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PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD CRIME AND INCARCERATION IN FINLAND

by

Ikponwosa Ekunwe, Ph.D.,¹ Richard S. Jones, Ph.D.,² and
Kaley Mullin³

ABSTRACT

The following paper provides insights into Finland's criminal justice system and discusses the policies that emphasize using prison for rehabilitation, not merely for punishment. These methods of prevention and rehabilitation, in conjunction with correctional and educational staff within and outside the prison walls, have contributed to consistently low recidivism rates in Finland.

This study discusses many ideological similarities between public opinions towards criminals and crime in Finland and the United States. Like Americans, Finns are intolerant of crime and violence, yet open to the idea of alternative forms of punishment, especially for non-violent and juvenile offenders. People in both countries tend to believe criminals are not born into a criminal life and that societal factors play a role in creating criminal behavior. This study sheds light on both the public support for ex-offenders' rehabilitation in Finland and the extent to which Americans support alternative forms of punishment. It also provides a narrative of the disconnect between public opinion and what public officials think public opinion is.

Introduction

The Finnish public attitude towards crime can be classified as civil in the sense that the society leans towards rehabilitating offenders. In most countries around the world, it is thought that crime control by imprisonment can keep society safe by increasing the certainty of punishment, increasing the

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severity of punishment, or both. But in Finland, the contrary is the case. Finnish penal policy is based on gentle justice, as indicated in the speech delivered by the president of the Republic of Finland at the opening of the annual session of parliament on April 2, 2000:

. . . We need to ask whether these people are receiving the help and treatment they need or if the problems are being neglected because society cannot agree on who will pay the bill. However, tackling the drug problem would be an effective means of getting young people to abandon a career of crime in its very early stage. It would also often be the fastest way of reducing the number of repeat offenders--not to speak of the other savings that could be achieved through treatment and rehabilitation⁴

The above extract explains the length Finland will go to in trying to rehabilitate malefactors in order to facilitate their return into society upon their release as reformed citizens. Although sentencing criminals to prison often seems to be the easiest solution, Finland has decided to rehabilitate convicts instead, regardless of the perceived difficulties that may ensue.

A cross-sectional analysis of American attitudes towards crime has also indicated that the historically punitive views of Americans are gradually shifting to a more progressive view. This stance should encourage American policymakers, as was the case of their counterparts in Finland, to support legislation that uses alternative forms of punishment to rehabilitate offenders and help them become functional members of society. However, the research conducted by Roberts and Hough (2002) concluded that the American public is being misread by policymakers who fail to recognize that public opinion is shifting and are continuing to push an out-dated agenda. This failure has presented a problem for both offenders and society. Historically, rehabilitation has been viewed as the main goal of correction in the United States just as it was in Finland. However, beginning in the mid-1970s, the main goal of corrections in the United States shifted away from rehabilitation to a more punitive attitude. At this time, both political parties in America began to oppose rehabilitation for different reasons. Liberals found rehabilitation to be too arbitrary in the amount of discretion it gave to judges and

⁴ At <www.valtioneuvosto.fi/tpk/puheet-1999/P000204.vpen.html>.

correctional officials to decide the fate of offenders. Conservatives found rehabilitation to be too lenient and too easy on offenders. They thought rehabilitation served to further victimize citizens rather than to provide restitution (Cullen et al. 2002). The shift from progressive to punitive was reflected by opinion polls which showed that, in 1968, 73 percent of the respondents said rehabilitation was the goal of prisons. That number declined to 44 percent in 1982, and to 33 percent in 1995 (Cullen et al. 2002).

Understanding the Finnish Psyche on Punishment

On any given day, there are about 2,800 prisoners in Finnish prisons. Out of these, there are 100 incarcerated young offenders between the ages of 18 and 21 and just eight young offenders aged 15 to 17 behind bars. The decline in the use of incarceration represents only half of Finland's experiment in criminal justice policy. The other transformation occurred inside the country's prisons. With the justice revolution launched in the late 1960s, the idea that tough prisons deterred crime was discarded. According to Esko Aaltonen, Director of Hameenlinna Prison Finland, "the main purpose of prisons in Finland is to try to solve the biggest problems in the lives of prisoners. The Finns try to take care of those problems to increase the chance that prisoners will live a life without crime after they are released."

A study of public attitudes towards crime in five major cities in Finland (Ekunwe 2007) showed that 80 percent of respondents believe that criminals should be rehabilitated and given a second chance. The survey was conducted in the areas experiencing high job-growth rates, thereby attracting migrations from the surrounding areas. These cities also have the greatest numbers of foreign immigrants. The four tables below illustrate the dynamics of respondents in terms of age, sex, educational background, and occupation. The ages of the respondents are from 25 to 70 years old, the response rate was 60.3 percent (N=211).

Table 1: Age

Respondent's Age		
N	Valid	211
	Missing	0
Mean		47
Median		49
The youngest respondent's age		25
The oldest respondent's age		70

In terms of gender, response was higher among women (58.8 %) as seen in the table below:

Table 2: Sex

Respondent's Sex				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	87	41.2	41.2	41.2
Female	124	58.8	58.8	100.0
Total	211	100.0	100.0	

The response among with those with a university degree was 31 percent, followed by those with comprehensive schooling, with 27.6 percent.

Table 3: Education

Respondent's Educational Background	
Primary school	10.0
Civic school	12.4
Comprehensive school	27.6
Matriculation examination	19.0
University degree	31.0
Total Percent	100.0
Total N	210.0

In terms of occupational background, the upper- and lower-level white-collar workers combined to make up the single largest group of respondents with 37.6 percent, followed by blue-collar workers with a response rate of 21 percent. These groups are also those that have acquired properties worth protecting. The survey indicated that 85 percent of respondents belonging to these groups are willing to pay extra taxes to the government if necessary to improve the existing correctional system. The white- and blue-collar workers combined made up the majority of the respondents, and these groups are often very influential to policymaking in Finland.

Table 4: Occupation

Respondent's Occupation	
Small entrepreneur	2.9
Entrepreneur	3.3
Upper-level white-collar worker	18.1
Lower-level white-collar worker	19.5
Blue-collar worker	21.0
Housewife	1.9
Student	8.6
Unemployed	8.1
Pensioner	16.7
Total Percent	100.0
Total N	210.0

The following comment from a respondent reflects the public attitude towards rehabilitation of criminals:

I would concentrate largely on crime therapy, probation, and aftercare. Handling these issues builds a bridge to the offender's sentimental life, therefore taking care of the others and taking responsibility help to prevent recidivism. . . .Long-term therapy and treatment should be applied in all prisons. Finding stimulating activities that could become new hobbies, education, vocation, or profession is also important.

Prisoners should be encouraged to take more responsibility for their lives, for example as for catering, cleaning, and developing free time activities.

Another respondent stipulates that:

Crime is a social problem. It requires resolving changes of attitudes and minds. People who are guilty of crimes often have had no basic education that would have improved their heart and mind... they live in a community which emphasizes money instead of human values, which is a good growth base to all crime.

This gentle attitude of giving second chances and favorable attitudes towards rehabilitation among Finns can be seen when analyzing the responses to the question "Should a malefactor be given second chance?" where the majority of respondents fully agree with such policy.

Table 5: Second Chance

Second chances to offenders			
	Male	Female	Total
Agree	42 (51.9%)	69 (61.1%)	111 (57.2%)
Disagree	39 (48.1%)	44 (38.9%)	83 (42.8%)
Total	81 (100.0%)	113 (100.0%)	194 (100.0%)

This understanding of the need to rehabilitate offenders can be attributed to the fact that the majority of the respondents believe that, although criminal behavior is learned, malefactors can be rehabilitated, and criminality is not a permanent trait. As shown below, 71.1 percent of the respondents disagreed with the statement “once a criminal, always a criminal.”

Table 6: Once a Criminal, Always a Criminal

Once a criminal, always a criminal			
	Male	Female	Total
Agree	26 (33.8%)	26 (25.2%)	52 (28.9%)
Disagree	51 (66.2%)	77 (74.8%)	128 (71.1%)
Total	77 (100.0%)	103 (100.0%)	180 (100.0%)

Though it is unlikely the concept of prison will ever disappear entirely, Finland’s policy of gentle justice has helped mitigate penal policy regarding rehabilitation. Finland’s open prison system has significantly contributed to the shaping of criminal behavior through providing various rehabilitation opportunities. The system focuses on helping the malefactors to cope in society after a prison sentence by organizing work, study, and various other activities for the prisoners. It also contributes to the breaking down of the prison cycle of violence by transforming the typical jailhouse culture of humiliation and violence into one of dignity and healing. Though the research on the program’s success is still in progress, the early findings are very encouraging. Repeat offenses among convicts in open institutions who participate in

the intensive drug therapy program have dropped drastically. Recidivism among graduates of educational programs has dropped as well, with the majority trying to seize the opportunity to further their education and become productive members of society.

As it is to Finns, the idea of rehabilitation is equally appealing to Americans at all levels of society. Multiple sources report that public support for rehabilitation is extensive and consistent throughout the United States, liberals and conservatives, rich and poor, women and men, young and old (Cullen et al. 2002). However, most Americans simply do not know the numerous alternatives to prison. Once they are informed of alternative forms of punishment, they demonstrate considerable flexibility and creativity in how they choose to punish offenders (Roberts & Hough 2002). This is seen in a group study where respondents were presented with twenty-three criminal cases and asked to choose a punishing option. When given only two options, prison or probation, the majority decided to incarcerate eighteen of the twenty-three. The group was then given an educational intervention, which provided them with information about a variety of alternative programs. They were then asked to re-sentence the offenders. After the intervention, the majority incarcerated only four of the twenty-three and found appropriate alternatives for the rest. This is consistent in other studies as well, where experimenters saw an increase in support for alternative forms of punishment once respondents were provided information about them (Doble 2002).

American policymakers have misunderstood the public's reasons for supporting alternative forms of sentencing, thinking the public supported rehabilitation because it is oftentimes less expensive than prisons. In reality, the public supported rehabilitation because it made sense to them when they recognized most criminals would re-enter society someday (Doble 2002). They saw prison as a means to harden criminals and further distance them from functioning society and saw rehabilitation as a solution to this problem. Studies in Washington have shown that policymakers overestimate the degree to which the public holds punitive views (Riley & Rose 1980). These studies show a disconnect between political rhetoric and public opinion that is reflected all over the United States. Similarly, Gottfredson and Taylor (1984) found the same situation in the state of Maryland, where "policymakers

in the state underestimated the amount of public support that existed for reform strategies” (Roberts & Hough 2002). Whitehead, Blankenship, and Wright (1999) found that legislators in Tennessee tended to overestimate the extent to which the public in that state supported the death penalty (Roberts & Hough 2002). For years criminologists and the media have criticized rehabilitation as ineffectual, unorthodox, and expensive. Politicians have continually won elections pushing “tough-on-crime” platforms, which makes it seem that Americans have a one-dimensional attitude regarding what works to stop criminals. This, as multiple studies have shown, is not true. Americans simultaneously want criminals to be punished as well as rehabilitated. Just as the Finns, the Americans see prisons as having multiple goals, all almost equally important.

In a study that asked respondents what they viewed as the main goal of corrections, fewer than 20 percent of Americans believed that rehabilitation was the main goal of prisons, but 55.3 percent thought that it should be (Cullen et al. 2002). For the majority of Americans who see crime to have multiple causes, it is reasonable to prefer rehabilitation to imprisonment because rehabilitation is multidimensional and addresses multiple criminal influences. In a study conducted by Doble Research Associates, a large majority of respondents came to the conclusion that there were four very important goals of the correctional system and that they were complementary, not competitive, and should all be accomplished simultaneously. More than 80 percent said it was a very important goal to “punish offenders,” “require offenders to pay back their victims or society,” and “discourage would-be criminals from breaking the law.” Sixty-eight percent felt that it was very important to “rehabilitate offenders so they will become productive members of society.” They felt that rehabilitation was “instrumentally valuable” in preventing offenders from reoffending (Doble 2002).

Furthermore, the majority of Americans feel that most criminals deserve treatment and have the potential to be rehabilitated. A 1996 national poll showed that most respondents felt that, with the right program, the majority of criminals who commit violent crimes could be rehabilitated (Cullen et al. 2002). It is clear there is even more public support for juvenile rehabilitation. Americans overwhelmingly felt that early intervention is a better option for youth offenders

than prison and that there is a need for programs intended for juveniles that are at risk for criminal activity. Respondents also showed strong support for programs that dealt with children with behavioral problems and truancy.

Historical Cycles

Most Western European nations consider large prison populations shameful and use incarceration as a last resort. What sets Finland apart is that the country has made an explicit decision to abandon the country's long tradition of a very tough stance on criminal justice in favor of the Western European approach. Never before or since has a country so consciously and completely shifted from one philosophy of justice to its opposite. Markku Salminen, the Director General of Finland's prisons, pointed out that it was a grand experiment in criminal justice, and the results have proven successful. He paraphrased the ideological shift by saying, "We don't have this idea that hard crimes deserve hard punishment."

During the two decades of reforms, a long series of policy changes was implemented, all of the changes united by one goal: to reduce imprisonment. This was done either by diverting offenders to other forms of punishment or by reducing the time served in prison. "It was a long-term and consistent policy," Lappi-Seppälä⁵ emphasizes. He states, "It was not just one or two law reforms. It was a coherent approach." The reforms began in earnest in the late 1960s and continued into the 1990s. In 1971, the laws allowing repeat criminals to be held indefinitely were changed to apply only to dangerous, violent offenders. The use of conditional sentences (in which offenders can avoid prison if they obey certain conditions) was greatly expanded. Community service was introduced. Prisoners could be considered for parole after serving just fourteen days; even those who violate parole and are returned to prison are eligible for parole again after one month. And for those who are not paroled, there is early release: first-time offenders are let out after serving just half

⁵ Professor Tapio Lappi-Seppälä is Director of the National Research Institute of Legal Policy in Finland (since 1995). He has given substantial contribution to the total reform of the Finnish Criminal Code as a counsellor of legislation at the Ministry of Justice during the 1980s and 1990s. His main topics of interest and research areas include penal policy and sentencing, the system of sanctions, and the theory of criminal law. His publications include books on sentencing and sanctions, as well as numerous writings in the fields of criminology, crime policy, and substantive criminal law.

their sentences, while other prisoners serve two-thirds. Mediation was also implemented, allowing willing victims and offenders to discuss whether the offender can somehow set things right. "It does not replace a prison sentence," says Lappi-Seppala, but "in minor crimes, you may escape prosecution or you may get a reduction in your sentence." There are now 5,000 cases of mediation per year, almost equal to the number of imprisonments.⁶

Another critical change in the late sixties in Finland was the creation of sentencing guidelines that set shorter terms. Similar guidelines are used in the United States, but many of those restrict judges' discretion--Finnish judges remain free to sentence outside the norm if they feel that is appropriate. These guidelines were also the product of extensive discussions among judges and other officials within the justice system, unlike American guidelines, which were, in most cases, simply imposed on judges by politicians. Despite the enormous changes in Finnish criminal justice, crime has never been a political issue. As Lappi-Seppala eloquently puts it, "None of the major parties took this on their agenda." Even Finnish victims of crime seem to be satisfied with that approach. Victims' organizations act as support groups and not as political lobbies. The long-term result has been a spectacular drop in the country's imprisonment rate. From 200 prisoners per 100,000 people in the 1950s, Finland now has 52 per 100,000, a rate slightly lower than those of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. Finland's tiny prison population is the result of vigorous efforts to settle criminal cases with anything but jail time. In 1996, there were 64,000 convictions. These resulted in 36,000 fines, 30,000 conditional sentences, and 3,000 community service orders. There were just 6,000 actual prison sentences--fewer than ten percent of the convictions. By contrast, in the same year, roughly one-third of criminal convictions in U.S. courts resulted in prison sentences.

Violence is Rare in Finnish Prisons

Officials in Finland credit the calmness of Finnish prisons in part to their policy of giving prisoners as much contact with other people, both inside and outside prisons, as possible. Frequent visits from family and friends are encouraged, including conjugal visits. There are also "home leaves." After serving six months, all prisoners can apply for

⁶ At <http://unlockingamerica.blogspot.com/2008/08/finland.html> in Dan Gardner's article "Why Finland Is Soft on Crime."

leave to return to their home towns for periods of up to six days every four months. Only if a prisoner is considered likely to re-offend or is misbehaving is he likely to be turned down. Home leaves have been controversial in Finland, particularly when violent offenders are allowed out, but the authorities insist the program is both successful and necessary. Ninety percent of home leaves occur without even minor difficulties. And by allowing prisoners the chance to live briefly in the real world, home leaves strengthen relationships and help prevent the atrophy of basic social skills.

American punishment policies are especially severe in respects other than imprisonment rates. Throughout Europe, under the influence of the European Human Rights Convention and Court, defendants' procedural protections have been expanding for the last twenty years, while in the United States, constitutional and other types of safeguards of criminal defendants are systematically being reduced. Among developed Western countries, the United States is the only country to retain and use the death penalty, and with increasing frequency. It has also been the only one to adopt the "three strikes" law and extensive mandatory minimum sentencing laws. Again, only in the United States are life-without-possibility-of-parole sentences commonplace; elsewhere most murderers sentenced to life terms are eligible for parole or executive-branch commutation, and are typically released after eight to twelve years. While in most countries fewer than five percent of sentences are a year or longer, in the United States the opposite is true. In 1994 the average sentence in the United States for felons sent to state prisons was nearly six years.

Sentencing and the System of Sanctions

The Finnish criminal justice system is based on the principles of legality, equality, and humaneness, which are imbedded in the current Constitution of Finland that came into force on March 1, 2000. The constitutional right of legality in criminal cases stresses that no one can be held criminally responsible for any acts committed that were not stipulated as punishable by law at the time the offense was committed. To quote Section 8: "*Nullum crimen sine lege, nulla poena sine lege poenali*," or "No crime can be committed, no punishment can be imposed without a previous penal law." The principle of equality demands that all cases in the same category be handled and sentenced in the same manner and that no

arbitrary discrimination affects the judgment (Section 6 of the Constitution). The third constitutional right, the right of humaneness, demands the exclusion of death, torture, or any other form of sentencing or treatment from the Finnish justice system that infringes on the offender's human dignity (Section 7 of the Constitution).

Another imperative principle the Finnish system of sanctions aims to improve in the uniformity of sentencing is predictability, which states that a knowledgeable person (not just legal representatives) should be able to predict within reasonable limits the type and length of a probable sentence for a specific offense. Additionally, the statutory sentencing principles⁷ urge the court to bear in mind the uniformity and the proportionality of the sentence to the dangerousness and harmfulness of the offense in question, together with the guilt of the particular suspect discernible in the offense. The extenuating factors are less rigid and allow for more discretion on the part of the prosecution and the judges whether regarding the reduction of the severity of the punishment or concerning the waiving of charges of the punishment entirely.⁸ As mentioned above, equity, pettiness, and procedural economy are the main grounds for the waiving of the prosecution; however, the drug-related offenses (section 7 of chapter 50 of the Criminal Code) provide an additional possibility to waive the charges on condition that the offender agrees to undergo treatment approved by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

If the charges are not dispensed with, the offender may be punished by summary penal order, fine, community service, or imprisonment. Public officials may be punished by dismissal or warning. The summary penal order ("petty fine") is a relatively new form of a sanction, first introduced into the Finnish legal system in 1983⁹ to be used for minor traffic offenses, littering, and breaking fishing regulations. They may not exceed 200 euros, and if unpaid, may not be converted into imprisonment. In 1921 Finland introduced the day-fines system,¹⁰ according to which a fine is passed in the form of

⁷ Chapter 6 of the Criminal Code, adopted 1976:466.

⁸ Chapter 3, Section 5 of the Criminal Code, as amended by the Acts of 23 March 1990 (1990:302) and 12 December 1996 (1996:1060).

⁹ Petty Fine Act 1983:66 and Chapter 2a, Sections 8-11 of the Criminal Code (as amended 550:1999).

¹⁰ See Chapter 2a, Sections 1-7 of the Criminal Code (as amended 1999:550).

day-fines ranging from one to one hundred and twenty day-fines. The amount of the fine is set in monetary currency depending on the offender's income and assets. If the fine remains unpaid, it may be converted into a prison sentence, with two unpaid day-fines equaling one day's imprisonment.

Community service has been a part of the Finnish system of sanctions since its passage by an Act of Parliament on December 14, 1990 (1990:1105). In this Act a trial period of three years (January 1, 1991-December 31, 1993) was introduced, during which this new form of sanction would be tested in twelve rural districts and six cities. On conclusion of the stated period, the use of community service was widened to the rest of the country for another three years through the Act of 25 March 1994 (1994:227). Eventually, the new sanction permanently entered the Finnish penal system in December 1996 (1996: 1055). Community service is detailed as a form of punishment used instead of unconditional imprisonment. An offender may be sentenced to at least twenty and at most 200 hours of regular, unpaid work carried out under supervision. Up to ten hours of the sentence may be covered through the offender's participation in programs aimed at reducing recidivism or in treatment to reduce alcohol abuse. This form of punishment can substitute sentences of up to eight months of imprisonment (Section 3); however, for the court to be able to rule in favor of community service, the offender has not only to consent to it, but it also must be clearly established that he or she would successfully complete the sentence. The community service order is enforced and supervised by the Probation and After-Care Administration.¹¹ If the offender does not comply with the rules of the community service, the Probation and After-Care Administration has the authority to issue a warning. If the transgression is serious, the public prosecutor must be notified, who may request the court to convert the community sentence into imprisonment.

The last and the most severe form of criminal penalty is imprisonment, which in Finland can range between fourteen days and twelve years. When an offender is sentenced to a joint punishment, the maximum sentence passed may be as

¹¹ See Acts 2001:135 and 138, which came into force on August 1, 2001. The Probation and After-Care Administration under the Department for Punishment Enforcement of the Ministry of Justice replaces the role of the Finnish Association for Probation and After-Care.

long as fifteen years. Particularly serious crimes, for instance murder, are punishable by life imprisonment.¹² Finland does not permit capital punishment. In 1972, the death penalty was banned in Finland in time of both peace and war, even though in practice it had not been imposed in times of peace for more than 150 years.¹³

Social Responsibility and Prison Facilities

Both open and closed prisons in Finland make target-oriented activity programs available for all inmates, striving to reduce intoxicant abuse and boosting the inmates' chances for a crime-free life outside the bars. The number of prisoners taking part daily in some program or other activity which aims to sustain their work capacity is on the rise, especially in open prisons. The bulk of the activities offered consist of various programs for intoxicant abusers. Other programs include courses in cognitive skills as well as programs enhancing life control skills, training in job-seeking skills, and rehabilitative camps. In addition, a wide variety of leisure-time activities is provided.

Open prisons are more relaxed (the inmates are granted certain privileges unavailable in closed institutions, like the right to use their own clothes at all times); inmates and guards address one another by first name. Prison superintendents go by non-military titles like "Manager" or "Governor," and prisoners are sometimes referred to as "clients" or, if they are youths, "pupils." Prisoners in open prisons are paid wages that are comparable to those earned by regular citizens, and from these they pay taxes and maintenance allowance for their upkeep as well as for their board and lodging. Prisoners are encouraged to receive visitors during weekends and, on special grounds, at other times as well. Most of the visits take place under supervision, but visits by close relatives and other persons can be granted without supervision. Prisoners may be granted permission to go on leave if it is considered probable that they will observe set conditions. Leave permission may be granted when half of the sentence has been served or on other, particularly important, grounds.

¹² Chapter 21, Section 1-3 the Criminal Code. (Such prisoners are usually freed by presidential amnesty.)

¹³ Act 1972:343 on the Abolition of Capital Punishment from the System of Sanctions.

The Finnish legal system is based on mandatory prosecutions which require public prosecutors to bring criminal charges against offenders. The prosecutor may waive the charges only if certain conditions, clearly defined in the penal code, are met. These conditions, redefined in 1990 reform, include:

- a) Pettiness specified as a petty offense punishable by a fine. In cases of underage offenders punishment would not exceed six months' imprisonment, if the offense is believed to have been committed due to lack of understanding or negligence, rather than out of deliberate disrespect for the law.
- b) Procedural economy. The charges may be waived if the offender is already being prosecuted for other, similar charges and, on account of concurrence, the collective sentence would remain largely unaffected by the charges in question.
- c) Equity. Charges may be waived due to the offenders' personal circumstances or if they have taken action to prevent or eliminate the consequences of their transgression by participating in the reconciliation program. Prosecution may also be waived due to certain consequences of the offense on the offender, or due to the insanity or senility of the offender. Defendants found guilty but criminally irresponsible due to manifest insanity are turned over to the National Board of Medicine, which judges the need for involuntary confinement in a mental institution. However, in cases of a simple need for medical treatment other than for manifest lunacy, the offender's mental health is not recognized as a sufficient reason to waive the prosecution. Should the prosecutor decide to waive the prosecution, the victim ought to be notified of the decision.

If the offender is aged 15 to 20 years old, the case may be reassigned to the municipal social welfare board, but this alternative is not used frequently. The other available alternative to court trial is victim-offender reconciliation, which has been gradually increasing in use since its introduction in 1983. First pioneered in Vantaa, it has slowly spread to the rest of the country. If the offender is ready to accept responsibility for his or her actions and the harm these

actions caused and is eager to make amends and in some way compensate for the damages the actions incurred, then the offender may participate in the mediation program. In 1996 the victim-offender reconciliation program acquired recognized legal status, and the outcome of the mediation may affect the prosecutor's or court's decision concerning the punishment, even to the extent of waiving it entirely.

Mediation is overseen by a voluntary mediator, and the local program is managed by the municipal social welfare office. Typically, the police suggest that the case could be determined through reconciliation, but consent of all parties involved is needed to proceed with mediation. Cases decided by such a procedure include thefts, petty thefts, assaults, and incidents of damage to property as well as many of the offenses committed by juvenile offenders. Approximately 5,000 cases every year are currently determined by means of the reconciliation program in Finland.¹⁴

Conclusion

In conclusion, penal attitudes in America are less dichotomous than policymakers seem to believe, and the issue needs to be revisited by public officials. Research has shown that the public wants a balanced approach that simultaneously punishes and rehabilitates criminals and that mainstream media and policymakers are not reflecting these views.

As mentioned previously, it may be helpful for Americans to look to other countries that have successfully implemented rehabilitation programs to see the positive effects they can have on all aspects of society. When comparing the United States to Finland, a country that has fully embraced a progressive penal system, it is helpful to start with raw statistics. For instance, Finland employs 170 police officers for every 100,000 citizens, while the United States employs 270 officers for every 100,000. In Finland, there are approximately 52 sentenced prisoners for every 100,000 citizens, while in the United States there are 509 prisoners per 100,000 residents. Of the 64,000 Finnish convictions, fewer than 10 percent were sentenced to prison; at the same time, of the 1,145,000 American convictions, 70 percent were sentenced to incarceration. These statistics show that Finland is implementing alternative methods of crime control to

¹⁴ See "Sanctions in Finland" by Tapio Lappi-Seppälä (draft, September 2004). Available online at <<http://www.optula.om.fi/uploads/cxiz1k.pdf>>.

effectively reduce the prison population while maintaining a safe society. The huge difference in rates between the United States and Finland is quite startling. It begs the question, If a gentler penal system works in an overwhelmingly positive way for Finland, could it work for the United States?

There are many ideological similarities between the two countries when it comes to public opinion. Finns, like Americans, are intolerant of crime and violence, yet open to the idea of alternative forms of punishment, especially for non-violent and juvenile offenders. People in both countries tend to believe that criminals are not born into a criminal life and that societal factors play a role in creating criminal behavior. The Finns also overwhelmingly believe that rehabilitation is a better option than prison alone because most criminals will at some point re-enter society and need treatment to change into law-abiding members of society. This gentle attitude of the Finns towards rehabilitation and living in harmony with ex-offenders without collective stigmatization is also reflected in an international survey¹⁵ which showed that 82 percent of Finns said they felt safe walking alone in their neighborhood after dark, the second highest national rating (after Sweden; both Canada and the United States scored just more than 70 percent, placing them near the bottom of the eleven countries surveyed).

A major difference in Finland's penal system in comparison with that of the United States is the lack of political involvement in matters of criminal policy. Crime has never been on any of the major parties' political agendas. This is a positive sign because it places more focus on the betterment of the country's citizens rather than on political agendas. And one could also rightly assert that American policymakers are doing a disservice to American citizens by misreading public opinion and disregarding criminal experts. As Robert and Stalans (1997) have explained, an important step in bridging the gap between the public and public officials would be to better inform the public about sentencing options and increase the communication between sentencers and the community. Policymakers must look to countries like Finland, whose citizens have conscientiously decided to shift from a philosophy where a tough-on-crime legislature reigned to one of progressive values. Finland is known to take scholars'

¹⁵ <<http://www.dangardner.ca/Archmar1802.html>>.

opinions into consideration when determining criminal policies. There is a history of appointing prominent criminal experts¹⁶ to policymaking positions. Because Finland relies on criminal experts, legislation and the enforcement of policies more accurately reflect the dominant public opinion and needs of all of society's parties.

Prison sentences should only be handed down as a last resort. In other words, only dangerous offenders who pose a threat to public safety should be put behind bars, and we should make sure that imprisonment ceases to be the standard punishment. We should also accentuate the recent tendency to believe that the harshest sentence is not necessarily the best.

Many countries that have a crime rate similar to Finland's have successfully limited the use of heavier sentences such as imprisonment, primarily by modifying the scale of prison terms. In other words, these countries have eliminated most minor terms, especially those under six months, but also, by extension, terms of less than two years. They have also reduced the imposition of very long sentences (more than 10 to 15 years). On the whole, they have therefore narrowed the scale of sentences, often by replacing light prison terms with suspended sentences, and by lowering the implicit scale of reference for all prison terms.

This entire approach aimed at reducing the use of the penal system to deal with crime is based on a profound conviction that the best way to protect society is to socially rehabilitate offenders. Moreover, the job of correctional services is to ensure that offenders receive the supervision and assistance necessary to facilitate their gradual return to the community as soon as possible, depending on their individual behavior. Successful social rehabilitation depends on the offender's efforts, appropriate support from correctional services, and the active contribution of various community resources.

It is all too often implied by political actors that society is demanding more repressive measures and stiffer penalties. In short, pressure from so-called public opinion is often used as an excuse for trying to justify a more conservative approach

¹⁶ Several Finnish Ministers of Justice during the 1970s and 1980s have had direct contact with research work; indeed, one of them, Inkeri Anttila, was a professor of criminal law and the director of the National Research Institute of Legal Policy at the time of her appointment as Minister.

to the administration of justice. In Finland as well as in the United States, surveys reveal that people mainly want to see crime curbed, rather than just to have offenders punished.

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CELL PHONE USE WHILE DRIVING: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HBCU STUDENTS?

by

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ABSTRACT

There are limited literatures that have investigated the impact of cell phone use on accidents among college students and even fewer among minority students attending historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). This study investigated the attitudes and behaviors of cell phone use while driving among African American, freshman college students enrolled at a historically black institution in the South. Freshman students were chosen since the risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16- to 19-year-olds than among any other age group (most enrolled freshman are 17 to 19 years of age). A convenient sample (i.e., the participants are selected, in part or in whole, at the convenience of the researcher) was selected from African American college students who hold a driver's license and were classified as freshman ($n = 331$). The inclusion criteria for participating in this research were: 1) having a valid driver's license; 2) being a first-year undergraduate student; and 3) being an African American. Collapsing across gender, 78.2 percent ($n = 259$) of the respondents reported talking on a cell phone while driving, 71.6 percent ($n = 237$) indicated that they text while driving, 72.8 percent ($n = 241$) eat, 12.7 percent ($n = 42$) operate a PDA Palm Pilot or Handspring, and 52.9 percent ($n = 174$) use a hands-free device while talking on the cell phone when driving. A significant gender effect was observed among selected cell phone use practices and outcomes. These findings suggest that African American freshman students who use cell phones while driving are at risk for accidents, and that cell phone use while driving may pose an additional threat to the health and well-being of the general community. It should be noted that this study is not attempting to suggest that African American

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college students are more reckless than other individuals in the study's age group; therefore, the findings from this study should not, and cannot, be generalized to the larger African American population, or to the larger college student population. However, the results do suggest that African American college students are engaging in behaviors that increase their susceptibility to vehicular accidents. There is a need for a random survey to extend the findings of this research.

Introduction

Cell phones are now widespread, with more than 255 million wireless subscribers in the United States, comprising 84 percent of the population (CTIA 2008). In 2007, cell phone users spent 2.1 trillion minutes talking on cell phones and transmitted 363 billion SMS ("text messages") over the course of the year (CTIA 2008). This technology has been proven to be particularly useful for people on the move, since the majority of cell phone owners report they use the technology while driving (CTIA 2008). Recent estimates suggest that 85 percent of cell phone owners use their phone while driving and that 60 percent of cell phone owner's usage occurs while driving (Goodman, Bents, Wierwille, & Benel 1999).

Despite its popularity, cell phone use while driving is hazardous; it quadruples the risk of a collision and multiplies the risk of a fatality ninefold (CTIA 2008). Studies using driving simulators have found that using a cell phone while driving significantly impairs a driver's reaction time (Horrey & Wickens 2006) and increases crash risk (Strayer, Drews, & Crouch 2003) to drivers who do not use cell phones. Drivers talking on cell phones miss twice as many traffic signals, are more likely to swerve into the next lane (46%), tailgate (23%), have close calls (18%), and run red lights (10%) (Wilson, Fang, & Cooper 2003). A driver's use of a cell phone up to ten minutes before a crash is associated with a fourfold increased likelihood of crashing, and risk is raised irrespective of whether a hands-free device is used (McEvoy et al. 2005). Impairment has been found to be at about the same level as someone driving with a 0.08 blood alcohol level (Redelmeier & Tibshirani 1997). Text messaging while driving is a relatively new phenomenon and has been studied much less extensively than cell phone use while driving. However, preliminary results reported that this behavior is extremely dangerous. For example, a study conducted in which college students text

messaging while operating a driving simulator reportedly finds that text messaging increases crash risk by a multiple of eight (Richtel 2009).

Rates of self-reported texting and emailing while driving are highest among teenage drivers, and rates of cell phone use are highest among young adults (Times 2009). With in-vehicle use of cell phones rapidly increasing, the safety of young drivers may be disproportionately threatened. Young people (ages 15 to 24) represent only 14 percent of the U.S. population; however, they account for 30 percent (19 billion) of the total costs of motor vehicle injuries among males and 28 percent (7 billion) of the total costs of motor vehicle injuries among females (AAA 2008; CDC 2009). A nation's youth is one of its most important assets; therefore, preventing or reducing premature deaths from motor vehicle crashes is a national priority.

There are limited literatures that have investigated the impact of cell phone use on accidents among college students and even fewer among minority students attending historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs). The current study investigated the attitudes and behaviors of cell phone use *while driving* among African American, freshman college students enrolled at a historically black institution in the South. Freshman students were chosen since the risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16- to 19-year-olds than among any other age group (Finkelstein, Corso, & Miller 2006). Most enrolled freshman are 17 to 19 years of age and neatly fit into this at-risk group.

Method

Description of Sample

A convenient sample (i.e., the participants are selected, in part or in whole, at the convenience of the researcher) was selected from African American college students who hold a driver's license and were classified as freshmen ($n = 331$). Their gender distribution included 195 females (58.9%), and 136 males (41.1%). Age distribution included 4.8 percent ($n = 16$) who were less than 18 years old, 92.1 percent ($n = 305$) who were 18 to 24 years old, 2.4 percent ($n = 8$) who were 25 to 39 years old, and 0.6 percent ($n = 2$) who were 40 to 54 years old. For comparison purposes, it should be noted the age range of the comparison group referenced in the literature review section was 16 to 19 years. Primary vehicles driven included a passenger car, 75.5 percent ($n = 250$), a pick-up truck, 4.2 percent ($n = 14$), a sport utility vehicle, 14.8 percent ($n = 49$), a van or minivan, 0.6 percent ($n = 2$), and other, 4.8 percent ($n = 16$).

Data Collection Instrument

The primary data collection instrument used in this project was adapted from researchers at the UNC Highway Safety Research Center (IIHS 2006). The adapted instrument consisted of fifty questions: six demographic items (e.g., classification, age, gender, race, valid driver's license, primary vehicle driven); five general distraction items (e.g., do you talk or text on a cell phone while driving, operate a GPS or PDA while driving, or eat while driving); twenty-two items on cell phone usage; eleven items for rating distractions, and six opinion items.

Procedure

Due to limited research into cell phone use and driving habits of young college-age students, this phase of the research project targeted first-year undergraduate students enrolled in the university's "First Year Experience" program. This program is designed to increase freshman-to-sophomore retention rates by providing an exceptional educational experience common to all freshmen, including academic, social, leadership, and service opportunities. Typically between 800 and 1000 students participate in this program each year. The inclusion criteria for participating in this phase were: 1) having a valid driver's license; 2) being a first-year undergraduate student; and 3) being an African American.

The survey instrument was administered during regular classroom meeting times, and included the use of a Scantron answer sheet (form #19641). The personnel used to administer these on-campus surveys consisted of six JSU MURC employees. Incentives were not provided to students.

Results

The sample was composed of African American freshmen enrolled at a historically black institution; of these, 59 percent were female (n=198); 41 percent were male (n = 139), 4.8 percent were less than 18 years old, 92.1 percent were 18 to 24 years old, and the largest percentage drove passenger cars (75.5%) and utility vehicles (14.8%). Table 1 shows their attitudes toward various distractions while driving. These distractions ranged from "finding a location on a map" to "texting on a cell phone." Finding a location using a road map emerged as the most distracting activity while driving. It was followed by "texting on a cell phone," "dialing a number on a cell phone," and "talking on a cell phone without a hands-free device." "Talking on a cell phone with a hands-free device"

was perceived as the least distracting of all activity. A significant gender effect was observed for “finding a location using a road map,” “dialing a number on a cell phone,” and “texting on a cell phone,” with female respondents perceiving a higher level of distraction.

Of the various things people do while driving (e.g., talking or texting on a cell phone, eating, operating a GPS, PDA Palm Pilot, or PDA Handspring), a significantly higher percentage of male African American students indicated that they operate a GPS device, 24.3 percent versus 15.5 percent, $\chi^2(1, n = 330) = 4.01, p < .04$. A significant gender difference failed to emerge for other activities. Collapsing across gender, 78.2 percent ($n = 259$) of the respondents reported talking on a cell phone while driving, 71.6 percent ($n = 237$) indicated that they text while driving, 72.8 percent ($n = 241$) eat, 12.7 percent ($n = 42$) operate a PDA Palm Pilot or Handspring, and 52.9 percent ($n = 174$) use a hands-free device while talking on the cell phone when driving. Regarding use of a hands-free device, 51.4 percent ($n = 170$) indicated that a hands-free device makes it safer for them to talk on their phone while driving. This finding is corroborated by 48.0 percent ($n = 158$) of the respondents rating talking on a cell phone with a hands-free device as not at all distracting.

A significantly higher percentage of female African American freshman students make personal calls, 62.7 percent versus 52.9 percent, $\chi^2(1, n = 330) = 10.23, p < .03$, and receive calls on their cell phone while driving, 20.4 percent versus 10.9 percent, $\chi^2(1, n = 330) = 7.62, p < .05$. Also, a significantly higher percentage of African American female freshman students rate dialing a number on a cell phone, finding a location on a map, and texting as very distracting to extremely distracting, 20.8 percent versus 8.8 percent, $\chi^2(1, n = 330) = 13.17, p < .01$; 34.4 percent versus 17.9 percent, $\chi^2(1, n = 330) = 10.40, p < .03$; 29.8 percent versus 14.3 percent, $\chi^2(1, n = 330) = 12.64, p < .01$, respectively. Thus, gender differences while driving appear for operating a GPS device, making personal calls, and receiving calls, and gender differences

Table 1: Attitudes Toward Distractions While Driving

Distractions	<i>n</i>	%
Finding a location using a road map		
Not at all distracting	40	12.2
Some distracting	44	13.4
Distracting	72	22.0
Very distracting	80	24.4
Extremely distracting	92	28.0
Changing the station on the radio		
Not at all distracting	127	38.8
Some distracting	89	27.2
Distracting	62	19.0
Very distracting	25	7.6
Extremely distracting	24	7.3
Talking with passengers		
Not at all distracting	150	45.6
Some distracting	98	29.8
Distracting	43	13.1
Very distracting	21	6.4
Extremely distracting	17	5.2
Eating a sandwich		
Not at all distracting	76	23.2
Some distracting	76	23.2
Distracting	98	29.9
Very distracting	39	11.9
Extremely distracting	39	11.9
Drinking a cup of coffee		
Not at all distracting	98	30.0
Some distracting	74	22.6
Distracting	73	22.3
Very distracting	32	9.8
Extremely distracting	50	15.3
Dialing a number on a cell phone		
Not at all distracting	60	18.3
Some distracting	65	19.8
Distracting	106	32.3
Very distracting	41	12.5
	56	17.1
Talking on a cell phone without a hands-free device		
Not at all distracting	65	19.8
Some distracting	67	20.4
Distracting	94	28.6
Very distracting	42	12.8
Extremely distracting	61	18.5
Talking on a cell phone with a hands-free device		
Not at all distracting	158	48.0
Some distracting	97	29.5
Distracting	54	16.4
Very distracting	8	2.4
Extremely distracting	12	3.6
Texting on a cell phone		
Not at all distracting	59	17.9
Some distracting	56	17.0
Distracting	71	21.6
Very distracting	51	15.5
Extremely distracting	92	28.0
Receiving an incoming call on a cell phone		
Not at all distracting	109	33.1
Some distracting	92	28.0
Distracting	73	22.2
Very distracting	26	7.9
Extremely distracting	29	8.8

appear when rating dialing a number on a cell phone, finding a location on a map, and texting as very distracting to extremely distracting.

Accidents and Near-Accidents

When asked, “Have you ever had to make a sudden evasive maneuver to avoid being in an accident while you were driving and talking on your cell phone?” and “Have you ever had to make a sudden evasive maneuver to avoid being in an accident while you were driving and texting on your cell phone?” 23.2 percent (*n* = 74) and 34.7 percent (*n* = 112) responded *yes*, respectively. When asked “Have you ever gotten into a car accident while you were driving and texting on your cell phone?” 9.0 percent (*n* = 29) responded *yes*.

When the above questions are combined, 66.9 percent (*n* = 215) of the respondents reported an accident or a near-accident while talking or texting on a cell phone while driving. Deo and Torabi reported 21 percent for accident or near-accident among a convenient sample of college students (UNC 2010). Thus, the results suggest that driving while texting on the cell phone poses a higher risk for accidents than other behaviors referenced in the survey.

Table 2: Stepwise Logistic Regression

	<i>B</i>	S.E.	Wald Test (z-ratio)	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	Odds Ratio	95% Confidence Interval for Odds Ratio	
							Upper	Lower
Step 1								
V23	.51	.19	7.21	1	.007	1.65	2.40	1.15
Constant	1.14	.46	6.05	1	.01	3.12		
Step 2								
V19	-.53	.17	9.38	1	.002	.59	.83	.42
V23	.71	.20	12.07	1	.001	2.03	3.02	1.36
Constant	1.83	.52	12.38	1	.0001	6.29		
Legend								
V19 – How much total time do you spend during a typical day talking on your cell phone while driving?								
V23 – Which of the following categories best describe how many different incoming phone calls you typically answer while driving?								

A forward stepwise logistic regression was used to construct a model for predicting an accident while driving and talking on a cell phone. Table 2 shows the result of this analysis.

Nine variables were entered into the analysis, but only two variables emerged as significant predictors: V19: How much

total time do you spend during a typical day talking on your cell phone while driving? $z = 9.38, p < .002$; and V23: Which of the following categories best describes how many different incoming phone calls you typically answer while driving? $z = 12.07, p < .001$. The odds ratios were .59 and 2.03, respectively. Thus, V19 and V23 are significant predictors of having an accident while driving and talking on a cell phone among the targeted sample.

Although significant gender differences did not emerge for accident and near-accident, a higher percentage of females reported making a sudden evasive maneuver to avoid being in an accident while driving and talking on their cell phones, 24.3 percent versus 23.2 percent of males; having to make a sudden evasive maneuver to avoid being in an accident while driving and texting on their cell phones was reported by 35.3 percent of females versus 34.7 percent of males. However, a slightly higher percentage of male students reported having gotten into an accident while driving and texting on their cell phones, 11.3 percent versus 6.8 percent.

Discussion

Based upon the sampled population, current findings suggest that using cell phones while driving poses a higher level of risk for accidents than not using cell phones while driving. In our sample, approximately three-fourths of the respondents talk on the cell phone and text while driving, and more than 50 percent use a hands-free device while talking on the cell phone when driving, and these also expressed the conviction that hands-free devices make it safer to talk on a cell phone. However, research suggests that this belief is unsubstantiated, but promotes a false sense of safety, since hands-free devices have not been proven to reduce the risk of accidents (McEvoy et al. 2005).

In a study by Deo and Torabi (2004), the association between in-vehicle cell-phone use and accidents or near-accidents among 1,291 conveniently recruited college students in four states was examined (Deo & Torabi 2004). Findings revealed that texting and emailing while driving were highest among teenage drivers and overall rates of cell phone use was highest among young adults (Deo & Torabi 2004). For the current sample, 78 percent of the respondents reported talking on a cell phone while driving, and 72 percent indicated that they text or eat while driving; thus, talking or texting on a cell phone or eating while driving is very high for this group.

Current research tells us that text messaging increases crash risk by a multiple of eight times (Byrnes, Miller, & Schafer 2005). These findings suggest that college students' cell phone use while driving has the potential to pose a threat to public safety.

Given that this study was drawn from a convenience sample and in the absence of cell phone usage data that compares driving patterns of African American youth who do not attend college or data from other students of other ethnic backgrounds, these findings cannot be generalized. However, this study does document behavioral risks, such as texting and talking on the phone while driving, which increase susceptibility for vehicular accidents. Additional research is needed to extend the findings.

Unlike African American college students' risky sexual behavior, where there is considerably more research and data that identify the economic, cultural, educational, and social factors that serve as confirmed predictors of behavior, less is known about predictors of African American college students' cell phone use while driving. Very few studies have investigated cell phone use among college students. College students' high rate of use of cell phones while driving and the threat that this use poses to college students and fellow drivers suggest that culturally and racially sensitive research and interventions are desperately needed to better understand this phenomenon. Many states are passing anti-cell phone use legislation, but the impact of these laws on college students' cell phone use behavior is still unclear.

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A BLOW-UP DOLL ON CAMPUS INVOKING MARINA ABRAMOVIĆ'S *RHYTHM 0* TO INVESTIGATE FEMALE OBJECTIFICATION

by

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ABSTRACT

Inspired by a performance piece from 1974, the author undertook to replicate the performance with an inflatable doll rather than the living body which had been the object of the original piece. Her purpose was to heighten the awareness of the college community of the way the female body is objectified and fragmented in the culture of the United States. She set up the piece at a central location on the campus of a mid-sized state university. This paper reports her findings through the lens of bodily fragmentation theory and suggests possible implications for future work in feminism.

Introduction

Most feminist theorists would agree that theory works best when put into practice. Unfortunately, students' responses to the word "feminism" are often so defensive that Dale M. Bauer is still justified, two decades later, in saying that feminism is "the other 'F' word." In other words, speaking about feminism or feminist theory in the classroom remains an



Figure 1. The blow-up doll on campus at 10:30

enormous challenge. Therefore, to maintain their ongoing work, feminist college instructors must devise new ways of approaching their subject material, methods which challenge students in academic and non-academic settings and which encourage students' understanding of feminist concerns in concrete and sensate ways. To explore this mode of teaching, I created a project on the campus of a mid-sized state university.

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This project shocked the students out of their daily routine and forced them into a reconsideration of female objectification.

As students and faculty made their way to class one ordinary spring morning, they were suddenly surprised to see what looked like a plastic woman seated on a bench, next to a table full of tools and creative utensils. A sign bore the words, “I am the object.” She had bright blond hair and was dressed in the clothes of a young college woman. Yet she was in fact a doll—a plastic, inflatable woman. The sign next to her invited the campus to act upon the doll with the variety of implements on the table. After set-up early in the morning, I left the scene, so that passersby would not know who was responsible for the installation. Instead, they would be confronted with this scenario and would be encouraged to interpret it for themselves. I monitored the scene from a distance, occasionally passing by to observe reactions. Indeed, resounding confusion and laughter early in the day made way for some fascinating discussion, as the public began to analyze and interpret this feminized object.

The interactive piece, entitled *Judy* (after the name given in the doll’s packaging), was intended to show the dynamics of societal objectification²² and fragmentation²³ of the female body and the ways in which culture inscribes values and expectations on the female form. Or, in fewer words, it was intended to critique woman’s social role as a “doll”—a thing to be manipulated, looked at, and controlled. The theoretical issue that is undertaken in this public display is particularly problematic in terms of its absence from discourse. Many theorists have discussed the way the body is viewed and valued culturally, but few have satisfactorily discussed the real-life repercussions of the objectified and fragmented female. And regardless, theory is not the most viable means for conveying such issues to the public or the classroom. Therefore, this project undertakes the task of bringing the

²² For the purposes of this essay, *objectification* refers to the removal of subjectivity, the exploitative view that someone exists without a sense of self or identity, and rather, that that person holds (or should hold) a sense of belonging as an object to another person, group, or culture.

²³ *Fragmentation* refers to the ways in which a body or identity is dismantled or disassembled. It also involves the focus on specific body parts without reference to the whole of the body.

objectified and socially constructed female body to an unsuspecting campus in a concrete, interactive, public display.

Marina Abramović's *Rhythm 0*

The impetus for *Judy* comes from a striking performance piece by Marina Abramović entitled *Rhythm 0*, which brilliantly—and horrifyingly—exemplifies the physical fragmentation of the “passive” female body. Abramović



Figure 2. *Rhythm 0*, 1974

claimed that *Rhythm 0* was an experiment in human passivity. But more interestingly, this 1974 Naples,

makes some important discoveries about the way the female body is treated when presented as an object. In *Rhythm 0*, Abramović literally objectified herself, allowing her passive body to be utilized by spectators as they wished. Silently stating in a text next to her, “I am the object,” Abramović allowed spectators to use any of seventy-two items on her body in any way they chose over a period of six hours. Although she willingly placed herself in the position of an object, she certainly could not foresee the actions that would be taken upon her body. “By the end of the performance,” Tracey Warr observes, “all her clothes had been sliced off her body with razor blades, she had been cut, painted, cleaned, decorated, crowned with thorns and had had the loaded gun pressed against her head” (125). In several photographs, Abramović appears to be in tears, though she herself did not halt the performance and took full responsibility for everything that was done to her body. Abramović’s performance resulted in a painful and frightening display of the repercussions of human objectification on a passive female body.

Although Abramović claims to have been examining the dynamics of passive aggression, there is much more to her findings. What Abramović has discovered is a gendered

problem with clear connections to society's view of women. It seems that the spectators (who, judging by the photographs, were mostly male) were dissatisfied with the prospect of a complete, whole female body when they were capable of dismantling her. The fact that her clothes were removed and her skin sliced, not to mention the sexual acts that were performed upon her, shows the literal, physical fragmentation of the female body



Figure 3. Marina Abramović with loaded gun

that occurs when a woman is viewed as an object rather than a subject. The other actions, most notably the loaded gun incident, show the extreme of power that can be asserted over an objectified woman when fear of consequence is mitigated. (We recall that Abramović claimed responsibility.) Especially disconcerting is that these actions were performed in public, in front of many viewers, reminding us of what many women must endure behind closed doors. Thus, to present a woman as an object is to subject her to this range of dominating, devastating, and often dangerous actions.

Fragmentation in Theory

Unfortunately, theoretical approaches do not adequately address the fragmentation Abramović experienced in *Rhythm 0*. In fact, the theory surrounding the issue of objectification is itself fragmentary. As Susan Bordo points out, “We desperately need an effective political discourse about the female body, a discourse adequate to an analysis of the insidious, and often paradoxical, pathways of modern social control” (167). Although no theory fully discusses the repercussions of the gendered fragmentation pursued in *Judy*, the combination of theories does provide an intriguing network of bodily fragmentation theory. Jacques Lacan provides one of the most famous, and the first, description of the “fragmented body” (which he calls the *corps morcele*). For Lacan, the earliest experience of the body is that of the infant, who sees himself (the masculine pronoun is used purposely here) as a collection of parts. Lacan’s “mirror stage” marks the dramatic shift in perception “from a fragmented image of the body to . . . an ‘orthopedic’ form of its totality” (6). The fragmented body, according to Lacan, manifests itself in dreams as images

of “disconnected limbs or of organs exoscopically represented” (6). But ultimately, Lacan does not deal with the reasons or repercussions of a *female* fragmented body. For example, in “The Mirror Stage,” Lacan speaks of the “little man” becoming whole (4). Further, in “The Signification of the Phallus,” Lacan describes the Freudian term *Spaltung*, or splitting, of the body: “In any case, man cannot aim at being whole” while “he” is marked as “a subject to the signifier”; and in this case, “the phallus is the privileged signifier” (277). Thus, the fragmented body as it relates to the ongoing “splitting” of the female is ultimately absent from this theory.

Though it is feminist theory that best explains the objectification of the female body, a few other theorists should be mentioned for their early and important discussions of bodily fragmentation. Louis Althusser, for example, theorizes that the subject becomes whole during “interpellation,” when the body is hailed or called by name (152). On the other hand, Sigmund Freud argues that a fear of not being whole results from the horror of castration. The implication here is that the female body is always, already incomplete due to its lack of the male genitalia. Along a different line of thought, Michel Foucault’s view involves social and cultural factors that transcend gender. Foucault sees the body as a site of cultural inscription, stating that “the body is the inscribed surface of events” (148). This perspective is especially important in *Judy*, as the plastic doll becomes a literal site for cultural inscription by the public. Yet, as this brief overview shows, the most renowned male theoretical perspectives often leave out the gendered nuances of female bodily fragmentation.

However, one theorist does provide an intriguing discussion of the “ideal” female form arising from the fragmentation of male and female bodies: Lennard J. Davis has brought to attention the “classical nude and the fragmented torso” of Venus de Milo—who has no arms, a severed foot, and severe scarring, including a “particularly large [scar] between her shoulder blades, one that covers her shoulder, and one covering the tip of her breast where her left nipple was torn out”—yet is considered “one of the most beautiful female figures in the world” (126). Davis explains the *Spaltung* (splitting) that culture enforces for both male and female bodies:

Culture tends to split bodies into good and bad parts. Some cultural norms are considered good and others bad. Everyone

is familiar with the ‘bad’ body: too short or tall, too fat or thin, not masculine or feminine enough, not enough or too much hair on the head or other parts of the body, penis or breasts too small or (excepting the penis) too big. Furthermore, each individual assigns good and bad labels to body parts—good: hair, face, lips, hands; bad: sexual organs, excretory organs, underarms. (129)

Though this *Spaltung* inherently fragments the body, Davis argues that it is necessary in order to “remind the hallucinated whole being that its wholeness is in fact a hallucination. . . . *Spaltung* creates the absolute categories of abled and disabled, with concomitant defenses against the repressed fragmented body” (130). This theory seconds Foucault’s important point that culture plays a primary role in inscribing the body, but Davis extends this argument by describing the ways in which expectations are assigned to each of its specific, fragmented parts.

In order to discuss the gendered specificity of female objectification and fragmentation, one must ultimately turn to feminist theorists. One of the most comprehensive studies of the female body comes from Bordo’s celebrated *Unbearable Weight*. If the body is indeed, as Bordo argues, a “metaphor for culture” (165), then some interesting ideas about spectacle and commodification of the body arise. When discussing pop-star Madonna and, more generally, the pop-culture female body, Bordo notes that “the female body is offered to the viewer purely as a spectacle, an object of sight, a visual commodity to be consumed” (273). Bordo argues that the body is both a “*text* of culture” and a “direct locus of social control” (165). Therefore, similar to Foucault’s argument, Bordo points out that the body is inscribed with the values of culture. Yet Bordo’s discussion suggests the problem of the specifically female body in such sites of mass cultural consumption as television. Visual media, as Bordo well knows, is a primary means through which the female body is consumed, objectified, and fragmented. Similarly, Hélène Cixous poignantly describes her view of the female body, which she believes must be won back from the male. Regarding woman’s body Cixous argues, “If she is a whole, it’s a whole composed of parts that are wholes, not simple partial objects but a moving, limitlessly changing ensemble” (878). Her belief that women must write in order to *free* their bodies complicates Foucault’s and Bordo’s beliefs that the

body is repressed by *being* written upon by culture. Another important view, that of Donna Haraway, argues that not only is the female body fragmented, but the very concepts of womanhood and feminism are themselves fragmentary: “Painful fragmentation among feminists (not to mention among women) along every possible fault line has made the concept of *woman* elusive” (197). Women lack a stable identity, in other words, due to the continued societal fragmentation of woman.

In her feminist, postmodernist call for a “nomadic” envisioning of subjectivity, Rosi Braidotti points out that “fragmentation and disqualification from the position of subject are part of the historical heritage of women” and hence proposes “a sexual-specific reading of the totality of the bodily self” (55). In a section focusing on what she calls “organs without bodies” (a reversal of Gilles Deleuze’s and Felix Guattari’s concept of “bodies without organs,” which implies an unsexed being), Braidotti points out that the female body has become a “factory of detachable pieces” (61), meaning it is dismembered by the male gaze (66). According to Braidotti, “The whole body becomes a visual surface of changeable parts, offered as exchange objects”; therefore, although “there is always something more to the experience than the image can show,” Braidotti notes, “the triumph of the image is precisely what marks contemporary popular and scientific cultures alike” (68). Ultimately, as corporeal feminist Elizabeth Grosz argues, “bodies are not ahistorical, precultural, or natural objects in any simple way; they are not only inscribed, marked, engraved, by social pressures external to them but are the products, the direct effects, of the very social constitution of nature itself” (x). In other words, woman, denied historically of subjectivity, is by default an object. Consequently, her body becomes a collection of parts which are imbued with meaning by the very culture that assigns this objectivity.

Putting Theory into Practice: *Judy*

Marina Abramović’s haunting performance piece, in addition to the theory surrounding female fragmentation, has encouraged me to pursue further this concept of female objectivity. In order to examine my conception of female fragmentation, I have enacted a project similar to Abramović’s, engaging the university community in the same way Abramović engaged her spectators. In order to literalize and publicize the problem, something that resembles the

female body was necessary; therefore, an inflatable female doll substituted for a real female body. The doll was both an object itself and was presented with Abramović's words, "I am the object." It was placed on a centrally located campus bench, next to a table covered with numerous objects. A sign invited pedestrians: "There are items on the table that can be used on me as desired." And for six hours, like Abramović, the doll became the site of intriguing activity, cultural inscription, and fascinating discourse.

What began as a theoretical problem became the very essence of the project: Of course, there was no ethical, permissible, or rational way to use a real woman in such a project; a non-sentient object was required. Thus, my project does not corroborate, in the way Abramović's piece does, what would happen to a real female body in such a situation. In this way, *Judy* ultimately became very different from Abramović's *Rhythm 0*. However, the substitution of the doll has ultimately made the project even more worthwhile on a university campus, for not only did this substitution make for a campus-friendly project, but it also enabled the specific point that the figure of a woman is often viewed by contemporary society as a doll. By literalizing the "doll" metaphor, the project emphasizes that women are relegated to the position of an object in society in the same way this doll took an objectified position on campus. Especially important here is the fact that even pedestrians who passed the project *without* stopping to investigate or participate became aware of the female form as a literal object.

Using an object that was clearly feminized (in form, features, and dress) created some interesting nuances that have been addressed by several of the aforementioned theorists. For example, Haraway argues that "to be feminized means to be made extremely vulnerable; able to be disassembled, reassembled, exploited . . . reducible to sex" (197). This point perfectly captures the essence of using a feminized object. The doll was capable of being dismantled, recreated, and changed in innumerable ways, all with the participants' awareness of the doll's feminine qualities. Likewise, Klaus Theweleit notes, "Femininity in particular has retained a special malleability under patriarchy . . . [women] have already remained objects and raw materials, pieces of nature awaiting socialization" (294). Theweleit's observation points out that the female is always already an object under patriarchal power, a point

emphasized by the plastic doll. Most interesting is Davis's argument about the fragmentation of female statues. He finds that even though "male statues equally are truncated, the incompleteness of the female statues suggests another obvious point that has been repressed for so long—violence." Davis believes that an "act of violence against a female statue is constitutively different from that against a male statue." Like the inflatable doll, as Davis argues, "a statue is not a person. But as representations of women . . . statues carry a powerful cultural signification" (136). Davis points out that the "reaction to such statues [or a doll, in this case] tells much about the way in which we consider the body both as a whole and as incomplete" (136). Davis's observations about the female statue carry interesting connections to the actions performed on the inflatable doll. The point here is that this doll does not necessarily substitute for the woman. On the contrary, woman takes the doll's position in society, capable of being inscribed or fragmented. Therefore, regardless of what happened to the doll—even if *nothing* at all had happened to the doll—the project's job was complete. The motivation behind *Judy* was to create awareness and generate dialogue about this project in particular and the issue in a larger, societal sense.

While *Judy* would have fulfilled its mission even if the doll were left entirely alone, the activities surrounding the project were indeed fascinating. A table next to the bench on which the doll sat carried these items: Paint, paintbrushes, glitter, school glue, yarn, scissors, flowers, black markers, colored markers, pushpins, safety pins, bandages, tape, smiley stickers, paperclips, lipstick, rubber bands, pens, sunglasses, a hole puncher, a stapler, wire clothes hanger, nail polish, hand lotion, earrings, a notebook, a camera, and a sign that read, in large font, "I am the object. There are items on the table that can be used on me as desired." On the table was a "theory tablecloth." Highly fragmented itself, the tablecloth consisted of photocopied bits of the various aforementioned theories at work in *Judy*, and pictures of Abramović were placed alongside, but namely on top of, the theories. This placement is symbolic, for it shows the reality of female fragmentation juxtaposed with fragmentation in theory. On the bench next to this table, the doll sat for six hours in an outdoor, central location that has a high level of pedestrian traffic but which allows people to stop and observe at their leisure. The doll

remained on the bench from 10:30 AM to 4:30 PM, after which I recorded all of the actions that had been taken on the doll. These questions in particular were addressed in my observations:

- What actions have been taken on the doll?
- What parts of the doll have been targeted?
- Were the actions mostly dangerous (e.g., cutting, tying, piercing), or superficial (e.g., painting, writing, attaching things)?
- Was any text left on or with the doll?
- Are these actions symbolic? How are they significant?

I could not anticipate how the doll would be treated, and the answers to my broad questions only begin the process of theorizing about the problem of female objectification and fragmentation.

Results of *Judy*

Observation for the duration of the project consisted of my careful and anonymous monitoring roughly every other hour. I did so by either watching from a safe distance, or simply passing the project like any other student or faculty member. I found that walking past the project was particularly helpful because I could listen to conversations about the project. Hearing this dialogue was just as important as seeing the reactions and watching the activities going on around the project, because I could gauge the students' understanding of female objectification.

The actions, of course, were fascinating. During the first half hour, the doll acquired some blue facial tattoos, a "What Would Jesus Do?" bracelet constructed with masking tape on the right wrist, a bloody knee covered with a bandage, a peace-sign on the left arm, and some yarn around her neck. She had also had her left eye bandaged. Apparently, immediately suffering from penis envy, the doll had been given an erect penis (a stick from the ground) and some corresponding school-glue-ejaculate on her shorts. Around noon, she acquired two new tattoos on the same arm as her WWJD bracelet. One read, "Am I a slut?" and immediately beneath, another style of handwriting answered, "Yes." A flower had been creatively pinned to her molded plastic hair in such a way as not to puncture the doll. The care that was taken early on to leave the doll intact is intriguing. References had, of course, been made to her femininity, such as the "slut" tattoo, but other actions confounded her gender, particularly the addition of the penis. By 12:30, she had been

stabbed through the chest with a pen, around which a note read, “I’ve been stabbed,” and she had begun to be painted. She had also gained a nose-ring, from which someone later hung the pair of sunglasses. The stick-penis had either been removed or had fallen out, and the glue-ejaculate had been tactfully censored with a smiley-face sticker. Some student signatures were appearing, as were some interesting textual notes on paper. For example, someone had pinned a note to the doll’s shirt that used an obscenity to decry the objectification of women. Later, another note had been pinned to her shorts which used an obscenity against the female. These textual additions are of particular importance, as participants were beginning to voice their own concerns, anger, and humor through writing directed at the doll itself or at the overall project. By 4:30 PM, the doll’s “hair” had been thoroughly painted with pink and green. She had deflated entirely due to



Figure 4. The blow-up doll at 4:30 PM

the chest puncture, and she had been wrapped and “strangled” with yarn. The obscene note had had a piece of masking tape stuck across it, which read, “You are beautiful.” A note was found on the back of the head reading, “Jimmy is cool because he likes women,” and a woman’s signature had appeared underneath the doll’s shorts between her legs. “Carolyn” was signed on the right arm, “Michael Jackson” appeared on the left leg, and some seemingly random scribbles were on both legs. Perhaps the most unsettling aspect of the doll’s final appearance was her face. The initial facial tattoos and bandaged eye had been covered completely with paint and glitter. Black-marker facial hair had been added, and her eyes were multicolored. Red lipstick was smeared carelessly on her mouth, and sunglasses hung from her face. The deflated doll hung lifelessly next to her table, the head barely remaining upright against the back of the bench. I could spend infinite

the chest puncture, and she had been wrapped and “strangled” with yarn. The obscene note had had a piece of masking

amounts of time analyzing each of these actions, making claims to their concerns with gender, sexuality, heteronormativity, violence, objectivity, religion, culture, or any number of themes. However, we cannot know what these creative students had in mind. What we *can* gauge, however, are the responses of the students based on their reactions.

As expected, there was initially a great deal of laughter. Many students were surprised by the sudden, inexplicable appearance of a blow-up doll on campus. Others walked apathetically past, and still others simply looked confusedly or interestedly for a moment at the doll before moving on. The first students to participate did some interesting things. The young woman who contributed the first facial tattooing took a picture of her work and then of herself, with her *matching* paint tattoo, as if to claim ownership of her work, or perhaps, and more interestingly, in solidarity with the doll. Others among the first participants were very furtive in their actions, looking to see if anyone was watching before they contributed. After the first marks had been left, people began to stop in groups, as if they were embarrassed to be caught alone with the doll. The actions that were taken at this point were more daring, such as the penis and the yarn around the neck. Still later, however, the debased and disturbing appearance of the doll was enough to stop most people in their tracks. And as if the contributions of earlier artists had set the tone, later participants seemed to try to outdo the earlier contributions in terms of creativity and boldness.

Verbal reactions surrounded the project as well. I heard many male and female students simply saying, “What the hell is this?” But one woman, a graduate student, was particularly offended and sought some answers from a group of young women seated nearby. The angry woman asked this group, “What is this thing? Is it yours?” One of the young women replied, “We don’t know, but it looks like a women’s rights group is making a statement about objectification.” This dialogue was extremely heartening, as students were dialoguing and sharing their concerns and thoughts not only with their friends, but also with students whom they had never met. At one point, another group of students (both men and women this time) sat near *Judy* for some time, inviting other passersby to participate. They seemed to feel that the project needed public attention in order to succeed. Likewise, I learned that students were dialoguing within classrooms

throughout the day about “that thing in the Oak Grove.” It was, of course, encouraging to find that conversation had been opened on a topic that many students avoid.

Interestingly, it seems the level of personal offense grew as the day wore on. For example, the reactions in the morning were mostly lighthearted—laughter, confusion, or questions. But as the doll’s appearance became more unsettling, so did the emotions of passersby. More people were stopping to view and discuss the deflating doll the worse she looked. Therefore, much of the offense resulted simply from the actions of other participants, and not from the doll itself. Perhaps the increasing disgust with the doll came as a result of her looking *too* much like an object. For the less the doll resembled a real woman, the more it began to look like a monstrous culmination of too many cultural writings.

This collaboration raised an intriguing concept that I had not even considered prior to this project—the idea of ownership. The project became not the work of one artist, but a collective effort, with innumerable and unnamed contributors. As soon as the doll was left alone, it became the property and responsibility of the campus community. In other words, the doll could have been destroyed immediately, or even stolen, and I would not have interfered. Like Abramović, I refused to alter the results. The issue of ownership was even more complicated by the differing reactions of participants to their own part in the project. For example, the first woman to participate snapped a photo of herself as if to claim ownership. Yet others were highly secretive or embarrassed about their participation. Still others proudly signed their names or left notes about themselves or others: “Jimmy is cool because he likes women,” “Carolyn,” and “Pam.” But beyond the participants’ claiming or denying of ownership, there was an even larger ownership. Everyone who participated, or who walked past, or who even simply heard about the project but did not see it, acknowledged ownership in that the project, surprisingly, remained entirely intact. Among the objects that were left on the table all day, nothing was removed from the site. A primary concern was that the doll would be removed. A secondary concern was that objects—the camera in particular—would be stolen. Stealing could have resulted from anger at the project, the fact that no one was visibly monitoring the scene, or simple maliciousness. Yet nothing, not even small items such as pens and pencils, was taken. One

interpretation of this surprising amiability is the fear of the Foucaultian panopticon; perhaps, students may have rationalized, someone is invisibly monitoring this project. But another, more optimistic interpretation is that everyone who knew about the project respected or at least understood that it was somehow intended for the entire campus community. Therefore, anger at the invisible creator may have been curbed in deference to the members of the community who had a positive response to the project.

Application of *Judy*

Most of the questions posed above have already been answered by this summary of actions and responses. But one question needs further investigation because of the discrepancy between the original hypothesis and the actual outcome: Were the actions mostly dangerous or superficial? Had the actions been mainly “dangerous,” such as cutting or tying, *Judy* may have created a clear statement on what has been called physical fragmentation. However, aside from a few actions, most of the contributions were superficial, such as painting, signing, or somehow adding to the doll. For example, she was given a penis, nipples, cleavage, facial hair, and many accessories such as flowers, bandages, glitter, and jewelry. Only a few actions, such as tying and stabbing the doll with the pen constitute the literal or physical fragmentation that had been expected. Of course, the focus on specific parts, particularly the additions to the breasts, emphasizes the “detachable pieces” highlighted in the earlier discussion of fragmentation (Braidotti 61). Yet these body parts were additions rather than subtractions, and no body part (except perhaps the stick-penis) was removed. In this way, the project turned out very different from the original hypothesis. It was expected that the doll would lose a few limbs, the head, or the clothing. (The doll even wore underwear and a brassiere in case she lost her shorts or shirt.) But surprisingly, the doll remained entirely intact and was punctured only once. In many ways, she became more unified and more human than when she started, rather than being fragmented. Of course, we understand that these results have little connection with how the *real* female body is treated in our world. I reiterate my earlier point that the actions taken on the doll are not as relevant as the message that the doll was intended to send.

The theories described earlier show the way in which a body is fragmented or objectified, though they do not do

justice to the reality of the problem. Abramović's performance piece provides more insight into the fragmentation of the female body than do many of these theories. One theorist in particular, however, provides some interesting links to the real fragmentation of the female body. Laura Mulvey's theories about the way that the female body is perceived in cinema correspond well with the idea of objectification and fragmentation. Mulvey describes the ways in which the viewer derives pleasure from gazing upon the female body. Through the Freudian notion of *scopophilia*, or pleasure in looking, the viewer enjoys making the female body the object of the gaze. This notion suggests "taking other people as objects, subjecting them to a controlling and curious gaze" (127). Similarly, as Braidotti points out, visual media "cheats":

[I]t shows you a bloody mess of red flesh and it tells you, "This is the origin of life." It shows you organs moving in and out of each other, and it tells you, "This is sexual pleasure." It rests on the fantasy that visibility and truth work together. (68)

Though these theories help in understanding *Judy*, they deal specifically with the female body while the project substitutes a doll. Therefore, the voyeurism Mulvey discusses does not necessarily come into play, although there was a sense of pleasure for those who watched pedestrians act upon the doll, and many people simply watched throughout the day.

However, Mulvey's theory does point out a broader point that was also made by this project. The overall effect of *Judy* as a whole, with people acting upon the feminine image of the doll, shows the way in which our culture views woman. As an object or a doll that can be written upon, the *real* body of woman exists in the public eye in the same way as did the doll. Mulvey's theory points out that our world creates a split between the active male and the passive female, and that the "determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly" (176). Certainly, the feminized figure of the doll was stylized according to societal desire. Although participants appeared to be roughly half male and half female (unlike Abramović's project, in which spectators were mostly male), the effect created by a passive doll set up a clear contrast to the active passersby. The fact that she was obviously a feminized object emphasizes that split between active and passive, and her femininity was therefore key to the effect created. As a "metaphor for culture," to

reiterate Bordo's words (165), the female body is inscribed with cultural norms. The female body is subjected to an "ever-changing, homogenizing, elusive ideal of femininity . . . female bodies become docile bodies—bodies whose forces and energies are habituated to external regulation, subjection, transformation, 'improvement'" (166). The external modification of the female body is what *Judy* is really about. The actions taken upon the inflatable doll show not what would happen to a real female body in such a setting, but how the female body is, in today's world, *presented* as a doll—as *something* without subjectivity that can and should be written upon and modified. My hope is that *Judy* succeeded in using praxis to force a reconsideration of representations of the female body, that the hundreds or perhaps thousands of people who walked by the project were compelled to consider its implications.

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**GLOBALIZATION AND THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY
IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE UNANSWERED
QUESTIONS**

by

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian economy has been experiencing reforms since 1999, and these reforms are anchored under the aegis of the phenomenon of globalization. However, the problematic of the economic restructuring in Nigeria *vis-à-vis* the wave of a globalizing world is that these reforms are driven by the caprices of globalization and hence, in the long run, will serve to achieve foreign interests rather than the goals and needs of the domestic Nigerian economy. This article, using the dependency theory, interrogates this problematic and attempts answers to these questions: What ends does globalization seek to accomplish? Whose interests do the economic reforms in Nigeria serve? Does the Nigerian economy possess the capacity to compete favorably with her counterparts in a globalized world economy? What needs to be done in order to structurally reposition Nigeria as an economic force to reckon with in the global economic system? It is suggested that international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization should be reformed, that corruption in the public sphere in Nigeria must be tackled, that Nigeria should soft-pedal the rapid liberalization of her economy, that there should be a stiff legislation to define the terms of operation by multinational corporations in Nigeria, that there must be a congruence between her national policies and the emerging world economic realities, and that economic policies must be formulated which will increase the level of productivity in Nigeria so that the country can reap the perceived benefits of globalization.

Introduction

The international economic sphere is presently contending with the phenomenon of globalization with the

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expected result that the world in the long run will become what has been coined a “global village.” This implies that, when globalization firmly establishes its fame on the global economy, the conduct of business by international economic actors such as nation-states, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and Transnational Corporations (TNCs) or Multinational Corporations (Multinational corporations) will take a *gratis* posture. Under this kind of setting, national frontiers will no longer pose any barrier to production, trade, movement of capital, or investment.

The “freedom” to be granted to international economic actors under a globalized economy will, however, be enjoyed by the actors based on their economic capabilities. For instance, as for nation-states, it will depend on how buoyant their home economies are, that is, their ability to produce *en masse* domestically and export same, their possession of adequate capital to be used for foreign investment, and their use of advanced technology in the production process and in other areas such as communication and transportation. The actors will necessarily co-exist as unequal partners as the degree of their economic capabilities realistically varies. In other words, globalization will usher in an enabling worldwide economic environment for competitive business transactions, which environment denotes that partakers in the global economy will operate on the dictum of survival of the fittest.

It is important to quickly note that the idea about a global system began to blossom in the closing decade of the twentieth century, particularly following World War II (Dougherty 1981, 1). Subsequently, with the end of the cold war, the pulling down of the famous Berlin Wall, and the dominance of a single ideology (capitalism) in the world, there arose an epoch in the history of capitalism which Nabudere (1977, 212) terms “neo-colonialism under multilateral imperialism.” In this era, there have been concerted and purposeful efforts by western countries led by the United States to expand the horizon of international investment capital. In doing this, “developing countries [are compelled to] open their markets and adopt “one-size-fits-all” reform policies without appropriate safety nets and controls” (Aremu 2006, 3). Of course, the advanced countries stand to benefit more from this process than the developing countries. It is against this background that the wind of globalization erupted in the post-

World War II period with vigor and has had sweeping impact across the length and breadth of the universal economic firmament. It is therefore, not surprising that the phenomenon has been dubbed

as either the invisible hand of American empire, the McDonalidization of the world, or the conquest of American style in which western consumer culture, fast foods, gadgetry, cinema, and economic rules of trade and business relations that serve the interests of few nations are being inevitably imposed on the entire world. (Aremu 2005, 2)

Given this economic pedigree of globalization, pundits are quick to question the *raison d'être* of globalization. For instance, the protagonists of globalization contend that it will enhance universal interconnectedness, global flows, and networks necessary for investment capital to move across the globe freely and that it will intensify “worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (Giddens 2000, 92). However, skeptics point out that since there is visible inequality among nation-states that are partners involved in globalization, the dividends and benefits accrued to the phenomenon will logically be reaped by the stronger partners, advanced western countries, rather than the weaker partners, the Third World countries.

In the particular case of Nigeria, the country's economy experienced a boom in the 1970s, and, regrettably, that decade has gone into history as the first and only era in which the economy has achieved such a feat. Beginning from the mid-1980s, the Nigerian economy experienced variegated structural transformations anchored on a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) and purportedly (and outrageously, too) aimed at addressing the economic crisis that has bedeviled the country since the beginning of the decade (Jega 2000b, 27). However, the bitter outcome of these changes has paradoxically been a steady slide of the economy to depression as evident in the ever-rising rate of inflation, unemployment figures, increasing poverty levels, deepening gap between the rich and the poor, and, recently, infrastructure dilapidation. One of the factors responsible for the dwindling fortunes of the Nigerian economy is deregulation as part of neo-liberal economic policies meant to open up the economy in line with the tenets

of globalization. These policies have consequences on the Nigerian people given the deteriorating social conditions Nigerians have to contend with (Aremu 2006, 12; Eregare & Afolabi 2009, 148).

Arising from this background, this paper attempts to address pertinent questions relating to the fate of the Nigerian economy given the spate of globalization which has been pursued with vigor and foisted onto other countries by western capitalist states. These questions are: What goals does globalization seek to accomplish? Is it the domestic Nigerian economy or foreign interests that the economic reforms in Nigeria serve? Does the Nigerian economy possess the capacity, especially in the post-reform era, to compete favorably with its counterparts in a globalized world economy? What are the odds inhibiting the growth of Nigeria's economy? What needs to be done in order to structurally reposition Nigeria as an economic force to reckon with in the global economic system? The paper argues passionately that Nigeria (just as other developing countries) stands to gain nothing under globalization; rather, the country will serve as a pawn in the hands of western capitalist interests in the exacerbation and universalization of imperialism.

Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

The idea about globalization and its interpretation is a contested terrain; as a result, there are multifarious conceptions of what globalization is and its application. Held and McGrew (2000) have submitted that the whole issue about globalization has altogether become a great debate of sort. There are those (Alubo 1999, 12; Thomas 1999, 2) who contend that globalization is driven by the antics of capitalism. In the words of Gurtov, globalization is meant "to marketize the world at the expense of the poorest economies and social groups, the state and whole cultures" (1999, 12). Further elaborating on this issue, Thomas retorts that:

Globalization is transforming the authority and capacity of states differentially to set the social, political, and economic agenda within their respective territorial boundaries. Decision making authority is being ceded to actors such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, transnational corporations, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and so forth. (Those institutions are not autonomous actors, of

course; rather, they represent the interests of the leading states, particularly the United States, and such states represent other interests, notably those of global capital. (1999, 2)

Also identified with globalization is its tendency to corrode the sovereignty of states (Strange 2000). According to Scholte (1999, 60), the independence of modern states, which is defined in terms of territory and self-government and has hitherto been bound by a sense of commonality, has been substantially undermined by the phenomenon of globalization. Similarly, Beck conceives globalization to imply “the process through which sovereign national states are criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientations, identities, and networks” (2000, 101). Furthermore, the autonomy of states is weakened by the penetrating influence of direct foreign investment that knows no national boundary and by activities of multinational corporations that are capable of diminishing the industrial competitiveness of domestic entrepreneurs and entrenching dependency, a trend Sunkel (1979) calls “big business and dependecia.” In the view of Abdul-Raheem, globalization is equal to re-colonization, especially as it concerns the African continent that has already had more than 400 years of contact with Europe characterized by slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism.

Another dimension of conceiving globalization relates it to the impact it has on production, trade, transport, consumption, social welfare, social institutions, social relations, material processes, interregional flows, migration, and patterns of social interaction, as well as power relations across regions and continents (Alubo 1999, 12; Held & McGrew 2000, 4; Aremu 2006, 3). In effect, globalization transcends all facets of society; its operational mechanism permeates virtually all the fabric of human endeavor, especially culture, production, and communication.

Globalization is thus seen as a myth with deceptive intent (Hirst & Thompson 2000). Held and McGrew (2000) draw attention to the fact that there is nothing global in globalization since its intention is to foster the interests of western capital; the final beneficiaries are the United States and its cohorts. Mann (2000) is very cynical about the fate of other nation-states in a globalized economy because of the problems resulting from globalization, namely erosion of the

sovereignty of nations, dismantling of national boundaries, emasculation of state institutions, dominance of foreign cultures and hence the diminishing or dilution of local cultures, uneven distribution of benefits, and many other such side effects. Even if globalization in the final analysis were to benefit all countries, developing countries, argues Aremu (2006), would stand no chance to gain, as the prospects of their economic growth have dwindled in recent years as a result of the impact of globalization on their economies.

Globalization is not without its positive aspect. Hirst and Thompson (2000) argue that globalization is, after all, not a new phenomenon, since business transactions on a world scale have been practiced since time immemorial. Aspects of globalization such as trade, migration in the international labor market, economic integration, and openness and interdependence in world economy are age-old economic developments in the global economy. The UNDP Report 1999 (2000) makes a case for globalization by pointing out that it provides “great opportunities for human advance” because of the enormous benefits associated with the process. For example, international “markets, global technology, global ideas, and global solidarity can enrich the lives of people everywhere, greatly expanding their choices. The growing interdependence of people’s lives calls for shared values and a shared commitment to human development” (2000, 341). Globalization, according to its proponents, therefore seeks to simplify international business conduct by closing up the gaps hitherto imposed by national boundaries, laws, and regulations.

No matter the notion attached to globalization, what is clear and must be borne in mind is that the canon of globalization miniaturizes the role of individual nation-states in the global economic spectrum as political and economic interconnectedness among actors in the global economy and breakdown in restrictions hitherto imposed by various national laws leaves international business terrain bare for competing interests geared towards capital accumulation. Thus, this softens the process of economic relations amongst nations and international business concerns and invariably results in the emergence of a widespread network in economic, social, cultural, and political ties.

Arising from the above conceptual background, this article adopts the dependency theory in its analysis of the problems bedeviling the Nigerian economy in the twenty-first

century amidst globalization. The dependency theory evolved in Latin America and became prominent in the 1960s. Some prominent scholars associated with the theory include Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Samir Amin, Immanuel Wallerstein, Andre Gunder Frank, and Paul Baran. The crux of the argument by the proponents of the dependency theory is that the structure of the international economic system has been ordered unequally such that the economies of developing nations are tacitly made to be dependent on the economies of developed countries. In this world economic order, the developing, peripheral, or Third World countries are subordinated to the antics of the advanced or metropolitan western countries such that the frail economies of dependent countries exist to build and sustain their counterparts in the advanced nations.

The protagonists of the theory further posit that Third World countries' dependency was schematically orchestrated by colonialism (Uche1994) and is currently promoted by the activities of multinational corporations in developing countries as in Brazil (Evans 1979); the phenomenon of globalization has furthermore accelerated underdevelopment in backward nations (Kema 2005) because of its "one-recipe-fits-all" principle that gives no room for these nations to draw their independent economic policies. It is also argued that the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization exist as institutions that foster the economic interests of western capitalist countries by enhancing the financial attachment of Third World countries to the apron strings of capitalist nations. For instance, the debt crisis of the 1980s in most Latin American, Asian, and African countries is seen as a direct effect of the policies of the above international financial institutions that amplified global capital mobility, thus making developing countries more dependent on foreign capital and hence more vulnerable to negative changes in world capital markets (Rojas 2001, 3).

The high rate of indebtedness of Third World countries, it is argued, stimulates stagnation of their domestic economies; the multiplier effects of this stagnation translate into the preponderance of hyper-unemployment, inflation, poverty, and the low pricing of local export crops on the one hand. On the other hand, cheap raw materials, capital flight in the form of huge profits repatriated by multinational corporations to their home countries, and debt servicing from developing nations

are utilized in boosting the economies of advanced countries. Therefore, there is an economic divide and a very wide income gap between the rich industrialized countries and Third World countries. As illustrated in Table 1 below, the gap between the industrialized countries and the developing countries has continued to widen in the past four decades, depicting the subservient nature of the economies of Less Developed Countries (LDCs).

The dependency theory is, therefore, most appropriate in understanding the impact of globalization on developing economies as exemplified by the case of Nigeria because “the socio-economic and political structures of the peripheral countries are subordinated via globalization to foster the economic interests . . . of the metropolitan countries” (Kema 2005, 1).

Table 1: GDP as Percentage of Aggregate GDP for 156 Market Economies

	1960	1970	1980	1990	1999
Industrialized countries (21)	83.2	83.2	78.4	83.3	84.3
Sub-Saharan Africa (50)	2.5	2.3	2.8	1.4	1.1
South Asia (8)	3.9	3.1	2.2	2.0	2.3
Middle East and North Africa (9)	1.8	2.6	5.5	3.1	1.8
Latin America and the Caribbean (41)	6.7	6.8	7.7	5.9	6.7
East Asia and the Pacific (27)	2.0	2.1	3.3	4.4	3.8

Source: Rojas, R. 2001. “International Capital: A Threat to Human Dignity and Life on Planet Earth (1).” Retrieved August 4, 2010 from <google.com>.

Moreover, nation-states in a globalized economy end up pursuing national goals within universal economic parameters defined by international capital and spelled out by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. This situation covertly makes developing nations “new colonies” existing to serve the metropolitan rich economies. In Nigeria’s case, the operation of multi-national oil companies with

devastating environmental degradation and the alienation of the local communities has fueled crises in the Niger Delta area of the country (Obi 2006, 35), thus destabilizing the national economy that depends mainly on the export of crude oil from the Niger Delta. The prices of Nigeria's oil and other primary export products often fluctuate in the international market because the country has no control over them; rather, the rich and industrialized nations, through cartels like the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), manipulate the prices to their advantage, making Nigeria's domestic economy enfeebled and dependent on imports, including refined oil, from these advanced economies.

It has been argued that globalization has facilitated poverty reduction, quality education, and access to decent jobs, especially for the youth, because of the openness of the phenomenon (UNDP 2005, 11). However, the counter-argument is that, in the long run, globalization enhances brain-drain as young people migrate *en masse* from poor nations to seek better opportunities in advanced countries. This ensures human capital drift and further weakens the labor force in developing economies.

Economic Reforms in Nigeria Since 1999

The Obasanjo-led administration was inaugurated on May 25, 1999 following the victory of his party in the General Elections that were conducted in April 1999. The regime immediately embarked on series of reforms aimed at revamping the ailing economy as well as setting the economy on a sound transformative edge; according to Professor Charles Soludo, the former Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the "strategy [was] to make government leaner and more efficient to free up resources to be devoted to law and order" (*FDI Magazine* 2003, 1) such that the economy will be private-sector driven.

The regime's economic reforms were anchored on "private-sector" led and "market oriented" economic growth of which privatization and commercialization of public enterprises formed a core strategy. The ensuing section of the paper will appraise the privatization program as a major reform strategy in Nigeria since 1999; the section will also assess the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) initiated by the erstwhile Obasanjo government in 2003.

Privatization of Public Enterprises

Privatization, the bedrock of liberal economic policy, is embedded in the philosophy of the Structural Adjustment Program which, in the case of Nigeria, came to light in 1986. Privatization has been defined to imply the transfer of services and interest from the state to the private sector. It may involve issues such as: selling of nationalized concerns to private stakeholders;

issue of shares traded on the Nigerian Stock Exchange; sales of assets; joint ventures with the private sector; relaxing monopoly rights to allow competition; and allowing private contractors to tender for provision of services (Akpan 1999, 136).

What this implies is that in an economy where privatization has run its full circle of implementation, the state has the least role to play, as virtually all economic activities are under the control of private concerns, individuals, and conglomerates whose driving force of operation is profit maximization in a highly competitive economic environment. Arising from this, questions that have posed great concern to keen observers of the Nigerian economy are: As the privatization program is being implemented, do Nigerians have the required capital base to actively participate in the process? What percentage of the government-owned stocks and shares in public enterprises being sold is purchased by Nigerians? If, in the long run, the majority of Nigerians are unable to hold substantive control over these privatized public companies as foreign investors gulp a better chunk of their (companies') ownership, will it not amount to mortgaging the domestic Nigerian economy (and the interests of Nigerians) to foreigners to take charge for purely alien interests rather than those of Nigerians? And let us assume that Nigerians are the ones to whose hands the ownership of these enterprises is being transferred (and it is a well known fact that the twenty-first century world economy is guided by advanced technology and functional infrastructure), does Nigeria possess such a high-tech and efficient infrastructural base to support her "private-sector" driven economy and competitively play a role in a globalized economy? These and many other unanswered questions have made Bangura (1987) to correctly posit that the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program through a strategy such as privatization in Nigeria by the various

regimes in the country has succeeded in generating crisis rather than solution to the downward trend in the country's economy.

The ideologues of privatization argue that this economic program is considered necessary in order "to improve the efficiency of [public] enterprises, to curb corruption, and also to reduce the financial costs to the federal government" (Okonjo-Iweala & Osafo-Kwaako 2007, 13). It has been contended, however, that the implementation of privatization as a composite aspect of the Structural Adjustment Program has led to the impoverishment of Third World countries in general and Nigeria in particular, that it is disastrous to productive activities and has become an economic albatross to developing nations (Bangura 1987, 95; Clairmont n.d., 15; Chossudovsky n.d., 17; Igbuzor 2005, 312-13).

The crisis-generating capacity of the privatization program in Nigeria is easy to decipher when we consider what Chossudovsky (n.d., 17) terms as "market colonialism" of the entire world wherein people and the government are subjected to the impartial interchange of market forces. Also, given that the program is motivated by the avarice of the Structural Adjustment Program (the hatchet instrument of the Bretton Woods institutions, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank), the Nigerian domestic economy is prey to foreign economic domination. This is because, in tune with the tenets of globalization, foreign direct investment with a colossal capital base will find free access into Nigeria and buy up all the public enterprises on sale, and, in the end, these companies must operate in consonance with the dictates of their foreign "owners." That is, they must operate to serve the interests of international capital, such interests being the massive accumulation of wealth through unfettered profit maximization.

Again, privatization, as an aspect of "rolling back the state" from the centre stage of the economy, is capable of further impoverishing Nigerians because it is known to be anti-people (Igbuzor 2005, 313). Its implementation in Nigeria has worsened the already horrendous condition of the labor market as unemployment levels in the country soar as more and more companies (both private and public) and even the Federal Government continually embark on retrenchment exercises in the name of "down-sizing," "cutting wage costs," and "re-structuring." All these measures emanate from the capitalist

instinct of its beholders; the intent is to make more profit at the least cost. Privatization cannot insure and secure the interests of Nigerians, at least not the feeble, the poor, the downtrodden, and the wretched; it can only enhance the achievement of the goals of globalization in Nigeria by expanding the ambit and horizon of global capital flow as the twenty-first century advances.

National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS)

According to the National Planning Commission, the NEEDS is:

. . . the strategy aimed at achieving the directive principles of state policy. Its focus is wealth creation, employment generation, poverty reduction, corruption elimination, and general value re-orientation. Other principles that underpin the NEEDS are:

- An incentive structure that rewards and celebrates private enterprise, entrepreneurial spirit and excellence;
- New forms of partnership among all stakeholders in the economy to promote prosperity—among all arms of government: federal, state, and local; public and private; civil society and the international community; and indeed all stakeholders;
- A public that delivers prompt and quality service to the people. (2004, 28-29)

These are some of the principles on the basis of which the NEEDS program was officially conceived to operate. The program was meant to raise the country's standard of living through a variety of reforms, including macroeconomic stability, deregulation, liberalization, privatization, transparency, and accountability. In addition, through NEEDS, it was intended that seven million jobs would be created and the rate of inflation reduced to a single digit. These targets were indeed ambitious and at the same time phony, given that the reforms made virtually no impact on the lives of Nigerians after four full years of implementation, from 2003 to 2006.

Yusufu Bala Usman, in an open letter to former President Obasanjo, whose government initiated the NEEDS reform, observed with dismay that the document establishing NEEDS “fails to propose any strategy for national economic

empowerment and development. It contains no strategy, no coherent plan of action which to endorse. . . . It is a bundle of confusion in its conceptualizations, use of data, and organization” (2004, 7-8). The lack of strategy in the conception of NEEDS which Yusufu Bala points out above came to the fore at the tail end of Obasanjo’s regime; virtually little or nothing was achieved by NEEDS. For example, if we take the objective of the policy targeted at reducing the rate of inflation to a single digit, no achievement was accomplished in this regard as of 2005. If we consider the creation of seven million jobs by the policy, there is no indication that the unemployment level had decreased by any margin in the country as of May 29, 2007 when the Obasanjo regime handed over power to a new government. It was not surprising that even Obasanjo’s close associates such as his Minister of Finance, Esther Nenadi Usman, and the then-Chairman of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Dr. Amadu Ali, reviled the reforms. All these condemnations of the reforms became necessary because

The more Nigerians complained that things were not going well, the more the government moved them along the reform highway which was paved with a plethora of problems, bumps, potholes, and huge craters, all designed to make the ride bumpy and hazardous. (Mohammed 2007, 16)

What is manifest from the above is that NEEDS, just like its preceding counterpart reform measures, was, right from its conception stage, flawed. Worse still, there was little or no commitment to its implementation by government, as much of it was only for show on television and radio stations without much practical effort to get the program to create wealth, generate employment, reduce poverty, eliminate corruption, or reduce inflation, any of which would have had a direct, positive impact on the lives of Nigerians. Little wonder that after five years of NEEDS’ lifespan, nothing tangible can be thought of it as its contribution to the empowerment of Nigerians and development of the country.

The Challenges Facing the Nigerian Economy in the 21st Century

The Nigerian economy is reeling from the pangs of underdevelopment that can be situated in the country’s historical trajectory. Most of the policies that have been

evolved aimed at providing a safe haven for the economy, right from the independence era to date, seem to lack the requisite antidote to revamping it. It is no longer tenable to hurl the blame of Nigeria's economic backwardness on colonialism, as attention (even at the level of scholarship) has been shifted to the military as the culpable factor for the country's economic woes (Adejumobi & Momoh 1995). Paradoxically, after more than ten years of democratic government in Nigeria when the military have returned to the barracks (and the colonialists have left decades ago), the economy is still awkwardly languishing in a state of stagnation. What factors could be held responsible for inhibiting the growth of Nigeria's economy even up to the present twenty-first century, given that the culpability of colonialism and military rule are no longer fashionable? Probably, as Quadri (2004) has noted, the character of a state determines the policy it makes, the nature of Nigeria (i.e. the inability of the complex Nigerian state to chart a proper course for development after 50 years) could be the rationale for her slow pace of economic growth. Below are some factors, though not limited to these alone, which can be considered as the challenges or obstacles against Nigeria's economy in the twenty-first century.

The Impact of Neo-Liberal Policies

By neo-liberal policies, I mean economic policies meant to deregulate and restructure the economy so that private capital takes control of the economy. The Structural Adjustment Program as mentioned above is an example of a neo-liberal policy that has unleashed negative consequences on Nigeria's economy since it was introduced in 1986. It has been pointed out that the implementation of a liberal policy like the Structural Adjustment Program has never in any way assisted the growth of the economies of developing countries; rather, it has retarded them (Clairmont n.d., 15-16; Chossudovsky n.d., 18-20; Jega 2003a, 5). Also, in this age of globalization, critics are apt to point out that its impact on the domestic economies of Third World countries is phenomenally ruinous (Alubo 1999, 13; Aremu 2006, 12; Mohammed 2002). This is so because the operational parameters of globalization place developing nations at a disadvantaged position since these nations' weak economies possess no prowess to compete favorably with their advanced counterparts in a globalized setting. In short, in articulating the retarding impact of

liberalization and globalization on less developed countries, Mahathir Mohammed fervently questions:

Why is it that so many of the rich countries, despite all their globalisation and liberalisation rhetoric, will not remove the barriers on products—textiles, clothing, and footwear—in which the poor countries are world beaters? Why is there instead tariff escalation on all those important products where the developing world is able to develop awesome global competitiveness? (2002, 11)

Liberal policies such as privatization, deregulation, and currency devaluation as imbedded in the Structural Adjustment Program are meant to oil the wheels of capitalism. As long as the execution of such policies by developing nations support the sustenance of the economies of advanced countries, western capitalist-controlled financial institutions, namely the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, would insist that such policies are the best curative alternatives to the development problems of Third World countries. If we consider the key economic indicators in Nigeria as shown in Table 2 below, before the Structural Adjustment Program was introduced in 1986, the total external debt of the country in the preceding year 1985 was US \$17,297.50. This figure rose to US \$18,631.30 in 1986 when the Structural Adjustment Program took effect and continued to rise; between 1994 and 1998, Nigeria's external indebtedness reached \$29,187.00. By 2005, Nigeria's debt figure stood at close to US \$40 billion with more than US \$30 billion owed to the Paris Club alone (Aina 2006, 40).

Table 2: Key Indicators of External Balance and the External Debt Stock (\$millions)

Year	Trade Balance	Capital, Services and Income Balance	Overall Balance	Exceptional Financing	Change in External Debt	Change in Reserves	External Debt
1985	567 8.0	- 5798.6	- 120.6	0	-736.6	349.3	17 297.5
1986	103 3.2	- 2431.1	- 1397.9	1465.0	1333.8	- 763.5	18 631.3
1986-92	390 2.9	- 6922.2	- 3019.3	2914.4	1494(2695)	- 160.9	28 043.5
1986-98	400 3.5	- 6868.2	- 2864.7	2849.5	882.8	404.6	28 540.0
1994-98	429 1.9	6990.4	2698.5	2822.1	1685.7	808.4	29 187.0

Source: Garba, A. G. 2005. “International Trade, Globalization and Nigeria.” *Nigeria and the Neo-Liberal World Economic System*. Ed. A. Momoh. Abuja: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, p. 50.

What this indicates is that if the Structural Adjustment Program were to be a solution to Nigeria’s economic woes, since its introduction in Nigeria over twenty years ago, by now the economy would have improved with a decline in the rate of foreign indebtedness as an important indicator of progress in the economy of the country. Furthermore, deregulation of the economy only aids the stagnation of the domestic economies of developing nations as seen in the case of Nigeria where the level of imports increased substantially beginning from 1986 when the Structural Adjustment Program was introduced. This trend is shown in Table 3 below, whereby Nigeria’s reliance on imports to sustain her economy increased, thus accelerating the country’s dependency level. Apart from capital goods and chemicals whose importation dropped from 58.2 percent to 52.1 percent, other imports like food and consumer goods increased from 10.6 percent to 13.2 percent and from 27.3 percent to 29.1 percent respectively in the post-SAP period in Nigeria.

Table 3: The Structure of Nigeria’s Merchandise Imports in Percentages

Import Group	1970 - 85	1986- 98	1999-2002
Food	13.5	10.6	13.2
Consumer Goods	24.1	27.3	29.1
Capital Goods and Chemicals	58.8	58.2	52.1
Crude Materials	2.3	3.3	4.7

Source: Garba, A. G. 2005. “International Trade, Globalization and Nigeria.” *Nigeria and the Neo-Liberal World Economic System*. Ed. A. Momoh. Abuja: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, p. 47.

Corruption

The scale of corruption in Nigeria is no doubt a major contributor to her economic backwardness. Professor Charles Soludo, a former CBN Governor, once admitted that “Corruption is a stigma associated with Nigeria” (*FDI Magazine* 2003, 2). The ranking of Nigeria in 2003 by Transparency International as the second to the last most corrupt country in the world on the Corruption Perception Index (Crowell 2003, 9) further reinforced the position of the former CBN Governor. In 2005, Nigeria ranked 152 out of 159 countries by the same Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index, and in 2006, the country placed 94th out of 155 countries in the World Bank’s Ease of Doing Business Index. These are clear local and international attestations to the pervasiveness of corruption in Nigeria.

Corruption in Nigeria takes multifarious dimensions, including the outright embezzlement of public funds by public office holders, over-invoicing of contract sums, a financial scam also called Advanced Free Fraud or “419,” falsification of certificates, and a host of other versions of corruption. Expectedly, corruption is most harmful to Nigerians themselves because not only does the practice deny the citizenry access to efficient social services, but it also damages the image of the country internationally and hampers development. Ibrahim notes with dismay that the “effects of corruption on the Nigerian state and society are so devastating that political structures have significantly lost their capacity to perform their functions” (2003, 3). The question that stands

hanging is, Can the Nigerian economy grow under this state of raucous corrupt practices in order to face the challenge of development in the twenty-first century? Evidence from Europe, America, and the Asian Tigers point to the fact that most countries have developed through a conscious process of building their societies based on transparent and accountable governments. Corruption is, indeed, a major impediment to Nigeria's economic development in the twenty-first century, unless the menace is eliminated.

Foreign Economic Influence

Developing countries are under undue foreign pressure in the formulation of their economic policies (Aremu 2005, 7). This influence comes in various forms, especially from international bodies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and multinational and transnational corporations, and this influence directly impacts negatively on the development process of Third World countries. In his analysis of foreign influence exerted on African economies, Mshomba (2000) argues that various issues such as health, environment, labor, human rights, and trade are the compelling factors that induce nations to be integrated into the global economy. In the case of sub-Saharan African countries, their involvement in the global economy (for example, membership in the WTO) has not fared well for their domestic economies because of the unequal terms of trade adopted by World Trade Organization meant to benefit advanced member countries more than their Third World counterparts.

Nigeria is not absolved from this syndrome, as her membership in the World Trade Organization has affected her economy in a relatively negative manner. A report of a study on "The Impact of Globalization, Trade Liberalization Processes, and WTO Regulations on Nigeria" (*Globalization Review* 2005, 66-89) indicates that Nigeria's export level (especially in agricultural products) has fallen drastically in recent years. The report links this development to the adherence of Nigeria to the regulations of the World Trade Organization to which Nigeria has acceded as a member of the organization. Furthermore, given that Nigeria is now very strategic to the United States of America in terms of the latter's energy needs (Center for International Policy 2007), the former has become vital to America's energy security policy on the

entire continent of Africa. The question is, How can Nigeria devise any economic policy to move her local economy forward to the detriment of America's energy interests in the country? This question beckons for an answer. The fact is that the influence exerted by foreign forces, whether as former colonial masters (as in the case of the former French colonies) or as international financial organizations (as in the cases of the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and the World Bank), on developing countries, is economically retarding.

Activities of Multinational Corporations in Nigeria

Elsewhere, I have argued that the operation of multinational corporations in Nigeria has been injurious to her economy, as the activities of these corporations foster underdevelopment in the country rather than promote economic growth (Aluaigba 2006). The presence of multinational corporations in most Third World countries has certainly inhibited economic progress in these countries, given their unequivocal motives for operating in these countries, namely: to expand and preserve markets, to obtain cheap labor, to take advantage of economies of scale at comparatively lesser prices, and to foster monopoly capitalism (Nabudere 1977, 189). Following from these objectives, the multinational oil corporations operating in Nigeria, such as Mobil, Chevron, Shell, Elf, and Agip, have failed to assist the country in her development efforts that would have improved her economy. For instance, these companies hardly conserve the environment for the good of the immediate communities in which they are operating in the Niger Delta region. A report by Essential Action and Global Exchange summarizes the conduct of oil companies and their negative impact on the host communities in the region as follows:

1. Oil corporations in the Niger Delta seriously threaten the livelihood of neighboring local communities. Due to the many forms of oil-generated environmental pollution evident throughout the region, farming and fishing have become impossible or extremely difficult in oil-affected areas, and even drinking water has become scarce. Malnourishment and disease appear common.

2. The presence of multinational oil companies has had additional adverse effects on the local economy and society, including loss of property, price inflation, prostitution, and irresponsible fathering by expatriate oil workers.

3. Organized protests and activism by affected communities regularly meet with military repression, sometimes ending in the loss of life. In some cases military forces have been summoned and assisted by oil companies.

4. Reporting on the situation is extremely difficult, due to the existence of physical and legal constraints to free passage and free circulation of information. Similar constraints discourage grassroots activism. (Shah 2010, 1)

It must be emphasized that these oil companies, right from the 1960s, have exerted tremendous influence on Nigeria's oil sub-sector, but have shown little or no interest in the development of their host country, particularly their immediate host communities (Human Rights Watch 1999). Little wonder that, emanating from the long-bottled-up discontent with and grievances against the oil multinational corporations, the period from the 1990s up to 2005 has witnessed unprecedented agitation, upheavals, and civil strife in the Niger Delta region of the country (Djebah 2006; Agoi 2006; Obi 2001). This agitation has taken the form of heightened youth violence in the Niger Delta through kidnapping the personnel and vandalizing the facilities or the equipment of the oil companies.

The phenomenon of violence in the Niger Delta has retarded Nigeria's economy by the shortfall in her oil export due to the unrest in the Niger Delta, and, incidentally, oil is her major foreign exchange earner. From January to July alone, Nigeria lost ₦1 trillion as a result of the crisis (*Daily Trust* August 9, 2007). The activities of the oil companies also fuel corruption in Nigeria through the manner in which they award contracts and access land and through their dealings with community representatives. In June 2004, "the Shell oil firm admitted that its business practices have inadvertently helped to promote corruption and ethnic conflict in Nigeria" (*The New*

York Amsterdam News June 17–23, 2004, 2). In other sectors of the Nigerian economy such as manufacturing, construction, and transport, the impact of multinational corporations is not different, and this situation has further stagnated the economy.

Effects of Globalization

Apart from the factors discussed above, it must be mentioned that, like its counterparts in other Third World countries, the chances of the Nigerian economy to improve have been asphyxiated by the effects of globalization. Alanana (2004) and Aina (2006) have argued fervently that the incorporation of all facets of the Nigerian society into the main stream of the global capitalist system through the globalization process has not profited the country by any measurement. Evidences abound to epitomize the retarding consequences of globalization on the Nigerian economy. For instance, the World Bank report (cited in Aina 2006, 38) has shown that as late as 1980, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria was US \$91.13 billion and the country was then ranked twentieth due to the size of its GDP. However, from 1986, the economic stagnation prompted by the pursuit of the Structural Adjustment Program via the policy of liberalizing the Nigerian economy in the spirit of globalization led to over-openness of her economy with accompanying setbacks. As mentioned above, the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program as an amalgam of globalization has led to devaluation of the naira, inflation, unemployment, high debts, and over-reliance on imports in Nigeria.

Apart from these, openness as a key tenet of globalization has assisted public office holders in Nigeria to recklessly loot the public treasury; such monies are easily repatriated and stacked in foreign banks through money laundering. Good examples are former military ruler the late General Sani Abacha and, most recently, the cases of looting public funds by Joshua Dariye, Reverend Jolly Nyame, Saminu Turaki, Orji Uzor Kalu, James Ibori, and Oyunba Adebayo Alao-Akala, former governors of Plateau, Taraba, Jigawa, Abia, Delta States, and former deputy governor of Oyo State, respectively (*Tell* November 20, 2006; *Newswatch* June 11, 2007 & January 11, 2010; *The News* February 19 & July 30, 2007) apart from other numerous, similar instances. The inability of the local manufacturing industries in Nigeria to cope with the harsh economic terrain since the 1980s has culminated in continuous job cuts; about 150,000 job losses

were recorded from 1989 to 1999 alone (Aina 2006, 45). Furthermore, about twenty automobile plants across Nigeria, including Volkswagen, Mercedes-Benz, Steyr, Leyland, and Nigeria Truck Manufacturing, have collapsed. The only surviving ones like Peugeot Automobile of Nigeria (PAN) and ANAMCO are operating far below installed capacity, and yet they face staunch competition from automobile brands from Japan, the Americas, and Germany; these are easily smuggled into Nigeria through the extremely porous borders of Benin and Niger Republics. Globalization has led to cultural erosion in Nigeria. This is evident in the dominance of Chinese cuisines over the local Nigerian menu and the menacing impact of the adoption of western style of dressing by most Nigerian women. Such modes of dressing are considered un-African by some Nigerians and prompted a member of the country's Senate, Senator Eme Ufot Ekeatte, to sponsor a bill on "Public Nudity, Sexual Intimidation, and Other Related Offences Prohibition and Punishment Act, 2007." The aim of the bill was to curtail "indecent" dressing, which many consider to be foreign culture imported into Nigeria.

Unfocused Development Policies

The inability to initiate purposeful development policies, coupled with poor implementation, macroeconomic instabilities, weak policy response (Aremu 2005, 46), and lack of commitment on the part of political leaders, has been the bane of development efforts in Nigeria. According to Usman Nigeria, "has been ruled, for over twenty years, without a national development plan" (2007, 3). Actually, what have been brandished as policies by most governments in Nigeria are caricatures of strategic plans that will hardly breed development in the country. Moreover, given that such policies are fabricated under the influence of foreign capitalist interests, they lack the domestic relevance to nurture economic growth.

As a result of the paucity of focus in the content of development policies in Nigeria, their outcomes tend to reflect the perverse and porous impact the policies do have on the economy. For instance, if we consider economic indicators in Nigeria (as shown in Table 4 below) since 1999 when the Obasanjo's economic reforms, anchored on "rolling back the state" and driven by privatization, kicked off, the trend has never been growth-stimulating economically speaking. The inflationary rate from 1999 to 2006 staggered between 10 percent and 12 percent, with a peak of 21 percent in 2003,

meaning that the economy was static during that period without any progress. It was impossible for the exchange rate of the naira to the dollar to be at least below ₦100:US\$1 from 1999 to 2006 as a sign of improvement in the strength of the national currency. Despite this negative tendency, external reserves continued their rise from a position of 3.6 percent in 1998; they reached a whopping 46.5 percent rate in 2006 (see Table 4 below) without a seeming reflection on the state of the economy in terms of growth.

Yet upon all these, the government at that time had inundated, immersed Nigerians with its reform aphorisms of “attracting foreign investors” and “creating an enabling economic environment for business.” Worst of all, the regime went to the extent of deducting funds from the Federation Account just to settle Nigeria’s debt to the Paris Club (*The Guardian* 2007, 1). That was happening when an ordinary Nigerian was not sure of the availability of his or her next meal, whether it would be *garri*, whether his or her child would attend school at all, whether he or she would not be robbed the next hour because of insecurity, whether electricity in his or her house would stay for the next thirty minutes, or whether he or she would not die of ordinary fever because the pharmacies in the hospitals were without medicine. Are these the conditions under which Nigerians will beat their chests and competitively face other nationals in a globalized economy in the twenty-first century? Many more such questions remain unanswered. Evidently, the economic reform policies in Nigeria, particularly from 1999, have been overwhelmed by the gloominess of globalization and in the long run will benefit foreign investors and foreign capital, not the indigenous population.

Table 4: Selected Economic Indicators in Nigeria, 1999 – 2006

	199 2- 1998 (avg)	19 99- 2001 (avg)	200 2	20 03	20 04	2 005	2 006
Annual percentage changes (unless otherwise specified)							
Real GDP (at 1990 fact cost)	1.8	3.5	1.4	10.9	6.1	6.2	5.1
Oil GDP	0.5	2.5	11.6	26.5	3.5	2.6	-1.6
Non-oil GDP	2.4	3.8	8.0	4.4	7.4	8.2	8.2
Inflation rate (year-on-year)	39.3	10.4	12.2	21.8	10.0	11.6	12.2
Money supply	...	35.0	21.6	24.1	14.0	16.0	...
Exchange rate (IFEM/DAS) (₦:US\$ average)	...	102.3	121.3	129.5	133.5	131.8	126.5
External reserves (US\$ billion)	3.6	8.4	7.7	7.5	17.0	28.3	46.5

Source: Okonjo-Iweala, N., and P. Osafo-Kwaako. 2007. *Nigeria's Economic Reforms: Progress and Challenges*. Washington, D. C.: The Brookings Institution, p.11.

Suggestions

Globalization seems to be an irreversible process, which all economies of the world, whether developed, developing, or underdeveloped, must countenance. The options opened to Third World countries are not to opt out of the process, as no nation can survive or even exist in isolation, but rather to choose the right strategy to adopt in order to take advantage of the economic opportunities provided by the changing international economic system, which is fast transforming into a “global village.” In the case of Nigeria, what needs to be done in order to structurally reposition her as an economic force to reckon with in the new global economic system in the twenty-first century? The proposal outlined here is an agenda intended for Nigeria and also other developing nations to chart a viable course for their development in order to dispel the impact of globalization. Although some of the suggestions, which are general, may seem to be uphill tasks because developed countries (especially western capitalist states) will surely not succumb to them utterly, these suggestions are aimed at ensuring that globalization does not transmute to an encumbrance to Nigeria’s domestic economy and that of other developing nations around the world.

In the first instance, to disperse the impact of deregulation as an aspect of globalization on the economies of Nigeria and other underdeveloped countries, there is a dire need for international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization to be reformed in order to make their decision making processes inculcate democratic values that will be accepted by all member states. In doing this, unjust trade rules and market barriers must be eliminated from the rules governing these institutions. For instance, there could be the creation of an international currency that belongs to no country and that could be used for global transactions; there could as well be an imposition of a global levy based on nations' GNP so that those countries which benefit more from a fully integrated and globalized economy will pay more and the proceeds equally distributed among all nations. In this way, there could be a relatively level playing ground for partners in the "global village."

Second, for economic development to be achieved in Nigeria, corruption in the public sphere, no doubt, must be tackled head-on. To do this, there is a need for the sustenance of good governance that is built on the democratic values of social justice, rule of law, and transparency and accountability devoid of discrimination; there should no longer be "untouchables," "sacred cows," or "no-go areas" in Nigeria. Past and present public office holders must be compelled to account for their stewardship and must be punished if found to have abused their positions through corruption while in office. This will motivate Nigerians and make them proud and ready to identify with the development goals of government towards building a solid economy. The current efforts of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) at curbing corruption in the public sphere in Nigeria must be commended, but the Commission needs to be more vigorous in its fight and must be supported by government and, indeed, all Nigerians.

Third, for Nigeria to dilute foreign influence on her domestic economy, the country should soft-pedal the rapid liberalization of her economy. Thus, there should be a selective approach to liberalization which must not be total, as it is currently done. Instead of allowing the forces of globalization to dictate the pace of the country's economic development, there should be a balance between "opening up" the economy to foreigners and the protection of local entrepreneurs and

manufacturers. Nigeria, as a strong economic force in Africa, can take advantage of sub-regional and regional economic blocs such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union (AU) to promote the collective interests of the member states against retrogressive external manipulation.

Fourth, to ensure that the activities of multinational corporations in Nigeria do not further compound her economic woes as a result of their neo-colonizing intent, Nigeria can formalize her position by legislation. That is, there must be in place a legislation or legislations to define, in clear terms, the modalities through which global firms can operate in the country. For example, such a national law should establish general guidelines to be administered by an agency on multinational firms. The agency should regulate multinational corporations in areas such as the necessity for such multinational corporations to develop local expertise, the kind of Nigerian industries foreigners can invest in, the attitude of multinational corporations to their host communities including the environment, restrictions on the rate of profits to be repatriated abroad, and other business conduct considered to be harmful to Nigeria's domestic economy. The kind of legislation envisioned here will place a ceiling on the business behavior patterns of multinational corporations and create an enabling economic environment in which local industries can develop even with the operation of these multinational corporations.

Finally, instead of succumbing to the dictates of foreign economic interests in her policy formulation process, and in order to expedite development amidst the wave of globalization, Nigeria should, among other things, ensure that there is a congruence between her national policies and the emerging world economic realities and evolve policies that will amalgamate the informal sector of the domestic economy into the mainstream of her economy in order to increase the level of productivity. The local communities should be empowered so that their productive capacities can be strengthened while at the same time recognizing and preserving their identities and cultures; accurate technologies should be used that will fit the natural and material endowments of the country; and above all, consequent economic policies must be articulate, consistent, and focused.

Conclusion

One major operating principle of globalization is economic interface via competition. It follows therefore that any country aspiring to be an active player in the twenty-first century globalized economy and benefit immensely from the process must necessarily possess economic prowess. This implies that it must have a high level of technology, a sound infrastructural base, a high productivity rate, a high volume of exports, and a buoyant domestic economy to favorably compete and excel amongst a myriad of powerful adversaries in the global economy.

Nevertheless, given the pedigree of capitalism, under whose auspices globalization has surfaced, it is obvious that globalization will, in the long run, strangle the development process in Third World countries as the twenty-first century progresses. It is also evident that Nigeria is ill prepared or lacks the tenacity to contend, survive, and outwit other competitors economically in the fast globalizing world economy. Notwithstanding, Nigeria's condition is not irredeemable given the avalanche of her human and material potentialities. She should tread the path of development that will utilize her enormous local resources to transform her currently backward economy into a strong and viable one that can compete with other actors in the emerging globalizing economic system. The nature of the economic approach Nigeria chooses will determine whether globalization will distort development in the country or whether Nigeria will emerge as an economic power, strong enough to surmount the vicissitudes of globalization in the twenty-first century.

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On behalf of the **Mississippi Philological Association** and **Jackson State University**, we invite lovers of learning, literature, and history, academicians, students, and writers to submit proposals for papers or panels for presentation at the 2011 annual meeting of the MPA to be held on February 18 and 19 on the campus of Jackson State University. Submit 250-word abstracts by December 1, 2010 to conference organizers: Dr. Patsy J. Daniels, patsy.j.daniels@jsums.edu or Dr. Elizabeth S. Overman, esoverman@cox.net.

Since 1877, Jackson State University, a Historically Black Carnegie Doctoral-Research Intensive public institution of higher learning, has been providing young men and women opportunities that will empower them to succeed in an increasingly complex world. As the Urban University of Mississippi, Jackson State emphasizes public service programs designed to enhance quality of life and seek solutions to urban problems in the physical, social, intellectual, and economic environments. Located in **Jackson**, the capital city and the cultural, political, geographic, and business center of **Mississippi**, the campus sits on a scenic 125-acre tract only five minutes from downtown and less than twenty minutes from **Jackson International Airport**. Tree-lined walkways and a large central plaza add to the atmosphere of a major university in a bustling capital city.

The Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University will present the *5th Annual Creative Arts Festival: The 50th Anniversary of the Freedom Rides* on April 8 and 9, 2011. This year's festival will feature keynote addresses from Amiri Baraka and Sonia Sanchez as well as a number of other events, including poetry readings, performances, student panel presentations, and art displays.

The Margaret Walker Center invites proposals for papers, presentations, and panels for the *Creative Arts Festival* by March 4, 2011. While the theme of the conference is the 50th anniversary of the Freedom Rides, the organizers welcome proposals from high school, undergraduate, and graduate students on any topic. Proposals should be 250-500 words for submissions in one of four fields:

1. **Spoken Word** (5 to 7 minute presentations in original storytelling, oratory, and poetry)
2. **Visual Arts** (up to 3 pieces of artwork in any media with 5 to 7 minute presentations)
3. **Written** (8 to 10 page essays with 15 to 20 minute presentations)
4. **Performing Arts** (5 to 7 minute dance, musical, and theatrical presentations)

In the case of panel proposals, please submit the participants, the moderator, a brief synopsis of the panel's topic, and paper proposals.

To submit a proposal, please send a document in Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF to mwa@jsums.edu.

For more information, contact the Margaret Walker Center (mwa@jsums.edu or 601-979-2055) or the Conference Coordinators:

Dr. Robert Lockett (robert.lockett@jsums.edu)
Mrs. Catherine Lee (catherine.p.lee@students.jsums.edu)
Mr. Garrad Lee (raymond.lee@students.jsums.edu)

Note that selected submissions in the written category will have the opportunity to be published in Jackson State's *Researcher* magazine and the best essay by a JSU student will receive the \$1,000 Margaret Walker Alexander Annual Award.

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