrants. By 1999, undocumented workers living in the country occupied 30,000 openings in these sectors. Such programs depend upon a pre-existing work contract, and given that illegal immigrants largely work in the underground economy, obtaining such a contract is enormously difficult. As Calavita indicates with regards to these programs, the majority of underground work excludes a legal contract by the very nature of being underground, and some underground employers in fact prefer their workers to have no contract, instead utilizing the threat of deportation to abuse the immigrants’ hours and working conditions. Antonio Izquierdo points out that even those fortunate enough to obtain a work contract and meet regularization standards face the obstacle of maintaining a contract every year. Also, some ‘pre-contracts’ cease to exist when an employer does not pay social security, which renders legalized immigrants incapable of renewing their own status.

The work permit system consciously operates under the same circular logic. Legalized foreign residents must obtain a work contract with an employer before applying for a work permit. In addition, these work permits last no more than a year, and workers need a long-term contract to renew the work permit. As mentioned before, maintaining that contract on a yearly basis is insurmountably difficult for illegal immigrants: Izquierdo cites irregularity as a norm for Moroccan and Algerian immigrants. In terms of statistics, the Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales (Ministry of Work and Social Affairs) cites 90,000 permits issued in 1997 for a country with more than 300,000 immigrants.

‘La Ley Orgánica 4/2000’ (the 2000 immigration law) definitively separated illegal immigrants from the greater community while allowing them to remain in the country for an unspecified period of time. Though Spain repealed this contradictory law under pressure from both the European community and domestic political parties, La Ley Orgánica of 2001 not only allowed deportation but also repealed the rights of immigrants to assemble, strike or join labor unions.

These obstacles are perplexing given the necessity of young migrant workers to bolster the dwindling and aging Spanish population. More alarming still, these workers become the scapegoat during times of recession, characterized as a mass of impoverished invaders encroaching upon Spanish land. The economic contradictions are glaring, for while the post-Fordist economy necessitates the kind of cheap labor provided by illegal immigrants, these ‘irregulares’ are relegated to the dredges of the underground economy in a system that both institutionalizes and takes advantage of their illegality while also punishing them for it. As Calavita eloquently states, third-world immigrants are forced in unending cycle where they work “scared and hard” through several part-time jobs a year, ever wary of deportation. This systematic legislative and economic institutionalization of illegality reflects the paradoxical nature of Spain’s relationship with Moroccan immigrants, a relationship spanning countless centuries.
Purity of Blood & Moriscos: The Historic Presence of Moors in Spain

Following the Christian conquest of Granada in 1492, Muslims remaining in the Peninsula were granted religious and cultural freedom. This freedom disintegrated under Fray Francisco Jiménez de Cisnero’s rule, a man who both forced conversions to Christianity and repressed Islamic culture, compelling many Muslims of Granada to rebel. Following this insurrection, baptism was the only option for Muslims wishing to remain in Spain. By the 1520s, Islam was no longer permitted in any Spanish kingdom. Remaining Mudéjares were legally Christian but known as Moriscos (“little Moors”), a clear linguistic indication that Spanish society continued to associate them with a Muslim past. The Inquisition monitored and censored these new converts with regards to customs, language and clothing so they would conform to “national norm.” However, because the Moriscos converted so suddenly, they had insufficient time to meaningfully absorb these new practices, and they practiced their old ways both consciously and unconsciously. The Inquisition gradually penetrated the private lives of the Moriscos to evaluate the extent of their assimilation, even requiring the Christian community to speak out against “crypto-Muslims” who demonstrated resistance to the Christian lifestyle, such as turning one’s face to the East in prayer. Christian Spaniards eventually expelled the Moriscos in 1609 after deeming them irreversibly incompatible with Christian Spanish society. Root argues Spaniards viewed this as an incompatibility because of their ideas about genealogy and “purity of blood,” a concept that would become increasingly important and is still echoed in jus sanguinis today. The Moriscos, who adopted Spanish styles of dress, religion and “culture norms,” were simultaneously different and unnervingly similar, and their subsequent expulsion was a manifestation of Spanish anxiety over Moriscos’ ambiguous place in society.

This historic anxiety is evident in the history textbooks distributed through Spain today. In a 1997 study, Josep María Navarro argues that modern Spanish textbooks downplay the relationship between European and African or Middle Eastern cultural traditions. Schools perpetuate their textbooks’ implications by focusing on a construction of Spain and the Iberian identity to the exclusion of Islam and Judaism. This historic construction and expulsion of Moorish identity denies an integral connection between Moroccan immigrants and Spaniards, further distancing Moroccans from the possibility of entering Spanish society at the socioeconomic and legislative levels since, like their Moorish ancestors, they are seen as genetically and irreversibly incompatible.

Europe: New Nationalism, Racism & the Nation State

Spain’s modern concern with European identity further compounds these historic anxieties. As Daniela Fleser observes, Spain is notable for choosing a European identity following eight centuries of Arab rule, which reflects a “fervent will to be Christian, European and Western, embracing its Roman and Visigothic past against its Muslim and Jewish one.” To be sure, this past has not been easy. It includes racism against Spain
during long eras of economic recession, such as when Spain exported over 91 percent of its migrants to Europe in the 1960s. Fervent European reactions to these migrants included prominent signs on bars that read “No entry for Spaniards, Africans and North Africans.”

The reversal in migration patterns in the late 1970s, following an immense boom in tourism and economic expansion in Spain, represented a psychological shift and reflects Spain’s preoccupation with immigration today. It is no longer a country of emigrants shunned and vilified by European society. Instead, Spain now views itself as part of the elite European club that receives immigrants – “somebody else’s Utopia.”

Membership into this club entails a new type of nationalism. Substantively speaking, the new nationalism does not include but rather excludes when assembling an identity, so that rather than building its identity against other nation-states, a nation-state creates boundaries within its own state to define itself. In other words, the country defines itself by erecting a boundary against what it is not. This community subsequently maintains itself based off of common traits such as language.

Benedict Anderson comparably argues for the nation as an “imagined community…conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship.” The nation becomes an “imagined community” created by ideological borders to cement a certain type of national identity.

As Étienne Balibar and Manuel Wallerstein argue, this new nationalism relies upon the ideological borders of racism. Because no modern nation-state has any true ethnic basis, nation-states utilize the politics of exclusion and inclusion vis-à-vis nationalism to create a fictitious ethnicity based off of racist ideologies, which in turn supports that structure of nationalism. Balibar specifically defines this racism a “new racism,” or:

racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but the insurmountability of cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but ‘only’ the harmfulness of abolishing frontiers, the incompatibility of lifestyles and traditions.

This subtle yet malignant racism perpetuates the idea that cultures are separate entities, and their survival depends upon maintaining distance from “foreign” cultures, avoiding the negative connotation of racism by claiming to nurture “cultural distances.”

In this framework, nationalism and racism are not merely related but interdependent. Balibar thus argues that immigrants have become the new “race” that Europe discriminates against in its nationalistic efforts to maintain a separate cultural identity.

Importantly, this “new racism” also involves post-colonial discourses of racism. Europe identifies as “white” colonialists who established their superiority by excluding “non-whites.” In other words, Europe created its identity by the expulsion of undesired identities through the use of a racist historical narrative of Europe and what constitutes European identity. Accordingly, colonialism returns to “haunt ‘new nations” where shifting identities and precarious polities are anchored against the modern by the reinvention of forms of tradition that too often clearly betray traces of a colonial past.”

This expulsion is based off a border narrative rather than history or any inherent division.
The Border Narrative: Liminality, Multiplicity & Otherization

According to Wilson and Donnan, borders have three categories: the legal borderline which both joins and separates states, the physical structure that both marks off and protects the area of a nation-state, and the frontiers, areas between and apart from borders, where individuals negotiate meanings and behaviors based on citizenship. All three categories express the duality of the border as an open range for both conjunction and disjunction between nation-states. This ambiguity is central to understanding the border as a narrative rather than a static, cohesive boundary; borders are a source of stress and tension across the world because they are uncertain and socially constructed.

Physical space and place, as well as conflict and integration, comprise the border. These components involve the fall of structured societies and the growth of ‘flows,’ movements across space and time where individuals can not only observe but also direct and change their identities. In this way, social conditions are fluid, discontinuous and chaotic, making boundaries and frontiers merely “temporary” or provisional phenomena, imagined but still real for its participants.

In contrast to the previous theory, Samuel P. Huntington puts forth the cultural differentialist argument that:

The most significant dividing line in Europe…may well be the eastern boundary of Western Christianity in the year 1500…The peoples to the east and south of this line are Orthodox or Muslim; they historically belonged to the Ottoman and the Tsarist Empires and were only lightly touched by the shaping events in the rest of Europe.

Huntington therefore views the modern-day conflict between Islam and European Christianity as a result of radically different and ultimately incompatible cultures which contains elements of racial tension as well. Thus, while the EU dismantles boundaries among its “members,” it simultaneously reinforces the thin line dividing it from Africa via the Schengen Agreement. Crossing this border entails the dehumanization process central to human rights abuses, going through “what Mary Pat Brady calls an ‘abjection machine’ that metamorphoses them into something else, into ‘aliens,’ ‘illegals,’ ‘wet- backs,’ or ‘undocumented,’ and renders them ‘unintelligible (and unintelligent), ontologically impossible, outside the real and the human.’”

Though European borders demonstrate flux and changeability, interwoven new nationalist and new racist ideologies within Europe illustrate a narrative that attempts to draw borders between what is European and what is non-European. Catherine Lee and Robert Bideleux understand this narrative as constructed on three levels: functional, actional and narrational, a “multi-layered composition” that reflects a “multiplicity of standpoints.” Thus, relationships between functional units, however small or inconsequential, engender the possibility of a universal European identity. To produce a truly meaningful
narrative it is necessary to base the idea of European identity on multiple but separate narratives. This combination could be used to appreciate the diversity of European identities, but currently, the narrative process is utilized to stratify, racialize and differentiate European from non-European.

All of these narratives involve processes of otherization. For example, Europeans treat Muslims as the Other, defined as entities “outside the known, familiar, and acceptable world that we inhabit,” who are also “doomed to rage and irrationalism.” Otherization is part and parcel of the process that renders non-Europeans inhuman, objects of both fear and anger distanced from “Europeans” racially, culturally and economically.

Spain’s attempt to create itself as a distinctly European, First World country is therefore best understood through a border narrative of “strategic differentiation and stereotype building” with the Moorish Other that remains an inextricable part of its identity and history. This differentiation is not only evident in Spain’s historic anxiety over Moorish presence but also the modern-day economic and legal framework that relegates Moroccans to the underground dredges of the economy and society. As the French once said, “Africa begins at the Pyrenees,” and Moroccan immigration reifies Spain’s identity as a successful First World European country, while at the same time complicating such a division. African immigration serves as a source of cultural trauma for Spain, and both the Moorish past and present-day immigration compound the unresolved anxieties in articulating a Spanish identity distinct from Africa. Within these dimensions, the Mediterranean Sea becomes a border that both unites and divides cultures that share a common thread but fight to communicate the ongoing binary distinction between European and non-European, a division that does not appreciate the nuances and multicultural background of Spain itself. Tellingly, French president Nicolas Sarkozy’s suggestion to create a Mediterranean Union was met with resistance and ridicule, as the xenophobic and racist sentiments so crucial to contemporary European identity destroyed such a possibility. Later, Sarkozy himself condemned attempts by Turkey and other such countries to join the European Union, because they formed part of “Asia Minor.” These efforts influence a larger European identity cemented otherization processes that utilize both racism and nationalism to exclude immigrants from the politics, and Spain has carved itself as part of such an identity wielding the same nefarious tools.

Representations & Realities: *Las Voces del Estretcho & Diario de un ilegal*

Despite Spain’s efforts to create a definitive narrative, the multiplicity of European identities also entails a variety of different narratives to complicate any one dominant story. Literature retains importance as a cultural artifact that both frames an issue and offers a viable platform for discussion thereof. At the same time, rather than hindering understanding of a particular issue, literature functions as a tool to test limits, renegotiate identities and challenge accepted norms, and it is precisely literature’s creative nature that allows such flexibility and reinvention in an otherwise stratified and monopolized world. Literature offers a human face while also analyzing conflict and even investigat-
ing its potential solutions. To this end, Andrés Sorel’s *Las voces del estrecho* (*Voices of the Strait*) and Rachid Nini’s *Diario de un illegal* (*Diary of an Illegal*) are useful tools. Both books underscore the importance of voice and representation in immigration politics: Nini writes a fictional autobiography, detailing the life of a Moroccan immigrant in Spain, while Sorel’s protagonists are a multitude of dead immigrants who the audience discovers through Abraham, a writer enlisted with the mission of telling their stories as they surface from the mouth of a woman in tune with the spirit world. The vocalization of Moroccan voices and the humanization of their conflicts serve as literary methods that destabilize and complicate the dominant Spanish narrative.

Sorel’s *Las voces del Estrecho* focuses on voice and representation as being central to power and politics. Also, themes of death and corpses are particularly poignant facets of representation in the novel. For example, Ismael, a man with the job of finding corpses on the beach and offering them a proper burial, claims he interacts with and sees the spirits of the corpses. “For this reason,” Ismael states, “They say I am crazy. And they say this because they do not want to see. They know, but they prefer to ignore it… this is a village of the dead. It’s just that some know it and others prefer not to recognize this fact.”

Death, then, is not simply departure from life but also the disappearance from the minds and consciences of others. Whether the immigrants inhabit bodies or visibly walk as spirits among the living is irrelevant because without the gaze and acknowledgment of the living, one is as good as dead. One spirit observes:

> They say that our cadavers appeared rigid and inflated. And that the waves left me on the beach of Asilah, before the houses that people from far-off countries pant, in the village that in the summer reunites groups and choruses from all over Africa to sing about love, life, and perhaps death, though they never listen to our voices, our pleas, our history.

The word “cadavers” here describes the corpse as lacking any human quality--shaped flesh without personality or life that is also “rigid” and “inflated” as a balloon. The juxtaposition between the motionless cadavers ignored and discarded and groups collaborating on the very same beach to preach love and peace reveals the politics of power and the ease with which one group may dehumanize another.

Death, in Sorel’s novel, is thus the cessation of the manifestation of one’s identity through words. This disempowerment and inequality materializes in a particularly powerful scene:

> Before arriving on land, they made us jump in the water. Some barely knew how to swim. They assured us that that was Spanish land. They ignored us when we drowned. Now here I am…there is only night, water, drowning, suffocated cries, water that drowns the voice, asphyxiation.

The death of their voice as their lungs are filled with water and their bodies sink downward is evocative of the importance of voice, because without the ability to call out for help, one is a helpless victim. Here, the word “asphyxiation” allows for ambiguity
regarding who is killing these immigrants – is it the strait with its rough tides, or those on
the boat who ignore their calls and push these immigrants into the water with false prom-
ises? This implies the mere process of immigration as embodied by the body of water
they must travel is rife with human rights abuses.

As another immigrant voice declares:

The Moors, the blacks, what are they for Europeans but inferior citizens? In old times
they sold us as slaves, and now they exploit us as human merchandise. We continue hav-
ing no value, and they have no consideration for us. All they need are our arms.\textsuperscript{57}

Using words such as “merchandise,” “slaves” and “arms” connotes the exploita-
tion of immigrants on an economic level. The evaluation of Moroccan immigrants as
solely meant for manual labor to stimulate the economy is not a new concept. Because of
these dehumanizing elements, Abraham endeavors to “paint the voices that no one listens
to, those that are given no importance. Because it has been a while that we have become
blind and walled up our hearts.”\textsuperscript{58} Bringing the immigrants’ plight to light while tearing
down the walls between hearts re-humanizes them, allowing the public to empathize.

Similarly, Nini’s \textit{Diario de un Illegal} understands the importance of representa-
tion as voice. Nini focuses on the importance of language and names in particular, writing
that “[w]hen you are an illegal immigrant, without work, without money, you become a
parrot...”\textsuperscript{59} Nini’s parallel between an immigrant and a parrot ties to the idea of an immi-
grant without a voice as well as immigrants that must adopt the “language of the strong”
and forget their own in the process.

Festival narrative is part of this language forced upon the Moroccan immigrants:

There’s no pretense of recounting for the new generations what really happened when
the Arabs were expelled from Andalusia. The Inquisition. The slaughter. The collective
expulsion. These things do not attract tourists, and on the contrary, they promote an inap-
propriate dramatic tone.\textsuperscript{60}

Nini’s commentary is at once sad and horrifying, for the rewriting of history is a
reworking of their very identity, and that rewriting is part of the larger cultural framework
from which language operates. Culture influences language, and if that culture aims to
excuse or completely do away with history, that is expulsion of Moorish voice. As Nini
suggests in these descriptions, the main goal is to attract tourists, and so Moroccan im-
migrants remain at the mercy of an economy that uses them as sheep.

These narratives consequentially not only add Moroccan voices to a Spanish nar-
rative that wants to drown them out entirely but also offer a human face to immigrants.
To this end, Sorel complicates the common portrayals of immigrants as criminal leeches
on society. For example, one immigrant states “The tourists passed us, frightened. But we
didn’t look at them even if we wanted. We asked for nothing. They asked nothing. Our
aim was simply to wait.”\textsuperscript{61} This description of the immigrants as invisible yet also docile
and evasive could be considered disempowering. However, the fact that the immigrant himself narrates his experience dampens such a critique, and more importantly, his narration offers an image of immigrants as peaceful and disciplined, refusing to draw attention to themselves. Later when the immigrants must pay an individual to take them across the Strait, their movements and bodies are not aggressive and instead are full of self-sacrifice. Even their journey across the strait is defensive, so that one immigrant describes how, “Strangely, instead of swimming, I looked to protect my wet chest against the furious lashes of the water: my mouth dry and my lungs collapsed without help.” These details, utilizing words such as “protect,” paint the immigrant’s movements as self-preserving against the “furious” ocean – a body of water representing the process of emigration from Morocco to Spain. By refusing to fight, the immigrants seem to have an awareness that Spain will be a hostile rather than a hospitable host.

Abraham does not, however, depict all relationships between Moroccans and Spaniards as violent, and his diversification of these relationships further humanizes Moroccans as beings fully capable of loving Spaniards. This idea is best illustrated in the story of Romeo and his Spanish lover, wherein a common interest in liberal philosophy and romantic films led to a beautiful relationship in Morocco. Interestingly, his story is connected to Shakespeare’s romance of *Romeo & Juliet*, which affords the reader an immediate empathy with this Moroccan immigrant as part of a well-known narrative. In the scene of their love-making, Romeo “understood that she desired him and did not resist, and now they journeyed on a cloud, and it would take them very far away, to an unknown world where no one can hear them, nor see them, and they sang not only with their voices but with their whole bodies…” Though Romeo ultimately dies before he is able to cross the Strait and begin a new life with the Spanish woman, their brief consummation is natural, full of mutual love and sexual interest as embodied in the stress on desire and mutual vulnerability when they have sex. Notably, Romeo’s decision to cross the Strait is not because of his impoverished position in Morocco but rather his desire to love this woman and spend his life with her. Accordingly, the narration of their consummated relationship is a foil to the Spanish narrative that dehumanizes Moroccans as racially, culturally and economically incompatible with Spaniards.

Abraham’s narrations rarely address any brutality perpetrated by immigrants; only the voice of a prostitute vocalizes part of a dark segment of immigrant society in Spain. Nini’s story, in contrast, bluntly discusses the necessity of these actions for survival, but in a humanizing fashion. In one moment of desperation full of hunger and impoverishment, he finally decides to steal a drunken Englishwoman’s purse, an act he previously found “despicable.” After running away with her purse and discovering merely a passport, he:

felt a little anguish…I opened the passport and looked at the photo of the woman. A beautiful woman born in Leeds in 1953. She had to be a Libra like me, because she had been born in the middle of October. Leeds. I would have liked to continue my education at the University of Leeds. But I didn’t have the money to pay the tuition.
This statement re-humanizes Nini, despite his act of theft, by first demonstrating how he does not simply view the woman as a source of cash but rather as a human being with personal traits, such as her astrology, which Nini connects with as a fellow Libra. The image of Nini gazing upon this woman’s face also re-humanizes him as an individual who desires to know her face and her life. His interest in and desire for an elite education further indicates a man with ambitions and aspirations via the venues that most individuals pursue; the lack of this legitimate venue, then, is not simply a symptom of any individual laziness or inherent stupidity.

Nini’s intelligence is, in fact, elaborated upon at length when he discusses his forays into education at Morocco and an attempt to enter the professional world of journalism, which is met with hostility and disbelief.67 This context allows the audience to understand the gravity of his situation when his only alternative is theft. Subsequently, Nini details the desperation that leads immigrant children to beg, so much so that, “There are many children that send their fathers to the cemetery for a little bread. The rustic bread is so good that you could send the entire family to the cemetery without remorse.”68 These immigrant children, in other words, are willing to forgo all dignity in order to obtain a piece of bread and survive.

Nini depicts toil and tribulation as the only feasible means of identifying immigrants, writing that, “In this peninsula the cracked fingers are the flesh of identification for immigrant Arabs, better than those blues almost impossible of getting for the grant to work and reside…”69 Nini’s emphasis on the cracked fingers (the result of hard labor) as opposed to the blue eyes (of a white European) undercuts not only the rough toil that identifies an immigrant but also the impossibility of legalization as necessitating genetic change and a certain Aryan identity. This depiction adds a personal, human quality to the thousands of immigrants incapable of exhuming themselves from the underground economy.

Nini discusses the gravity of the situation of certain immigrants in survivalist terms and also offers the perspective that some Moroccan immigrants prefer Morocco and experience nostalgia and homesickness while in Spain. After a year in Spain he declares:

I miss my miserable country. I miss the good people. I miss the intense sun and the winters we pass in sandals. I miss the fat police that pay attention to money more than licenses. I miss the rickety ambulance, the shrillness of its siren and the chauffeur appearing to smile, as if the smell of corpses is intoxicating.701

Nini’s clear love for Morocco, even its morbid ambulance drivers and lazy policemen, allows readers to both sympathize with his situation and view him as an immigrant with a past history and a country, not simply a faceless invader from a nameless country across the Strait. As Nini states:
The Spanish do not comprehend immigration. Or at least the new generations. The past generations lived the emigration during the Civil War and during General Franco’s regime. And for this they know the hell that is emigration. They left to Mexico, Argentina, France and Germany and who knows what other places. And now they are not ashamed of themselves when, seeing a person of Arab-descent, they say, “Uhh, these Moors have returned!”

By connecting his current experience with that of past Spanish generations, he draws a historic commonality of immigration and further illuminates his situation, which is not one of choice but rather of necessity, while also pointing out Spain’s hypocritical attitude toward immigration.

Sorel and Nini’s narratives, understood within the context of the Spanish border narrative, ultimately complicate Otherized depictions of Moroccan immigrants as an encroaching mass of racially and culturally distinct leeches hell-bent on invading Spain. The vocalization of Moroccan immigrant voices and the narration of their human experiences as desolate individuals seeking to survive and prosper in another country offer a valuable addition to the multiplicity of narratives that compromise any national identity.

Little inherent meaning exists in stating that this literature reflects on the dire circumstances of Moroccan immigrants in Spain today. The importance lies in providing a human face for a conflict that is easily transformed into a list of statistics and a long history. While history and statistics add important context and credence to a multi-faceted and complex debate, no real substantive change can occur without the recognition that these immigrants are human beings with the same desires and feelings as those citizens in the host country. Literature raises awareness about these issues, but also does so in the context of detailed and passionate descriptions, so that the reader can connect with the protagonists and understands their plights.

Comparing this economic exploitation to rape is not an outlandish literary metaphor inapplicable to the real-life context. Rather, this creative framing offers ideas and methods for reaching the larger apathetic (or worse, xenophobic) audience complicit in the institutionalization of such atrocities. While these brutal descriptions illustrate a disempowered immigrant group under the heavy hand of an abusive state, they also reveal the depth of the issue as a fundamentally human conflict, and offers new discourses for exploring solutions in regards to Moroccan immigrants in Spain. Accordingly, this literature is not simply an embodiment of subjugated knowledge but a tool for re-humanization and creativity, all useful mechanisms for rearticulating the gaps between Moroccan immigrants and Spaniards in the predominant Spanish narrative.

**Conclusion**

This paper has aimed to establish a predominant Spanish narrative embedded in an institutionalized, post-colonial racism that otherizes the Moor as religiously, ethnically, racially and economically separate from the Spanish citizen. This narrative is apparent
not only at the economic and legal level, but also at the educational level and within the historic amnesia of Moorish presence in Spain. Insidiously, Spanish identity utilizes the Moroccan immigrant Other to establish itself as a credible European power, part and parcel of the broader European identity that defines itself by excluding others. However, in the case of Moroccan immigrants, a common historical thread and their value as inexpensive labor in a budding Spanish economy makes this Spanish border narrative contradictory and hypocritical.

This fluctuating border narrative is especially crucial in understanding the futility of defining a static Spanish identity, and literature provides a forum from which to excavate those voices lost in attempts to establish such a definitive identity. Literature not only resurrects such voices but also offers unique and revealing perspectives on any given conflict. The voices that result contribute new perspectives to use when analyzing the prevailing Spanish narratives that are systemically interwoven in the legal, economic and educational skeleton of Spain. However, without offering context for their voices, their faces are blurred, their voices are drowned, and their identities are dehumanized. Because of this, bridging the gap between Moroccan immigrants and Spanish “citizens” requires open-mindedness, self-reflection and re-humanization of those involved.

Analyzing literature as a cultural product with reflexive value can allow Spain to fully embrace the voices of its contextual past. This is the first step in recreating Spain into a border that binds groups rather than excludes them, a society of both/and rather than either/or, a country that proudly embraces its roots as a diverse and rich tapestry of voices, spaces and bodies.
Endnotes

1 *ABC ‘España Acoge a Más de un Millón de Inmigrantes Legales,’* April 17, 2002.
8 Ibid., 404.
9 Ibid., 405.
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16 Ibid., 440.
17 Calavita, 436.
20 Ibid., 333.
22 Ibid., 118.
23 Ibid., 118.
24 Ibid., 125.
25 Ibid., 130.
27 Ibid., 127.
29 Ibid., 29.
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35 Ibid., 48-49.
37 Ibid., 22.
38 Balibar, “Racism and Nationalism,” 45.
43 Ibid., 181.
47 Ibid., 174.
48 Ibid., 30.
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61 Sorel, 39.
64 *Ibid.*, 130.
65 Nini, 96.
70 *Ibid.*, 76.
Richard Scinteie is a senior at Indiana University and is majoring in Communication & Culture, International Studies and Spanish, with minors in History and Western European Studies. He worked in residential hall student government for two years as president of his floor, largely focusing on gathering student support for human rights issues. In his spare time, he enjoys reading, fitness, and travel. Richard is currently studying abroad in Madrid, Spain and aspires to spend another year in Europe before applying to law school.

*Title painting by Hena Ahmed*
Rosie the Riveter and Sociocultural Evolution
by Kasey Greer
While other girls attend their favorite cocktail bar, sipping martinis, munching caviar, there’s a girl who’s really putting them to shame. Rosie is her name. All day long whether rain or shine, she’s a part of the assembly line.”¹ This excerpt from the 1943 song *Rosie the Riveter* sets a sharp contrast between a woman named Rosie, the idealized female worker of the World War II era, and her not-so-industrious counterparts. While female workers received a great deal of praise during the war years, a reversion to more traditional gender roles followed during the 1950s. In fact, it was not until approximately two decades after the war that women started to reemerge prominently in the workforce. Though this period of lag between women working as Rosie the Riveters during World War II and gaining a more equal footing in the workforce seems baffling, examining the process of sociocultural evolution can help to explain this phenomenon.

Sociologist Stephen K. Sanderson asserts that in order to understand change within a sociocultural system, one must first break the system into three main components: material infrastructure, social structure, and ideological superstructure. Material infrastructure is the basic materials and social forms necessary for survival. Social structure is the actual practices of organizing social life among members. Finally, ideological superstructure is the way societies think about and evaluate the way in which they organize social life.² Sanderson goes on to explain that any social change must begin with some kind of adaptation in one of these three areas. A change in one area will, ideally, lead to changes in the other two, thus prompting sociocultural evolution. Sanderson specifically argues that changes in the material infrastructure are the primary causes of sociocultural change, a materialist viewpoint.³

One of the primary parts of the material infrastructure is the economy, the system that individuals use to produce, distribute, and exchange goods.⁴ During World War II, the production of goods in the United States, and thus its economy, changed dramatically. Production consists of a variety of factors, including the types of goods produced and who produces them. These two portions of the economy were most affected by the war.

As part of the war effort, the United States government mobilized the entire private economy, drastically increasing defense spending to get troops the supplies they needed. Thus, the war both increased the amount of production necessary and concentrated it in the defense sector. For example, the last American cars made during World War II came off the assembly line in 1942, since all factories producing automobiles transitioned into making weapons, such as B-24 bombers, for the United States military and its allies.⁵

In addition, because almost all men of draft age were serving their country in the military, there was a distinct shortage of labor. As a result, the government called for all able-bodied persons, including women and children, to fill the positions. In a fireside chat on October 12, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt told the nation, “In some communities, employers dislike to employ women. In others they are reluctant to hire
Negroes. In still others, older men are not wanted. We can no longer afford to indulge in such prejudices or practices.” Essentially, Roosevelt was indicating to the American public that wartime was a time when all citizens needed to band together to assist in fighting the common enemy. It was neither the time nor the place for discrimination, as there were more pressing issues to address, like feeding hungry American GIs. To help further inspire women to do what many saw as their patriotic duty, the United States government created Rosie the Riveter, an idealized female worker supporting the boys on the frontlines through her labor. This propaganda campaign seems to have been effective, since by 1945, women comprised 36 percent of the workforce, versus 20 percent in 1920.7

However, despite the rhetoric of everyone pitching in equally to overcome the Axis powers, gender stereotypes were still clearly evident on the American homefront and overseas. There are indications of these even within the government’s propaganda campaigns. Poster 52 from the Office of War Information shows a woman working on the nose of an airplane with the title, “The more women at work, the sooner we win.” While this may seem like encouragement to break the social norms, there is certainly more to it than that. For example, the woman and her uniform are pristine, and she has her nails done perfectly. In addition, she is wearing makeup, with her hair curled and pinned back. She is even demure, with her gaze cast downward, perhaps concentrating on her work.8 In fact, in a different setting with a different wardrobe, she would be the perfect illustration of the later 1950s housewife. Essentially, there is no true break from the traditional female image. She is only in the factory instead of the home.

This illustration and its implication help to explain why sociocultural evolution towards gender equality in the workplace did not immediately follow World War II, even though the materialist perspective indicates a change in economy would have prompted it. According to this theory, the next step in this chain of social change would be an alteration in the social structure of the country, more specifically in its gender division, the way in which certain jobs, tasks, or roles are allocated to men or women.9 Norman Rockwell’s illustration of Rosie the Riveter on the front of the Saturday Evening Post might have led readers to believe all women working for the war effort were taking over masculine factory positions. Indeed, it shows her taking a lunch break, still in her uniform, including her welding mask, with her large riveter resting on her lap. She wears slacks, boasts large biceps, and chews her sandwich while resting her feet on a copy of Adolf Hitler’s autobiography.10 Rockwell’s portrayal, in combination with the “Rosie the Riveter” song makes it seem as if the job allocation for genders changed dramatically during World War II. However, while many women did work in factories producing weapons for overseas, a great number of them served the country in more traditional capacities. The government propaganda poster lists twelve capacities in which women are needed, including farm workers, typists, salespeople, waitresses, timekeepers and teachers.11 Of the twelve listed on poster, half are traditional female positions which simply need more recruits. Another poignant example of resistance to modifying gender roles was in the military. During World War II, women were relegated only to auxiliary units, which saw no combat. Instead, they most often served in clerical and administrative positions. This
allowed the men who had been serving in these positions to be sent overseas and into combat.  

It is evident that in both American civilian and military life, gender division of jobs and roles remained largely the same as in pre-war years. Women were almost always in solely supportive roles. In essence, the men went war, and the women went to work to keep up the tail-to-tooth ratio that would allow them to fight in relative comfort. Marcelle Miller, who served as a Rosie the Riveter, remembers “It was just that with the men going into the service, the women had to step in and fill the gaps there.” Her contemporary Lois Loftin adds, “All the men around the United States were standing in lines to enlist in the military service. Everyone was anxious to be involved and do something for the war effort.”

This explanation as to why they served their country in the capacity that they did leads into the third and final component of sociocultural system, the ideological superstructure. The main portion of this portion is general ideology, which is comprised of beliefs, values, and social norms.

Beliefs are the shared thoughts about what is true and false, including the difference between men and women. One demonstration of the prevalent belief system during World War II is how women overall did not view working in the defense industry simply as their opportunity to work outside the home or as a break from their traditional roles. Instead, they believed they were doing their small part to help the Allied powers win the war. Marie Gray, another Rosie the Riveter, said, “They [the other women] just wanted to make good airplanes and do whatever they could and get those men home.” In a broader context, even the Rosie the Riveter song says, “She’s making history working for victory.”

In addition, most citizens strongly believed that the war would only be a temporary intrusion in their lives. In sociological terms, they realized that the it was only a short term sociocultural adaptation, that people had seen a change in circumstance, responded rationally, and would likely respond again when the conditions changed once more. Essentially, they saw that the economy had only adapted out of the necessity of war and that it would likely revert back to its previous conditions when the labor shortage the war caused was no longer an issue. As a result, many women fully intended for their factory employment to only be temporary, resulting in no necessity for altering their belief systems. For example, Minnie Metzger, who thrived working on tanks and earned the nickname “Transmission Minnie,” claimed she looked forward to re-opening her beauty parlor when the war ended.

Another facet of general ideology is values, which deal with conceptions of worth and issues such as what is seen as good and bad, desirable and undesirable, etc. Typical American values remained traditional during the war. As the propaganda poster suggests, Americans still valued beautiful women who kept themselves looking pristine and well made-up. In fact, there was a real fear of women taking traditionally male jobs and thus becoming more masculine. A particularly strong way in which this value took root was in the rumors which spread about women in the auxiliary military being sexual extremists, either promiscuous or lesbians. The enlisted servicemen created this to keep
their sisters and friends from joining. This reveals how Americans at the time valued both feminine sexual purity and the complete separation of female and male roles within organizations.

These values are further reinforced through norms, the standards or rules about what should happen and what should not. For example, the United States unwavering dedication to keeping women out of combat was entirely based on the society’s established social norms. At the time, American women were allowed to enlist, though only in female-only auxiliary units that would never see combat. The most famous of these are the Navy’s Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES) and the Women’s Auxiliary Army Corp (WAAC). Since many other countries utilized females in combat during the war, including Great Britain, Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall decided to experiment in secret by training mixed-gender units in antiaircraft gun batteries during late 1942 and early 1943. Colonel Edward W. Timberlake, who commanded the combined units, was extremely impressed with the women’s performance, and even indicated that they took less time to train than the men. In addition, he claimed that the women “met the physical, intellectual, and psychological standards for this mission.”

This army official actually wanted to substitute more of his men for women, because the mixed-gender unit performed better in many situations. However, when his superior requested permission to conduct the experiment on a larger scale, he was denied, because it would have to be made public for this to occur. In fact, they decided instead to eradicate the experiment all together, since women were needed more urgently behind desks than in combat. Based on this decision, women remained auxiliary to the fighting men, serving their nation as typists instead of combat soldiers. They continued to play only a supporting role, despite being proven extremely capable of completing the frontline tasks. Sociocultural evolution towards gender equality was clearly absent in this facet of the sociocultural system.

Though there was clearly a change in the material infrastructure of the United States during World War II, Americans failed to change both the social structure of gender division and the ideological superstructure based in their beliefs, norms and values. As a result, this country won a “Victory over Fascism,” but would have to wait another two decades for even the semblance of a victory over sexism. Instead, women who had worked for victory found the factory doors closed to them, and found very few jobs that would accommodate the skills they had learned during the war. Thus they settled down to re-absorb help the servicemen into the country and make plans for the future.

Most Rosie the Riveters would become wives and mothers, sometimes working while their servicemen husbands attended college through money provided by the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1946, more commonly known as the GI Bill. This bill, which offered three years of college in exchange for two years of military service, allowed many men who would never have had the chance to attend college the opportunity for higher education. It also radically changed the emphasis these men placed on the education of their own families. As a result of this change, as their children grew older,
the need arose for additional funding to send them to the best possible colleges. As a result, the Rosie the Riveters of World War II were pushed back into the workforce in their later years because of the extra income achieving these educational goals required. This overall change in values, in the worth placed on education in American society, would translate into a change in the ideological superstructure necessary to prompt total socio-cultural evolution towards gender equality. Thus, the GI Bill resulting from World War II would help to prompt the overall change that the war itself failed to provide.
Endnotes

4 *Ibid*, 43
9 Sanderson, 44.
10 *Saturday Evening Post*, May 29, 1943, Cover.
11 Office of War Information, *Poster 52*.
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Kasey Greer is a member of the Indiana University Class of 2013. She is a Herman B. Wells Scholar and Hutton Honors College member. She is majoring in history and is a part of the Liberal Arts and Management Program.

Title painting by Hena Ahmed