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Cover Art

The front matter photo depicts a racially diverse group of protestors. The woman in the foreground speaks into an electronic megaphone. The photo encompasses the spirit of the theme of this year's volume, "Social Dis/Order" which describes the dynamics of anti-democratic movements, counter-movements, and structural disorder globally. The photo was sourced through Canva's free stock image library.

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STAR acknowledges that the University of Kansas resides on the ancestral territory of several tribal nations including the Kaw, Osage, and Shawnee peoples. This land acknowledgment recognizes that Native and Indigenous populations are traditional guardians of the land, and we recognize the enduring relationship between Native populations and these territories.

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The editors of STAR would like to thank all authors who submitted manuscripts since 2022 for the creation of this volume. Due to the disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, editorial staff changes, and the transition from a subscription-based format to a free, open-access format, the editors met several delays in the publication of this volume. We hope this updated, open-access platform will make the submission and publication process more efficient. We extend a special *thank you* to Marianne Reed at the KU Library for her guidance and assistance transitioning STAR to the OJS platform.

The Managing Editor would also like to thank the anonymous peer reviewers, assistant editors, previous staff, and faculty advisors who contributed their time, expertise, and guidance to making this volume a reality. Thank you for your patience and understanding through this challenging year.

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Editorial Introduction to the Volume: Social Dis/Order

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Editorial Introduction to the Volume: Social Dis/Order

“Protest beyond the law is not a departure from democracy; it is absolutely essential to it.”

~ Howard Zinn

Disobedience and Democracy 2002: 85

A survey of the contemporary world provides no shortage of ways in which social order appears to teeter on the brink of collapse. The global rise of anti-democratic movements, cascading global climate crises, and the persistence of gender and racial inequities are but a few examples of social chaos in recent years. In response, counter-movements attempt to address these issues, but their ability to meaningfully restructure social conditions remains unclear. For the 37th volume of *Social Thought and Research*, graduate students and early career scholars have identified and analyzed areas of persistence and change within established social and institutional orders globally within the United States, Jamaica, and China.

The volume begins with Blu Buchanan’s and Amara Miller’s exploration of counter-protests on college campuses in response to white supremacist movements in university spaces. The authors point to the *Unite the Right* movement at the University of Virginia’s campus that resulted in the vehicular manslaughter of activist Heather Heyer in August 2017. The authors argue that binary conceptualizations (violence vs non-violence) of collective action do not fully capture the nuance involved in such encounters. Buchanan and Miller outline a relational and ecological model of violence that identifies three interrelated types of violence: offensive violence of instigating protestors, passive institutional violence, and active defensive violence of counter-protesters.

Moving from the United States to the Caribbean, Alana Smith investigates how journalists in Jamaica report HIV-related news and stories within a prominent newspaper. Through content analysis, Smith identifies the use of stereotypical and biased language in media reports despite the region’s official training efforts to reduce journalism bias in HIV reporting. The author argues that the continued use of stereotypical and biased language reduces accurate HIV reporting by ostracizing people with HIV. Smith posits that researchers and experts should explore structural procedures and established newsroom dynamics to better address language bias in HIV reporting.

Nan Zhou offers a historical review and analysis of a unique type of urban village in China to analyze one result of the country’s rapid urbanization. These urban villages are known as *chengzhongcuns* which operate as a type of rural slum within the city. The author provides the historical context of these spaces’ legal and geographic development while exploring the cultural and socioeconomic aspects of its residents. The author argues that *chengzhongcuns*’ unique geographic and legal nature maintains broad patterns of social and economic inequality in the country.

While these studies highlight opportunities for meaningful change in established social orders, fighting for long-term change is a lengthy process. The authors highlight the need for more in-depth conceptualizations of the ecology of social movements and the need for institutions to

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hold themselves accountable to establish lasting social change. Social change requires a concerted effort by activists and institutions alike to reduce hate, inequality, and discrimination. The editors at *STAR* hope this volume provides guidance and sparks intellectual curiosity and activism moving forward.



Reckoning with Ecologies of Violence in Campus (Counter)Protests

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Abstract

Universities have become a focal point for contestation over the meaning of free speech as well as sites of violent protests connected to white supremacist speakers and anti-racist, anti-fascist activism. This paper investigates incarnations of violence operating during the recent resurgence of white supremacist organizing and counter-protest on college campuses, focusing on the case of the white supremacist attacks at the University of Virginia (U.Va.) and Charlottesville during August 2017 that culminated in the vehicular manslaughter of Heather Heyer. Past research often conceptualizes collective violence through a non/violent binary. In contrast, we argue that a relational and ecological model of violences (pl.) in social movement activity provides a stronger analysis. Using historical methods, we investigate three entangled incarnations of violence that contribute to contemporary moments of social dis/order: the offensive violence of white supremacists, the passive institutional violence of the (white supremacist) University, and active defensive violence on the part of counter-protesters in opposition to white supremacy. In conclusion, we discuss implications for research on violence in movements and contemporary (anti-)racist organizing, arguing that sociologists need to embrace more complex understandings of how violences manifest to address concerns about public safety.

Keywords: *Critical University Studies, Student Protest, Social Movements, Violence, White Supremacy, Counter-movements*

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Reckoning with Ecologies of Violence in Campus (Counter)Protests

"You had a group on one side that was bad, and you had a group on the other side that was also very violent... the other side that came charging in without a permit... were very, very violent."

~Donald Trump

"I will never forget the sound of those bodies being hit by that car... Trump might claim that there was violence from 'many sides' in Charlottesville, drawing a parallel between white nationalist terrorism and anti-racist protest. But I was there. And there is no parallel."

~Austin Gonzalez (2017), Chair of the Democratic Socialists of America, Richmond, VA chapter

After a year of white supremacists organizing at colleges across the country, on August 11, 2017, self-identified members of the alt-right marched through the University of Virginia (U.Va.) campus carrying tiki torches and chanting "white lives matter," "Jews will not replace us," as well as the Nazi slogan "blood and soil." The next day, the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville culminated in a vehicular attack by James Alex Fields Jr. that killed anti-racist activist Heather Heyer and injured more than twenty others. Universities have become a focal point for contestation over the meaning of free speech (Titley 2020) as well as sites of violent protests connected to white supremacist speakers and anti-racist, anti-fascist activism. In this paper, we investigate encounters between white nationalists and counter-protests, focusing our analysis on the 2017 U.Va. march and the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville. What incarnations of violence are observed in contemporary (counter)protest, and how do these comprise a broader ecology of violence within University spaces?

As discussed in our review of literature below, prominent research on collective violence often relies on a binary conceptualization, creating challenges for accurate analysis and risking a false equivalency between forms of self- or community-defense and premeditated harm to living beings. In this way, claims of "violence" used by researchers to classify movements or tactics can become what Stuart Hall (1980) calls an "empty signifier," when a phrase takes on nearly any interpretation desired in ways that support structures of power (Hall 2006). Following Foucault's genealogical method (Dean 1994; Gutting 1989), our analysis recognizes the socially constructed nature of violence and acknowledges that violence is contextual and multiple, informed by operations of power. Rather than impose our own definition and assumptions about what counts as violence, data were analyzed with a focus on how claims of "violence" were discussed and assigned by various activists, administrative officials, bystanders, and/or reporters, thereby creating particular structures of meaning which inform how others interact with, understand, and label social actors.

Unearthing the violences present in incidents of counter-/protest at Universities³ requires acknowledging the inter-relational and geographically situated nature of harm, environments that activists must navigate in their attempts at social (re)organization. We apply an ecological framework of violences to contemporary white supremacist organizing and anti-racist, anti-fascist counter-protest on University campuses, specifically the incident at U.Va./Charlottesville. This approach recognizes that forms of violence exist in relationship, such that they are recursively-affecting and mutually-constituting. Our analysis reveals three incarnations: the *offensive violence of white supremacists*, the *passive institutional violence of the (white supremacist) University*, and *active defensive violence in opposition to white supremacy*. In conclusion, we discuss the implications for sociological research as well as for efforts to combat hate in our communities.

CONCEPTUALIZING VIOLENCE IN COLLECTIVE ACTION

Studies of violence have historically focused on interpersonal conflict and/or war, with research dispersed across disciplines like sociology, criminology, international relations, political science, terrorism studies, and peace studies (Piven 2012; Walby 2012). Within sociology, experts have conceptualized violence in a variety of ways. One typology developed by Galtung (1990:294) presents a "violence triangle" or stratum (layers) with three "super-types." These include direct violence, an event where one or more people impair the basic human needs of others or threaten to do so. The second, structural violence, represents a process wherein certain groups experience discrimination within social institutions, preventing their access to basic human needs. Third, cultural violence refers to aspects of culture that legitimize direct and structural types. Cultural violence is similar to the concept of symbolic violence, "a gentle violence, imperceptible and invisible even to its victims, exerted for the most part through the purely symbolic channels of communication and cognition (more precisely misrecognition), recognition, or even feeling" (Bourdieu 2001:2). Other feminist scholars have sought to extend "definitions of violence to include a range of behaviours including, for example, physical, emotional and psychological abuse" (Morgan and Björkert 2006:442).

Mary Jackman (1999:276) argues that due to the legal and criminological emphasis in much literature and "in the absence of a clear, explicit conceptualization of violence, implicit assumptions about the nature of the phenomenon have shaped the research agenda." This includes overemphasizing physical injuries over psychological, social, and/or material harm as

³ Our capitalization of "University" throughout is meant to illuminate the inherent power imbalances within academia, reflecting the control that University administrations have over dominant understandings of non/violence.

well as focusing on interpersonal actors rather than institutional agents (Jackman 2002:387). These types of implicit assumptions are visible in research on collective violence in social movement studies, which historically emphasized the deviance or criminality of the disadvantaged, focusing on interpersonal harm, rioting, and/or terrorism on the part of (armed) activists against state targets (Buechler 2004). Contemporary studies often analyze protester tactics (Nassauer 2016), claims-making and framing processes (Snow, Vliegenthart, and Ketelaars 2019), and policing (della Porta and Fillieule 2004; Earl 2011).

Prominent social movement scholarship generally relies on a non/violent binary when analyzing collective behavior (Beck et al. 2022). For example, della Porta's (1995) foundational work acknowledges that determining what acts are "political violence" can be highly subjective yet constructs a dichotomy between non/violence (2-3). Charles Tilly (2004) defines "collective violence" as episodic social interaction that immediately inflicts physical damage on persons and/or objects and involves at least two perpetrators who are at least partially coordinated. Both scholars fail to differentiate clearly between violence directed at property and violence directed at living beings, with some activities clouded and categorized as both non/violent.

Many scholars fetishize nonviolence as more moral and/or successful in achieving movement goals. In recent years, the subfield of nonviolent civil resistance studies has developed (Nepstad 2015; Schock 2013), including influential quantitative research by Chenoweth and Stephan (2011), who argue that nonviolent tactics are more effective than violent approaches. However, their methodology and findings have been critiqued by several scholars (Lehoucq 2016; Meckfessel 2016). In a replication and expansion of Chenoweth and Stephan's original analysis, Anisin (2020:2) found nonviolent tactics were less effective than previously assumed, violent insurgency slightly more effective, and campaigns featuring unarmed violence were the most successful. This scholarship has sparked dialogue about the accuracy of nonviolent research (Anisin 2022; Onken, Shemia-Goeke, and Martin 2021).

Why have conceptualizations of collective violence remained so restricted? Scholars often rely on media and government narratives that privilege empowered, often white and middle-class perspectives (Schwartz and Cook 2002; Liu 2018). This relates to ease of access since, as Blee (2017) notes, it is more difficult and riskier to study violent movements. The prominence of binary conceptualizations also reflects broader racial and class biases. Meckfessel (2016:84-85) claims that the dominant conceptualization of non/violence "functions to guarantee a very capitalist equivalence between commodities and bodies." According to Anisin (2020), ideological bias toward nonviolent civil resistance is also tied to U.S. foreign policy and imperialism.

Recently, scholars have called for more relational analyses of collective violence that emphasize the constructed nature of political violence and how conditions are perceived by different actors (Alimi, Bosi, and Demetriou 2012; della Porta 2009; della Porta and Gbikpi 2012; Goodwin 2012). According to Sylvia Walby (2012: 96), there has been a “re-emergence of violence” within sociology, largely due to greater inclusion of views from the global South, women, and minorities. Noteworthy studies that recognize the ways nonviolence is always, and already, entangled with violence in movements include Cobb Jr. (2014), Doná (2012), Fanon (1963), Haines (1988), Jackson (2019), Tyson (1998), Umoja (2013), and Wang (2018).

Our research builds on these relational approaches, focusing on how participants and observers give meaning to violent interactions, shaping movement activity. We recognize that violence is socially mediated, context-dependent, and influenced by power since, as Jackman (2001) observes, certain actors have more power to engage in acts of harm while retaining legitimacy. For example, Weber (1958:78) argues that the state is “a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force,” or consider Bourdieu’s (2000:175) claim that the state holds “the monopoly of legitimate symbolic violence.” Our analysis conceptualizes the relationships between incarnations of harm that social movement actors are embedded within and respond to as a lived ecosystem of violences that constrains and enables certain forms of organizing. Our framework is ecological in the sense that relations between various manifestations can give rise to new forms and/or shape the nature of violent activities among social groups across time.

This study also adds to the literature on movements and counter-movements, mobilizations that arise in response to changes proposed by existing activism, creating a situation in which each movement reacts to the other group. Existing research has focused on theoretical interpretations (Meyer and Staggenborg 1996), claims-making between multiple movements, or in-depth qualitative studies of cases (Andrews 2002; Dixon 2008; Dorf and Tarrow 2014). However, conflicts between counter/movements remain understudied (Banaszak and Odercin 2010).

DATA & METHODS

We use historical content analysis of primary and secondary sources to better understand contemporary counter/protests on college campuses. Data gathered included the formal U.Va. archive on the U.Va./Charlottesville attacks and a variety of informal records. As Carter (2006:233) observes, archives are spaces of power and “the archive is riddled with silences.” Rather than relying solely on official records, we constructed a diverse data set aligned with Brilmeyer’s (2018:15) assemblage approach to archival research, which

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"encourages archivists to seek out expansive counternarratives that connect related records, expose the politics of an archive's intervention(s), and challenge seemingly self-evident categories." We collected additional sources using news, Google, and Facebook searches for records of events between January through August 2017. We prioritized sources that did not engage in analysis of the events but rather shared firsthand accounts from activists and/or University actors. We included sources on later events if they pertained to ongoing legal cases related to attacks. Documents included official university reports and email records from U.Va. as well as several other Universities that experienced counter/protests in the months leading up to August; a variety of mainstream, alternative, and citizen journalism; records of related legal actions; first person accounts from blogs and social media (especially from populations underrepresented in administrative and mainstream media sources); and various documentation of student activism, ranging from petitions to video recordings of actions such as rallies.

Given our inductive approach, we purposely did not begin the project with our own definition of violence that we then applied to the events being analyzed. Rather, utilizing a genealogical method, we explored how violence is socially constructed, context-dependent, and, as such, takes on multiple forms and interpretations shaped by power. During data analysis, we focused on tracking various uses of the term "violence" by social actors, including when they may have used implied language or wording that framed actions or people as dangerous, or wording that was synonymous with violence (e.g., attack, assault, threatening others, etc.). Our approach meant a variety of actions were incorporated in our analysis, such as hate speech, property violence, and physical assault; however, these were not coded as either nonviolent or violent. Instead, we analyzed how different social groups interpreted and assigned meanings of violence in different ways to actions, people, and/or events based on their positionality and how such labels shaped consequent activity.

Because we were especially interested in the relationships between manifestations of violence, we also engaged in process tracing, a qualitative data analysis technique that focuses on the unfolding of events over time as well as generating intensive descriptive "snapshots" that serve as the basis for causal inference (Collier 2011:824). This method is especially suited to within-case analysis characterized by thick description and close attention to sequences of action. We created a detailed timeline of the events leading up to and including the attacks at U.Va./Charlottesville to help us identify manifestations of violence and patterns of escalation in counter/protest encounters.

For the sake of length, we focus only on non-state actors in our analysis, including event organizers, other activists who attended actions, and university administrators' involvement and

responses. This means we have largely ignored state actors, including local government and police forces, who have complex ties to Universities and unique histories of violence that we are unable to adequately address in this study.

CONTEMPORARY COUNTER/PROTEST ON CAMPUSES

Since 2008, the U.S. has experienced a re-emergence of visible white supremacy (Perliger 2012) and a mainstreaming of white supremacist ideology.⁴ White supremacist activism, or what Blee (2017:1-2) calls organized racism, is a network of intertwined groups that "promote virulent racism and anti-Semitism and are often xenophobic and nationalistic." Tactics vary but include efforts to segregate white people as well as violent assaults. Between July 2005 and June 2015, out of the 279 murders in the U.S. with some sort of extremist connection, 93 percent were related to right-wing extremism with 77 percent tied to white supremacists (ADL 2018a). The ADL notes that "white supremacists can kill for many reasons, not just... their cause," that they are likely to engage in other crimes, and that they are responsible for 52 percent of extremist police shootouts. White supremacists are more likely to come from middle-class or wealthy backgrounds and have higher than average education levels (Parsons 2015; Petrella 2017).

Since January 2016, white power activists have been increasingly targeting college campuses (ADL 2018b). Organizers like Richard Spencer, head of the National Policy Institute, and Nathan Damigo, founder of Identity Evropa, have sought to rebrand white supremacy as "alt-right" ideology, targeting students through efforts like #ProjectSiege (ADL 2018b; SPLC 2017; SPLC 2018). Damigo has featured prominently in multiple clashes between white supremacists and counter-protesters. He attended the Milo Yiannopoulos event at the University of California Davis (UCD) in January 2017 and later, in April, gained notoriety at the University of California Berkeley (UCB) after being filmed assaulting a female anti-fascist counter-protester. Damigo was one of the main organizers of the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, where Spencer was supposed to be a key speaker.

In response to the threat posed by white supremacy on campuses, marginalized student activists have drawn on various traditions to resist these incursions and make their everyday

⁴ Throughout we use the term white supremacist to refer to active participants and/or organizers involved in white supremacist activism. Sometimes, we may refer to the ideology of white supremacy or to white supremacy as a movement; in such instances, we have tried to make the intended meaning clear.

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lives safer. Today, many of these efforts are popularly referred to as “antifa.”⁵ According to Bray (2017:xvi), antifa is “an ideology, an identity, a tendency or milieu, or an activity of self-defense.” It represents a transnational movement incorporating socialist, anarchist, and communist currents into contemporary efforts to contest growing fascism. These forms of counter-protest gained visibility alongside President Trump’s election in 2016. Student organizing for Black liberation and against fascism has received criticism from many (including sociologists) for their “violent” tactics (e.g., Chenoweth 2017; Woodson 2017). Whether those tactics are disruption, no-platforming, or destruction of white supremacist symbols like monuments, the framing of counter-protesters as “violent” is often related to their demands, which seek to disrupt everyday forms of violence already present on campuses.

In practice, anti-fascist and other liberatory student movements use a variety of tactics, the majority of which involve no physical violence. Mark Bray notes:

Anti-fascists conduct research on the Far Right online, in person, and sometimes through infiltration; they dox them, push cultural milieus to disown them, pressure bosses to fire them, and demand that venues cancel their shows, conferences, and meetings; they organize educational events, reading groups, trainings, athletic tournaments, and fundraisers; they write articles, leaflets, and newspapers, drop banners, and make videos... But it is also true that some of them punch Nazis. (Bray 2017:168).

This last tactic is especially contentious, especially when paired with the formation of a black bloc, a type of anonymous, coordinated street action where protesters mask up and wear uniform black clothing in response to growing surveillance technologies and police militarization.

Anti-fascists argue that occasional violence is necessary to counter fascism and white supremacy as well as to protect targeted communities (Bray 2017). They claim that white supremacists leverage University spaces to gain legitimacy while targeting opponents and vulnerable community members. Many counter-protesters feel that University administrations’ responses to white supremacist organizing have been inadequate and that University “free speech” policies facilitate the spread of white supremacist messages. As a result, counter-protesters often engage in escalating tactical innovations.

For example, leading up to the “violent” shutdown of Milo Yiannopoulos at UCD on January 13, 2017, organizers first pursued nonviolent tactics, including holding meetings with

⁵ We have maintained lowercase for Antifa throughout to reflect the movement’s power disadvantage and in recognition of the term’s blurred boundaries, which can also refer to a type of tactic as well as an ideological stance.

the administration to express concerns. A petition urging that the event be canceled pointed out administrative hypocrisy, arguing that the University was "fostering an environment in which hate speech is able to proliferate by providing Milo Yiannopoulos with a formal platform for student outreach and recruitment" (UCD Organizers 2017). The petition expressed concern that the presence of white supremacists not only "interferes with the learning of students," but would encourage further violence locally. Unionized graduate student workers even filed a grievance regarding what they felt were unsafe working conditions.

The fears of counter-protesters are hardly unwarranted. Blee (2017: 6) argues that white power activists' "vile depictions of racial, religious, and sexual minority group members... are intended to be immediately damaging to those who see them, as well as to instill fear." Fights broke out at UCD on the night of the event, and a week later at a similar event at the University of Washington, a supporter of Yiannopoulos shot an anti-fascist protester (Halverson 2019). White supremacist organizing also incites further racist violence in local communities, including hate crimes (ADL 2018a; Blee 2017; DoED Campus Safety and Security 2018; Feinberg, Branton, and Martinez-Ebers 2019).

As this context shows, the violence that unfolded at U.Va./Charlottesville did not arise in a vacuum. Historically, U.Va. and Charlottesville have deep ties to white supremacy. In the 1920s, U.Va. had its own chapter of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), which donated an endowment equivalent to \$16 million dollars today (Schmidt 2017). On May 13, only months before Heather Heyer's murder by a white supremacist, Richard Spencer—a U.Va. alumnus—led a torch-lit protest through Charlottesville against the removal of a Confederate statue (Toy 2017). Then, in July, the KKK held a rally where around fifty Klan members were escorted by police, who later fired tear gas on thousands of counter-protesters (Toy 2017).

On Friday, August 11th, 2017, white supremacists gathered at U.Va. and marched to the heart of campus. Using their torches as weapons, they attacked a small group of unarmed counter-protesters composed of students, staff, and faculty. Numerous witnesses reported police did not intervene despite their presence (Vasquez 2017). Several days later, one of the counter-protesters suffered a stroke that journalists claimed was related to injuries they sustained during the attack (Stripling and Gluckman 2017).

Emboldened by Friday's events, Saturday's "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville quickly turned bloody as white supremacists and counter-protesters clashed for hours in a chaotic street battle while police remained largely on the sidelines. Many came with shields, sticks, and clubs; due to Virginia's open carry laws, many had guns. Armed contingents included some of the left (e.g., Redneck Revolt), but especially those on the right (e.g., see VICE 2017).

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During the melee, Richard Preston, imperial wizard of the Maryland KKK, was filmed shooting a pistol at a Black counter-protester who was attempting to burn a confederate flag (Shapira 2018). White supremacists beat a Black teacher, DeAndre Harris, nearly to death, an assault caught on camera by the press. Harris continued to receive death threats for months (Modiano and McShane 2017). By 11:40 am, the city declared a state of emergency, canceled the rally, and riot police began to clear Emancipation Park. At 1:45 pm, white supremacist James Alex Fields Jr. drove his car into a crowd of counter-protesters leaving the area, killing Heather Heyer and injuring at least twenty, several of whom were permanently disabled (Wilson, Helmore, and Swaine 2017).

In the aftermath of U.Va./Charlottesville, white supremacists and counter-protests have often been framed as comparably violent. White supremacists are cognizant of this and use the equivocation to justify their actions. For example, after the murder of Heyer, white supremacist organizer Christopher Cantwell claimed:

None of our people killed anybody unjustly.... Someone [struck] that vehicle. When these animals attacked him again, he saw no way to get away from them, except to hit the gas. And sadly, because our rivals are a bunch of stupid animals who don't pay attention, they couldn't just get out of the way.... It was more than justified.... I think a lot more people are going to die (VICE 2017).

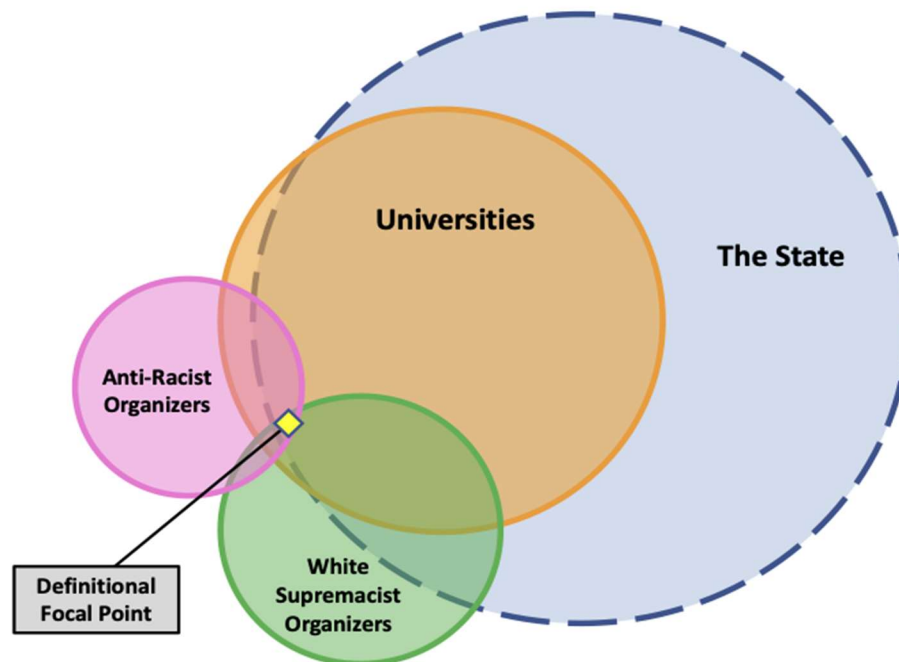
In this instance, Cantwell equates an anti-fascist protester striking Fields' car as "violent" justification for the subsequent vehicular attack, framed by Cantwell as an act of self-defense (or at least, defense of property).

ECOLOGIES OF VIOLENCE IN (COUNTER)PROTEST

Our analysis revealed three manifestations of "violence" that exemplify campus counter/protest dynamics. These incarnations can be thought of as a kind of ecosystem or web of activity, relationships, and social meaning that reveal contested understandings of "violence" for social actors and inform their subsequent strategic choices. In this sense, categories like "violent" are unclear but reflect events, actions, and encounters between actors and institutions unfolding across time and in relation to other individuals, cultural environments, and governing bodies. Existing power dynamics contribute to unequal access to authority that delegitimizes alternative understandings of violence, resulting in a disproportionate risk of harm to specific groups (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Illustration of definitional spheres of “violence.”

Size indicates power and authority, with overlapping points indicating greater alignment and legitimacy granted to that definition of violence, contributing to a dominant definitional focal point.



The first incarnation of violence is the *offensive collective violence of white supremacists*. Although those participating in this form of violence are presented as interlopers to campus, they are often embedded in University communities (e.g., Spencer's status as a U.Va. alumnus) and supported by local organizations such as right-wing student clubs. They leverage the power of the historically white institution of the University, especially by mimicking the demands of marginalized groups (SPLC 2016) and utilizing claims of "free speech" to gain access to amplified platforms (Delgado and Stefancic 2018). White supremacist organizers often portray themselves as victims of censorship or left-wing attacks. This dual position, at once claiming marginalization while simultaneously accessing tremendous advantages in power, is characteristic of offensive white supremacist violence. This allows them to take advantage of political openings within University spaces to organize and recruit by seeking out and/or inciting controversial and potentially harmful incidents.

This form of violence is offensive in that white supremacists often have premeditated intentions to commit violence. At U.Va./Charlottesville, this was demonstrated by documented assaults, as well as by first-person accounts of psychological violence. Independent journalists have since revealed how, leading up to the weekend, "in private chat channels, [white

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supremacists] shared advice on weaponry and tactics, including repeatedly broaching the idea of driving vehicles through opposition crowds” (Morris 2017: par.1). A student at U.Va., Weston Gobar, described how “the neo-Nazis who came to Charlottesville to intimidate minority communities... showed up with assault rifles and guns, wearing camouflage” (NYT 2017: par.4). Another student, Isabella Ciambotti, reported being threatened by several members of the alt-right who told her “I hope you get raped by a n-----” (NYT 2017: par.22). Counter-protester Logan Eliot (2017) recounted how white supremacists:

...came with bats, clubs, plywood shields painted with swastikas, brass knuckles, tear gas canisters, and wooden sticks. Not to mention the guns... They liked that they made you feel nervous. It was fun for them. They came to hurt people, and they did.

Temporally and spatially, offensive white supremacist violence is not contained to the moment of on-campus collective action but ripples outward, spurring future violence in surrounding communities. The violence at U.Va. on Friday rippled outward and was magnified on Saturday when Heyer was murdered. Hate crimes often increase in local areas after white supremacist events, such as a Mosque vandalism following Milo's visit to UCD (Magagnini 2017), as well as anti-Black and anti-Semitic vandalism in nearby Sacramento (Fletcher and Lindelof 2017). This violence also spills over into online spaces. Common practices used by white power actors include doxing (gathering personal information and releasing it to the public), swatting (calling the police to someone's home), or swarming (coordinated anonymous online harassment campaigns), all behaviors that can become heightened after in-person events. Reporting by Barnes (2017: par.1) indicates that after Charlottesville, white nationalists attempted “to compile a dossier of private information about Antifa members and plan to leak it to encourage harassment and violence.” White supremacists also doxxed Bystander Brennan Gilmore after he filmed the viral video of the vehicular attack (Barnes 2017).

The second incarnation of violence is the *passive institutional violence of the (white supremacist) University*. Our consideration of this form of violence is rooted in an institutional level of analysis and critique that acknowledges that the University has disproportionate power to legitimize its monopoly on violence and impose its own interpretations of violence on others. This incarnation is consequently more complex than that of offensive white supremacist attacks, especially given the diversity of actors within academia. Organizational structures mean that administrators, especially those at the highest level of leadership, such as the Office of the (campus) President, have far more power than other University employees to shape understandings of events and enact policy. Even among administrators, there can be conflicting

interpretations of violence. Staff, faculty, and other workers often have varied alignments with University administrations, and varying levels of power within the University structure depending on their roles on campus. The passive violence of the University is thus best understood as structural and often consists of inaction or tacit support by the administration that enables the offensive violence of white supremacists to unfold. Ultimately, actions like providing platforms and police protection for white supremacists on campus ensures power relations replicate a history of white supremacist, settler colonialism within academia.

Leading up to Friday's attack, the U.Va. administration messaged students about the importance of free speech for white supremacists, suggesting that counter-protesting would only incite "physical confrontation" and endanger their safety given the "credible risk of violence at this event" (Sullivan 2017a). University messages falsely equated white supremacist and anti-racist protests as similarly "violent." The University was aware of the potential dangers posed by "alt-right" protesters, especially the risk of harm perpetrated by white supremacists against students engaging in counter-demonstrations (Sullivan 2017b). Despite these dangers, the University did not cancel the event.

U.Va. administrators faced criticism for failing to take community concerns seriously leading up to Friday's incident, for not being adequately prepared, and for failing to protect students as police largely remained on the sidelines (Goodman 2017). Journalist Michael Vasquez (2017: par.1) has argued that "while the university maintained it was hamstrung from blocking the [Friday] march by free-speech rules, laws are in place that could have interrupted the event, and perhaps the deadly violence of the next day." Mr. Magill, the university worker who experienced a stroke following Friday's attack, blamed "the university's inaction... for fueling the boldness of white supremacists a day later" (Vasquez 2017: par.22). A U.Va. student of color, Nojan Rostami, who lived on campus directly across from where the torchlit march was held, expressed how they were "trying to be sympathetic to what is certainly a delicate situation for the administration. But it's hard to do that when I'm staying up on Saturday night fending off nightmares of armed militiamen dragging me out of my dorm room in the middle of the night" (NYT 2017: par.36).

Following the Unite the Right event, the University strongly condemned "intimidating and abhorrent behavior intended to strike fear and sow division in our community" and reiterated that "acts of violence are not protected by the First Amendment" (Sullivan 2017c). Yet the University's application of policy responded to the offensive violence of white supremacists only after they harmed counter-protesters rather than encouraging proactive, preventative efforts to ensure the protection of students and community members.

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The effects of passive institutional violence endure beyond enabling white supremacist organizing. Administrative responses to counter/protests generally call for greater surveillance and administrative control of campus spaces, often further militarizing the University. For example, administrators at U.Va. emphasized stronger relationships with police after the attacks to address community concerns (Sullivan 2017d; Lampkin 2017). The tightening of University relationships with police is often accompanied by greater efforts to surveil the speech and organizing efforts of anti-racist organizers. In the wake of white supremacist organizing across the University of California system, administrators have sought to limit the capacity of anti-racist activists to organize, increasing levels of administrative punishment and surveillance (Fuller 2017; Greenwald 2017). In addition to white supremacist violence creating conditions of danger for targeted communities, the responses of the University to such incidents continue to privilege whiteness within academic spaces and often create structural conditions that further marginalize vulnerable members of campus communities.

The third incarnation of violence observed is *active defensive violence by those opposing white supremacy*. This incarnation is defensive in that this violence (especially when directed against living beings) typically occurs after offensive white supremacist attacks have begun. It is also organized from a historically and structurally marginalized location (having had and continuing to leverage less power and legitimacy in society). Counter-protesters pursue such violence as an alternative solution to what they argue are missing structural protections from offensive white supremacist violence and amid pre-existing antagonistic relationships to institutions like the University.

Counter-protesters express that their efforts to oppose white supremacists are oriented toward the protection of the local community and a commitment to prevent future genocidal fascism. Given the real threat that white supremacists pose, such actions represent legitimate tactical approaches to self-defense, especially when police are absent or may even be sympathetic toward fascist aggressors, and thus more likely to target anti-racist activists than neo-Nazis (Levin 2018; Meckfessel 2016). According to Bray (2017), anti-fascists challenge conventional interpretations of self-defense, embracing certain offensive tactics to forestall the potential for self-defense down the line in the event that fascists gain greater power. Counter-protesters on campuses claim they use defensive violence strategically as one of many tactics that demonstrate their love and support for each other across lines of class, race, gender, and sexuality.

Witnesses at U.Va./Charlottesville emphasize the self-defensive nature of violence from the left. Cornel West claimed the religious group he was counter-protesting with “would have

been crushed like cockroaches if it were not for the anarchists and the anti-fascists... they saved our lives" (Goodman 2017: par.14). Brandy Daniels recounted how:

The anarchists and antifa milling nearby saw the huge mob of the Nazis approach and stepped in... Based on what was happening all around, the looks on their [Nazi] faces, the sheer number of them, and the weapons they were wielding... had antifa not stepped in, those of us standing on the steps would definitely have been injured, very likely gravely so (Lithwick 2017: par.5).

Another counter-protester, Cleric Logan Eliot (2017), recalled how "I never felt safer than when I was near antifa. They came to defend people, to put their bodies between these armed white supremacists and those of us who could not or would not fight. They protected a lot of people."

Counter-protester defensive violence is also a response to institutional violence operating within the University system. Many counter-protesters initially utilized nonviolent tactics, seeking assistance from institutions to prevent white supremacist organizing in their communities. However, due to passive institutional violence, most felt their concerns went unaddressed, creating a situation where they were faced with potential threats on two fronts. As such, some forms of counter-protester violence directly targeted property, such as Confederate statues or flags, bank windows, police vehicles, and/or barricades erected to protect white supremacists that symbolize passive institutional violence. Counter-protesters, and the violence they sometimes wield, are thus oriented toward addressing long-standing violence within the University as much as it is based on ensuring protection from the offensive violence of white supremacists.

What emerges from this analysis is a complex ecosystem of violences, unfolding in relation to each other. White supremacist organizing utilizes narratives of "free speech" to gain access to legitimate academic platforms, even as such activists often strive to incite violent incidents against living beings on campuses while recruiting new followers. Against an ongoing backdrop of passive institutional violence of the University, concerned students and community members feel they lack administrative protection and counter-protest as a means of opposing white supremacy and protecting those who may be targeted by hate crimes. In the aftermath of clashes between counter/protesters, Universities often equivocate and denounce violence on "both sides." However, as Bray (2017:157) notes, "if we take a look at the track record of anti-fascism... a consistent pattern emerges...: when local fascist organizing declines, so does local anti-fascist organizing."

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The way we lump and split social movements, actors, and institutions into “violent” and “nonviolent” categories has important implications for the preservation and empowerment of white supremacy and fascism. Binary conceptualizations of “violence” (and its presumed foil, “nonviolence”) present an epistemological and methodological problem for research on social movements, reinforcing assumptions that violence is a simple, uniform, and easily measured feature of social life. It is imperative to problematize “violence” as a label that is socially and historically situated within relationships of racialized, classed, and gendered power. Of the many incarnations of violence that exist, only some incarnations are deemed “violent” at particular historical moments while others become legitimized by powerful institutions like Universities. Conceptualizations of a non/violent binary benefit established social orders by presenting “violence” as contradictory to a presumed benevolent, “nonviolent” set of institutions. Nevertheless, spaces like the University are not neutral ground, nor are theories of violence deployed within its bounds. Such institutions are built on unceded Indigenous territories and rely on the continued oppression of people of color (Dolmage 2017; Harney and Moten 2013; Watkins 2001; Wilder 2013). By better understanding the relationships between incarnations of violence, it is our hope that we can identify more effective policies that address the roots of harm and promote community healing.

If we consider violence to be harm-inducing action, it is hardly the case that all manifestations of violence are recognized as such. Our analysis of white supremacist organizing and anti-fascist, anti-racist counter-protest revealed three manifestations. The *offensive violence of white supremacists* is often associated with premeditated acts of harm that are psychologically and physically damaging to living beings, typically people who are underrepresented and marginalized in University spaces. Given the white supremacist roots of academia, the *passive institutional violence of the University* generally operates as a supportive context for white supremacist organizing, providing tacit support for recruitment and adding legitimacy to speakers' racist ideologies. There are also considerable financial costs of heightened police presence on campuses in anticipation and response to such incidents, as administrators often strive to protect University property and white supremacists using campus spaces from counter-protester “violence.” This creates a relationship that delegitimizes and also penalizes *active defensive violence in opposition to white supremacy*, even while such actors feel compelled to protect their communities from threats. Thus, within the ecology of violences on campus, symbolic distinctions regarding which harm-inducing actions are labeled “violent” become weaponized by white supremacists as well as administrations seeking to protect,

reproduce, and/or expand existing systems of power. These realities are challenged by counter-protesters on college campuses, who seek to reformulate dominant power structures to create a safer, more socially just, and equitable future.

To understand and respond to contemporary campus counter/protest, we must be wary of solutions that appear to alleviate one incarnation of violence--say, offensive white supremacist violence--by increasing other manifestations that disproportionately harm marginalized populations, particularly passive institutional violence. University administrations have overwhelmingly responded by increasing the power of predominantly white police forces and cracking down on activists in general. This approach lumps offensive and defensive forms of violence together, even though these incarnations of violence are distinct (see Chirumbolo, Mayer, and de Witte 2006). However, research has shown that members of groups historically marginalized in Universities, like people of color, are more likely to be involved in anti-racist organizing (Barroso and Minkin 2020; Jones and Reddick 2017; Linder et al. 2019; Quaye, Linder, Stewart, and Satterwhite 2022). If anti-racist, anti-fascist organizing is framed as equally violent to white power activism by Universities who increasingly criminalize protest, we risk excluding those who are already at the margins of academia into the mass incarceration system. In the case we study, University administrations often try to solve the violence of white supremacy by adding punitive policies to an institutional structure that remains inherently violent. Yet this approach risks tightening the ropes of oppression rather than loosening them (Garces, Ambriz, Johnson, and Bradley 2022). Further research should explore how state actors like local governments and/or police forces play a role in the ecology of violences involved in campus counter/protest.

Shifting from prior conceptualizations to a conceptualization of an ecology of violence allows a different entry point into the study of collective action, helping inform solutions to protect targeted populations from both white supremacist and institutional incarnations of harm. Prioritizing living beings over property necessitates solving both offensive and passive forms of violence. Until structural, social, and cultural forms of oppression are acknowledged and healed by Universities, including reducing administrative support of white supremacist organizing on college campuses, the risk of repeated incidences like those at U.Va./Charlottesville remains.

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Dis/Articulating Ideological Norms in Jamaican HIV Reporting

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Abstract

The use of accurate terminology reflecting the reality of Jamaica's HIV situation is needed to dis/articulate existing social stigmas. This study explores whether Jamaican journalists predominantly use stereotypical language in HIV reporting. This quantitative case study used 14 predefined coding categories from PAHO's 2006 HIV-related Language Update - a Caribbean HIV-reporting media guide. This facilitated the use of content analysis to evaluate HIV-related stories before and after the publication of PAHO's HIV reporting guide in two time periods: January 1, 2004 to December 31, 2005, and January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2008. Jamaican journalists predominantly used 10 socially and medically problematic HIV-related terms. Through the application of the framing and agenda-setting theories, this study notes that these terms diminish attention from HIV; are socially outdated strategies; and ostracize, stereotype, and disrespect people with HIV. By spotlighting news production, this study underscores that dis/articulating existing stereotypical HIV reporting norms and language use in the Jamaican press must involve future research into newsroom dynamics.

Keywords: *HIV, Caribbean journalism, ideology, Jamaica, media, language*

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Dis/Articulating Ideological Norms in Jamaican HIV Reporting

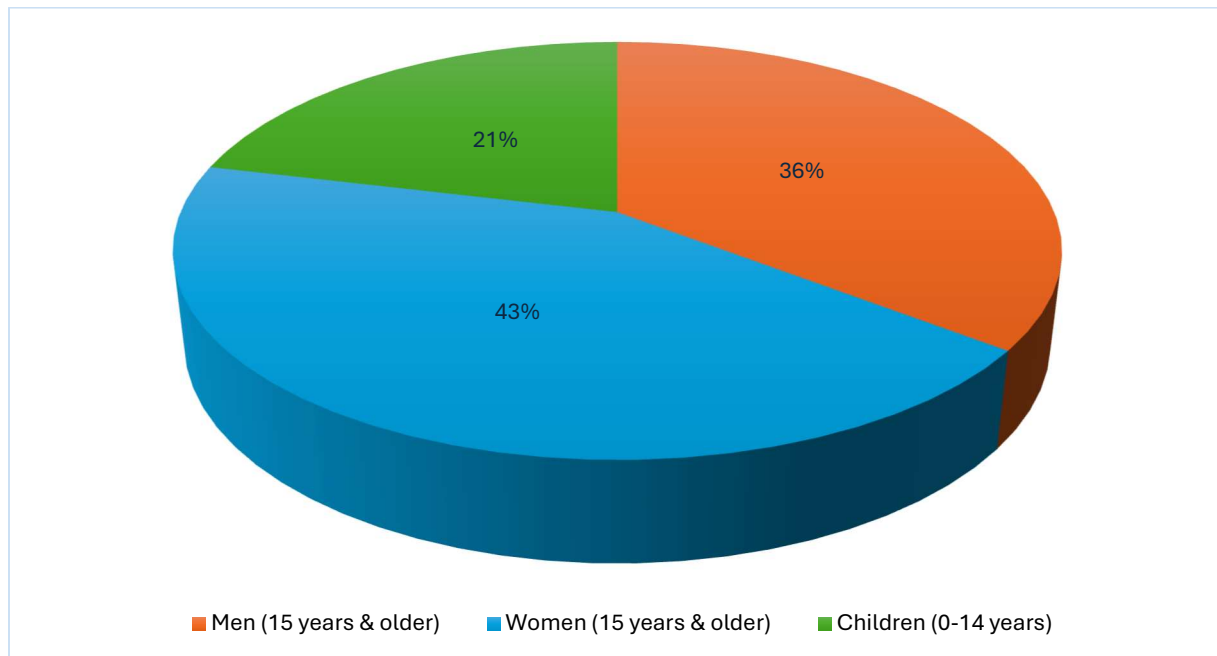
The recent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic wrought worldwide disruptions, impacting both medical and non-medical access to Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) treatment and services (Forsythe 2021). These disruptions caused a decline in the number of individuals receiving HIV treatment and a significant reduction in HIV testing since 2019. The disruptions, in part, may be attributed to changing public perceptions of HIV (Forsythe 2021).

This study is founded on the premise that how society talks about HIV is an important facet of diagnosis and treatment (Hamer 2000). This work examines the world of HIV-related discourse in the Jamaican print media to highlight the need for language to unbiasedly reflect reality. As such, two main questions guided this work:

1. Do Jamaican journalists use stereotypical language in HIV reporting, and how does this influence public perception of HIV and related issues?
2. Has the Pan-American Health Organization's (PAHO) provision of HIV reporting training to Jamaican journalists improved their reporting standards by using preferred HIV terms?

The developing country of Jamaica is of historical prominence in HIV-related discussions as the first instance of Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in the Caribbean was formally documented in Jamaica 42 years ago, marking the onset of a profound public health concern (Barnes et al. 2008). Since 1982, HIV has demanded political, economic, and social attention in Jamaican society, as evident in the country's National HIV Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (Figueroa et al., 2020).

Even with a lack of updated HIV statistics, available figures for Jamaica are cause for concern. A 2023 report by The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) estimates that approximately 32,000 persons have HIV in Jamaica. This signals the need to continuously stress the importance of people voluntarily testing for HIV in the country. In 2022, UNAIDS stated that many persons with HIV, particularly children and men, are not on antiretroviral therapy (ART). While more women with HIV access drug treatment therapy for HIV on the island, this figure is still less than 50 percent. These figures have dire implications for HIV mortality and spread rates.

Figure 1: Percentage of Persons with HIV On Antiretroviral Therapy in Jamaica, 2022

In a departure from past trends, in 2009, UNAIDS reported that both men and women were contracting HIV in equal numbers. This striking development is attributed, in part, to a noteworthy factor: the transmission of HIV from male partners to women who do not engage in sexual relationships with other men. UNAIDS has since underscored the need to investigate sexual relations within the Caribbean that do not conform to heterosexuality. The shift in transmission dynamics implies a change in the gendered impact of HIV, with serious implications for women, particularly those in the childbearing age bracket (Smith 2023).

Given this evolving landscape, the role of advocacy groups becomes paramount, assuming a crucial role in public education campaigns aimed at raising awareness about the changing patterns of HIV transmission. As a powerful communication platform, the media plays a pivotal role in shaping and disseminating national policy. Why is this so? The answer is simple: the media exudes influence on both the State and society (Tambini 2021). Journalists are conduits for information, simultaneously reporting on ground-level occurrences while contributing to the formulation of government policies by highlighting key issues. In this context, the media helps to construct and/or reinforce public discourse related to HIV.

PAHO has aided in not only breaking existing linguistic stereotypes and fallacies but also in establishing new norms rooted in fairness and accuracy. In 2006, PAHO published an HIV reporting guide that repositioned HIV in the public sphere by presenting to all categories of media workers acceptable HIV reporting terms. Unlike previous guidelines, PAHO's document

goes beyond mere instruction and delves into the rationale behind the usage or avoidance of specific terms, offering valuable insights to Caribbean journalists. The HIV reporting guide inadvertently deals with prevailing newsroom cultures. It treats the media as an active social and behavioral change agent, not a bystander.

The media is poised to play its role in dealing with HIV. Jamaica's leading daily newspaper company - The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited – participated in PAHO's HIV reporting training. This workshop focused on best practices using the guidelines specifically developed for Caribbean journalists (Smith 2023). By empowering media professionals with the knowledge to navigate the intricacies of HIV reporting through a Caribbean-centric lens, PAHO recognizes the fact that the media's culture – in this instance, expressed via HIV reporting terms – permeates all strata of society. Jamaican journalists are influential actors, shaping public opinion and contributing to the national dialogue on HIV-related issues. This multifaceted role positions the media as a hub in the intricate relationship between information dissemination, public perception, and governmental response concerning HIV-related issues.

These developments call for a re-evaluation of how the media depicts HIV-related issues and whether these depictions are presented in a manner aimed at reducing levels of stigma and discrimination in society. The Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), arguably the most powerful organization in the region, states that journalists must consciously adopt and continuously evaluate their journalistic practices in the context of HIV reporting (CARICOM 2006). Given all this contextual information, the shocking reality exists that there is limited research on HIV reporting standards and practices in the Caribbean (Smith 2023).

This study continues the clarion call for research into HIV reporting in the developing world. In the broader framework, this research addresses a critical gap in understanding by focusing on the HIV-related terminology embedded in Jamaican media texts. These linguistic elements are integral components of journalistic practices that necessitate revision and formal examination. The media's choice of HIV reporting terms plays a crucial role in accurately portraying the reality of the HIV epidemic in Jamaica, thereby contributing to the reduction of stigma and discrimination, aligning with CARICOM's objectives (CARICOM 2006). This objective is further reinforced as part of the Jamaican government's mandate, and this paper aligns itself with the State's commitment by offering pertinent research on the media's role as an integral component of a comprehensive social response to HIV.

The paper undertakes a quantitative approach to measure the frequency of HIV-related lexical terms employed by journalists at *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner*. This analysis spans periods both before and after journalists from *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner*

received formal training using the guide entitled HIV-related Language: PAHO's 2006. Through this investigation, the study aims to demonstrate the nuances and forcefulness of newsroom culture that, in some instances, are resistant to change from external social forces.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social institutions play key roles in the maintenance, production, de-construction, and reformation of a society's ideological norms. Stuart Hall (2021:180) reaffirmed the role of the media in this regard by stating that "the media's main sphere of operations is the production and transformation of ideologies." Hall (2021) understood that the media not only disseminates ideologically laden information through the process of producing news; it also constructs new ideologies or re-frames existing ones. It is important to note that language and ideology are not synonymous "but language broadly conceived, is by definition, the principal medium in which we find different ideological discourses elaborated" (Hall 2021:180). It follows that illness as discourse is a rich playground for ideological premises that affect our understanding and treatment of infirmity. Due to the historical treatment of HIV being socially regarded as an illness spread primarily through sexual contact between men in Jamaica (Hamer 2000), language related to HIV reporting reflects past attitudes that hinder effective HIV campaigns on the island.

Makus (1990) views Hall's assertion as revolutionary. Makus (1990) argues that ideological constructs about pseudo-notions of freedom result in limited social reality. He states that these limitations are the true determinants of everyday public discourse and social practices. Indeed, Hall (1980) warns against embracing all ideologies, particularly dominant ideologies, transmitted through ideological state apparatus (ISAs) like the media. Hall (1980) instead advises that people should strongly criticize ideological concepts to destroy their social stronghold. When applied to this study, Hall's critical theory of ideology facilitates a thorough understanding of HIV reporting as a social practice enacted by journalists via a structured organization: the media.

Examples of limited or, in some cases, inaccurate social constructs of HIV-related ideology (Makus 1990) are evident in both government policy, news production, and media training. Jamaica's 2002 – 2006 National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS has been criticized for its limited outlook on the role of the media. This State document does not recognize journalists as agents of social and behavioral change (de Bruin 2006). Furthermore, the document focuses on using the media as an advertising tool and does not consider the fraught relationship between profit-making, driven by advertising, and ethics. De Bruin (2006) notes that the State's proposed use of the media to disseminate HIV-related information promoting healthy behavioral practices fails to consider the sweeping changes in journalism within Jamaica. For instance, *The*

Gleaner has changed from an editorial-driven national newspaper to an advertisement-driven daily publication. De Bruin (2006) explains that socially responsible reporting is accepted once it does not clash with the newspapers' money-making mandate.

Furthermore, studies of HIV reporting in Jamaica detail the need for growth in journalistic standards. White (2007) and Hamer (2000) both agree that the standard of HIV reporting in Jamaica needs improvement. White (2007) found evidence of sensationalism, geared to shock audiences into consciousness, specifying that this was primarily done through military language. Similarly, Hamer's (2000) research found sensationalism present in judgmental language used in HIV reporting. Terms such as victims and sufferers were characteristic of this reporting style. Hamer (2000), however, found that Jamaican journalists who had secondary-level education were aware of how HIV was transmitted but lacked knowledge about appropriate terms to use in HIV reporting. Although Hamer's (2000) study does not explicitly address the preferred terms contained in the HIV-related Language: PAHO 2006 Update, her research provides insight into how the language a journalist uses to publish HIV-related stories strongly relates to an important factor that cannot be sidelined: their level of education.

Apart from work conducted by Smith (2023), Barnes and Archibald (2017) conducted the most recent research on the topic. These scholars found evidence of language-based discrimination against people with HIV in published stories written by Jamaican citizen journalists in two daily newspapers: *The Gleaner* and *Observer*. The study notes that untrained citizen journalists perform the essential functions of "collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and other forms of information" (Barnes and Archibald, 2017: 306). Correspondingly, this study found a strong relationship between negative media coverage of people with HIV and AIDS and a decline in the number of people seeking treatment for the illness. Although Barnes and Archibald's (2017) study excluded trained journalists employed by *The Gleaner*, it helps us to understand the linkage between HIV reporting in newspapers and health-seeking behaviors on the island.

Barnes and Archibald's (2017) linkage between mass media messages and the increased likelihood of people getting tested or seeking treatment is supported by international research. Li et al.(2009) state that in China, people rely heavily on information from television, magazines, and newspapers to obtain HIV-related knowledge. These researchers supported the hypothesis that mass media information about the illness influences social attitudes and behavior. Once these prevailing negative attitudes are not confronted and dismantled, their sociocultural power obstructs members of the public from getting tested for HIV (Li et al. 2007).

Furthermore, these prejudices also make it difficult for people with HIV to discuss their status with their sexual partners and access healthcare (Li et al. 2007).

Like Jamaica, Cameroon also has a lack of research on mass media and HIV (Antabe, Sano, and Amoak 2024). The scholars' recent study shows that exposure to HIV-related content via internet television, radio, and newspaper sources at least once weekly is statistically linked with a marked increase in people getting tested. The findings of Antabe, Sano, and Amoak (2024) are consistent with the premise of the examination of HIV reporting in Jamaica. This is due to a positive correlation between one's exposure to media messages emphasizing safe sex and an increased likelihood of practicing HIV preventative measures.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As an ISA, Hall's (1980) and Makus's (1990) work point to the social function of the media spreading ideologically laden thoughts and opinions to the public. McCombs and Shaw (2018) explain that individuals have an innate desire to make sense of their social environment. In this regard, the press is an integral part of one's information-seeking behavior, helping people situate themselves within broader society. This phenomenon, called orientation (McCombs and Weaver 1972), is supported by studies conducted by these researchers along with Weaver (1977). These studies unequivocally categorize the media as a prominent institution that simultaneously disseminates information on social issues while establishing their order of prominence.

As such, the application of the agenda-setting theory enables an examination of the HIV-related ideological underpinnings contained within the pages of The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited. As an industry leader, *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner* sets the public's agenda for HIV and its related topics within Jamaican society. The theory has undergone many transformations since its introduction by McCombs and Shaw (1972) and its resiliency is evident when applied to this research. The theoretical perspective notes that the media determines the public's thoughts through repeated coverage of issues. This set agenda by the news media is deliberate and consistent and points to the influential power of the print media. A society's prevailing attitudes and opinions are built upon what individuals perceive to be salient from press coverage. Long (1958) notes that of all media, newspapers set the territorial agenda "determining what most people will be talking about, what most people will think the facts are, and what most people will regard as the way problems are to be dealt with" (Long 1958: 260). News is birthed as various gatekeepers within the media, such as journalists and editors, either reject or accept topics deemed newsworthy (Smith 2023).

Gatekeepers within the newspaper industry are powerful because:

While the conventions of how a newspaper operates, and the compelling force of some events limit the complete freedom of a paper to select what events and what people its public will attend to, it has considerable leeway. (Long 1958: 260)

The territorial agenda is quite relevant to *The Daily Gleaner* and *The Sunday Gleaner*, with 51.4 and 77.3 percent readership, respectively (Smith 2023). Based on the agenda-setting theory, it is possible to state that the company's presentation of HIV-related news plays a substantial role in shaping public opinion of HIV, thereby influencing formal policy. For example, if the media should force attention to instances of stigma and discrimination experienced by people with HIV, members of the public will inadvertently begin to respond to media stimuli by giving eminence to the issue.

There is a strong correlation between the media's agenda, the public's agenda, and the State's policy agenda. The policy agenda accounts for the list of issues that government officials are paying attention to and is greatly influenced by what average citizens perceive to be important. The powerful agenda-setting function of the media plays a crucial role here by influencing collectivist thought on social matters through issue salience (McCombs and Shaw 1972). This is the first level of agenda setting, giving the public what topics are important. The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited gives relevance to HIV as a social issue by publishing articles on the topic.

Consequently, the media must frame issues in line with public perceptions of reality (Moqasa & Salawu 2013). Journalists are, therefore, actively constructing meaning by selectively using some frames while discarding others (Entman 1993). In so doing, they advance conceptual definitions, causal linkages with topics, and moral reflections of social phenomena in accordance with frames of meaning. Goffman (1974) says that the media goes beyond setting the public's agenda of important issues, positing that the mass media influences one's deepest thoughts and public discussions. This function of the media is often referred to as second-level agenda-setting. This advanced level dictates how people think about issues (Kiptinness & Kiwanuka-Tondo 2019).

There is an undeniable synergy between content and frames worthy of analysis without separation. This study analyses PAHO's HIV-related terminology as frames produced by social practices. News production is laden with ideological dogmas that lead to a better understanding of the media's role as an influential ISA (Hall 1980; 2021). Goffman (1974) supports the concept of social frames, and this study examines HIV reporting within this paradigm. When *The Daily*

and *The Sunday Gleaner* publish stories on HIV, their readers will automatically begin to think about the topic. Based on how the journalist frames HIV, readers will go further to form opinions and value judgments on a range of issues related to the illness, from people with HIV to national strategies in response to HIV. This study furthers the framing theory by illustrating the power of a communicating text by examining its frames, leading to an assessment of the representation of HIV in the newspapers' pages.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses quantitative content analysis, which counts the number of times newspapers have used an HIV reporting code in the period under study. Quantitative content analysis in newspapers is historically linked to facts that are, arguably, irrefutable (Krippendorff 1989). He adds that quantitative newspaper analysis bridges the gap that traditionally ignores the need for empirical investigation of journalistic phenomena. Conversely, Krippendorff (1989) explains that qualitative content analysis focuses on a detailed and critical reading of the published article. He notes that one's subjective interpretation of the newspaper article plays a key role in ascribing meaning.

Moreover, this study adopts a case study design with a singular focus: The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited. Health researchers widely embrace the case study approach because the design enables the capacity to dissect and analyze various layers of singular yet interconnected health-related phenomena (Yin 1999). Furthermore, the case study design finds considerable application in the realm of communication research (Jaques 2009), serving as a valuable tool for bridging communication theory with tangible, real-life experiences. Additionally, the deliberate selection of a single case – The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited - was motivated by its unique status as the sole verified newspaper company that underwent training from PAHO in HIV reporting (Smith 2023).

Language gives life to our everyday experiences and the study's design serves as a functional and purposive approach to probing the intricacies of HIV reporting by trained journalists. Focusing on a singular case facilitates a concentrated exploration of the phenomenon within the unique context of The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited, providing an opportunity for an in-depth analysis of the transformative impact of PAHO's training on the dynamics of HIV reporting within this specific media organization.

The guidelines governing HIV reporting for Caribbean journalists, known as the HIV-related PAHO 2006 Update, were officially published in August 2006. To establish a comparative framework, the study designated the two-year periods immediately preceding and following the document's publication—specifically, January 01, 2004 to December 31, 2005, and January 01,

2007 to December 31, 2008—for analysis, focusing on articles related to HIV published by *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner*.

Implementing innovative journalism practices, particularly the adoption of PAHO's preferred HIV reporting terms over terminologies that have existed for several years, poses considerable challenges within traditional media contexts. The diffusion of such innovations challenges the culture of news in traditional media. It hinges on various factors, encompassing the cultural dynamics of the newsroom, institutional logic among staff, and the attitudes and behaviors of other societal actors, who may or may not be well-versed in journalistic norms and values (Belair-Gagnon and Steinke 2020). While existing literature lacks a specified timeframe for the dissemination of new ideas related to HIV reporting, insights from former *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner* journalist and editor Mr. Leighton Williams affirm that the staff became acquainted with PAHO's document after it was published in August 2006.

A total of 122 published stories about HIV were accessed for Period 1 (January 01, 2004 to December 31, 2005), and eighty-six (86) published articles were obtained for Period 2 (January 01, 2007 to December 31, 2008). These figures represent the entire corpus of HIV-related articles published for the timeframe under review. Examining the entire corpus was a deliberate undertaking to gain a comprehensive understanding of ideological representations of the illness in this single case study.

The subsequent data analysis, manually conducted without electronic software, involved the creation of a coding sheet (see Appendix B) for coders to indicate, through a dichotomous “Yes” or “No” response, the presence of terms from the HIV-related Language PAHO 2006 Update in the headline and first paragraph of each article. Socioculturally, the inverted pyramid reporting style is a fixture of Caribbean journalism, and journalists of *The Gleaner* and *The Sunday Gleaner* subscribe to this approach (Smith 2023). This reporting style prioritizes the most significant news at the top, with subsequent details such as background information or figures presented later (Heravi 2022). Each instance of a coded HIV reporting term's use was counted. This count considered its presence in the headline which contains salient information to capture readers' attention. The tally also considered its repetition in the first paragraph, summarizing crucial story details while giving readers additional contextual information on the topic. The inverted pyramid style forces journalists to place the crux of the story in the headlines and first paragraph which accounts for this study's unit of analysis.

Two trained coders worked independently without consultation to establish categories using *a priori* coding. All *a priori* codes aligned with the categories from PAHO's 2006 Update. Quantification occurred at the nominal or categorical level, indicating the frequency of each

term's occurrence within the headline and first paragraph of the news story. The choice of the nominal level was based on a higher likelihood of achieving inter-coder reliability (Krippendorff 2004).

Upon completing the coding process for all published material from *The Gleaner* and *The Sunday Gleaner*, I collected and critically examined all coding sheets. There was notably no variation between the two coders, with all responses indicating uniform categorization of terms as either present or absent. This means the study achieved one hundred percent inter-coder reliability.

FINDINGS

Between January 01, 2004 and December 31, 2005 (Period 1), we identified a total of 122 stories containing content related to HIV. Newsroom culture in *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner* pins HIV with AIDS as the code HIV/AIDS was prominently featured, appearing 68 times. This finding underscores the term's prevalence and significance in the construction of HIV as an illness in public discourse. Another notable term was *people living with AIDS (PLWA)*, which occurred 16 times, reflecting a specific focus on the individuals affected by the condition.

The code *military language* appeared 13 times and encompasses concepts associated with the armed forces (e.g., *fight, battle, war, target, combat*). This hostile language choice in HIV reporting adds a layer of metaphorical intensity to the narrative, pitting the public against people with HIV in a figurative fight. Additionally, the code *HIV positive*, a crucial aspect of conveying a person's health status, was found 12 times, signifying a recurring theme where an individual's status moves from socioeconomic connotations to medical.

Less frequently recorded codes included *infected people*, which appeared six times, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the health implications discussed in the articles. Judgmental language, flagged by PAHO as casting blame or dehumanizing individuals, was observed twice, reflecting the careful consideration required by media in communicating about HIV without perpetuating stigma. This category encompasses terms such as *sufferers, victims, and those people*.

Furthermore, codes such as *promiscuous* and *AIDS orphan* were recorded once each, highlighting specific aspects related to behavior and the societal impact of HIV. These less frequently employed codes contribute to the diversity of language used in HIV reporting, offering a comprehensive portrayal of the multifaceted dimensions associated with the epidemic.

In Period 2, January 01, 2007 to December 31, 2008, 86 stories were identified and coded according to the coding categories developed using PAHO's 2006 HIV reporting guide. The code *HIV/AIDS* appeared 44 times, *HIV positive* was used 12 times, while the code *people*

living with AIDS appeared 10 times. Other codes of military language appeared eight times, and *infected people* appeared twice. The code *commercial sex worker* and *sexually transmitted diseases* both appeared only once.

Table 1 (below) details each coding category and their nominal occurrence of the abovementioned findings across the two time periods. These 10 coding categories are terms that PAHO says should never be used by Caribbean journalists in HIV reporting. A quantitative representation of the percentage change for Period 1 (before journalists were trained in HIV reporting) and Period 2 (after PAHO formally trained the Daily and Sunday Gleaner journalists in using acceptable HIV reporting terms) are presented in the last column. This percentile representation helps to empirically demonstrate the effect of training on newsroom culture regarding HIV reporting standards and practices in the print media.

Table 1: Coding Categories: Frequency & Percentage Change

CODING CATEGORIES	FREQUENCY OF OCCURRENCE		% CHANGE <i>Period 1 vs Period 2</i>
	<i>Period 1: January 01, 2004 - December 31, 2005</i>	<i>Period 2: January 01, 2007 - December 31, 2008</i>	
HIV/AIDS	68	44	-35.3
PLWA	16	10	-37.5
Military Terms	13	8	-38.5
HIV Positive	12	12	0
Infected People	6	2	-66.7
Judgmental Language	2	0	-100.0
Promiscuous	1	0	-100.0
AIDS Orphan	1	0	-100.0
Commercial Sex Worker	0	1	+100.0
Sexually Transmitted Diseases	0	1	+100.0

DISCUSSION

The outcomes of this study offer valuable, tangible insights with practical benefits into the prevalent use of ideologically laden language used by journalists from *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner* during Period 1 and Period 2 when reporting on HIV-related issues. This study aims to demonstrate that these quantifiable HIV reporting morphemes carry inherent meanings beyond their contextualized syntactic usage within headlines or sentences. Subsequently, this discussion delves into PAHO's semantic underpinnings of 10 HIV-related codes deemed inappropriate for journalistic use.

This discussion also underscores the paper's theoretical foundation using the framing and agenda-setting theories. The application of the framing theory aids in understanding that HIV Jamaican journalists use confining and often stereotypical media frames to influence public perception of the illness (Entman 1993). These frames involve obscuring HIV with other illnesses, representing HIV as a figurative enemy, stereotyping, disrespecting persons with HIV, and using dated language that serves no meaningful persons to readers. The use of these frames allows the media to set a traditionally stereotypical agenda concerning HIV, playing on existing social concepts in Jamaican society (McCombs & Shaw 1972).

The study highlights a conspicuous reporting trend that should not be overlooked. The code *HIV/AIDS* dominates both periods with 68 occurrences in the first period and 44 in the second period. Intriguingly, PAHO (2006) discourages the usage of this code, emphasizing that advancements in drug therapy have led to fewer individuals with HIV progressing to clinical indicators of AIDS. The semantic connotations associated with AIDS (i.e., stigma and mortality) contrast with the neutral socially connotative reference to HIV as a virus. Advocating for precision, PAHO (2006) suggests prioritizing using the acronym HIV over HIV/AIDS to foster a more accurate representation of the epidemic phase, enabling stakeholders to emphasize preventive measures and early diagnosis.

Persistently using the code *HIV/AIDS* is identified as detrimental to the efficacy of HIV campaigns, as it obscures the relevance of information on HIV by intertwining it with AIDS (Barnes et al. 2008). As part of the newspaper's role in setting the territorial agenda (Long 1958), pairing the two illnesses together adversely affects national efforts to increase the number of people getting tested and people with HIV accessing drug treatment. The call for clarity in distinguishing between HIV and AIDS underscores the need for responsible journalism in conveying accurate and unbiased information. Such clarity can only positively impact *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner's* gate-keeping function in setting the public, policy, and State agendas (McCombs & Shaw 1972).

Another noteworthy observation is the recurrent use of military language in both periods, including terms such as struggle, fight, battle, war, and combat. PAHO (2006) cautions against such terminology, linking it to erroneous perspectives on the current phase of the HIV epidemic. Sontag (1978) stressed the historical connection between military language and the stigmatization of the ill, suggesting that these terms may hinder open discussion and equal treatment for individuals with HIV. These military frames are commonly used by journalists in HIV reporting, especially within the headlines of HIV-related stories in Jamaica, because of their propensity to capture readers' attention using the inverted pyramid writing format (Smith 2023). Their efficacy, however, is questionable because people often assume antagonistic positions against people with HIV. The figurative struggle, fight, battle, war, and combat language counterproductively targets people with HIV instead of targeting the illness.

The code HIV positive emerges frequently in both periods, with 12 instances each. PAHO's (2006) objection to this language stems from its spotlighting effect on individuals with HIV, potentially portraying them as carriers prone to spreading the virus. This type of language does not break existing stereotypical norms; it supports information contained in a report by USAID (2022) that persons with HIV are not treated with tolerance and respect in Jamaica. The report notes the opposite, pointing to elevated levels of stigma and discrimination against this population. The media, in this regard, is simply reproducing the ideology that people with HIV are to be shunned because their bodies are defiled at the cellular level. According to Myhre and Flora (2000), it is imperative to acknowledge that the selection of specific lexical choices exerts a profound influence on audiences' psychological perceptions and corresponding responses. The stigmatizing implications of this terminology must be strongly condemned, and the importance of linguistic alternatives such as persons with HIV or people with HIV should be elevated to maintain micro- and macro-level focus on the virus rather than individuals.

A notable shift is observed in the diminishing usage of the code *people living with AIDS (PLWA)*, which declined from 16 occurrences in the first period to 10 in the second. PAHO (2006) suggests that the use of PLWA, once considered best practice, has become outdated and inaccurate, potentially fostering doubt about the ability to live with the illness. This term is steeped in Jamaica's traditional past when drug treatment therapy was not readily accessible, and the mortality rate was high (PAHO 2006). Today, however, the situation is different. While it is true that many persons with HIV are not on ART (UNAIDS 2023), the fact remains that the Jamaican government provides easy access to these drug therapies via treatment facilities (Jamaica Ministry of Health 2005). There is, therefore, a need for a more suitable language alternative, and this paper suggests that PAHO's (2006) recommendation of using the term

people with AIDS be the standard best HIV reporting practice to align with current understanding and trends.

While the code *commercial sex worker* appears only once in period 2, PAHO (2006) cautions against its usage due to inherent disrespectful undertones. These undertones exude from Jamaica's intense stigmatization of people, especially women, who are involved in transactional sex (Free Documentary 2021). To break through this existing sociocultural ideology, Hall (2021) asserts that one way to challenge these stigmas is to arrange linguistic elements differently to dismantle their existing socially constructed meanings. As such, PAHO (2006) offers the term sex worker as a viable neutral alternative. *Sex worker* is recommended as a more respectful alternative to avoid offensive language and promote inclusivity in HIV reporting. Bernstein (2015) provides a powerful justification for using politically correct language for persons in the sex industry. He notes that if language reinforces the stigma faced by marginalized groups, then social equality for all will remain elusive.

The code *infected people* is noted in both periods, evidencing the use of value-laden HIV reporting terms that ostracize persons with HIV in the Jamaican press (PAHO 2006). The most humane and kind way to respect ill people, their families, and friends is to firmly reject the exclusion of ill people from everyday society through polarizing language (Sontag, 1978). PAHO (2006) underscores the importance of value-neutral language, such as people with HIV, to positively influence societal perceptions and attitudes.

Judgmental language is identified in two instances during period 1, reflecting outdated and discriminatory attitudes toward people with HIV. Such language characterizes people with HIV as sufferers and/or victims who are beleaguered by the virus. This highlights a departure from ethical considerations in the code of practice that all Jamaican journalists subscribe to and should, at least in theory, execute in the production of news (Press Association of Jamaica 2011:3). Consequently, the journalistic guideline emphasizes the need for fair and unbiased reporting as journalists are discouraged from sidelining any individual or group. This paper recommends omitting judgmental terms in favor of language that respects all individuals.

The code *promiscuous* appears once in period 1, indicating prevailing social inaccuracies perpetuated by The Gleaner Company (Media) Limited before journalists received formal training in HIV reporting. PAHO (2006) cautions against using this term, as it does not accurately reflect HIV transmission and may contribute to negative perceptions based on socially construed attitudes. These attitudes are steeped in the notion that people contract HIV through wanton sexual abandonment with multiple partners. Jamaican media researchers emphasize the need for appropriate sociocultural language in HIV reporting (Barnes et al.

2008). PAHO's (2006) substitutes go a step further by providing practical solutions, such as a person with more than one sexual partner or non-monogamous, to facilitate open conversations about sex, sexuality, and HIV without perpetuating stereotypes.

The final codes for discussion are *AIDS orphan* and *sexually transmitted diseases*. These codes each appear once in published HIV stories during Periods 1 and 2, respectively. Language is a psychological tool (Myhre & Flora 2000), and due to the negative connotations of both codes, their use positions HIV within a stereotypical media frame. Jamaican journalists deliberately undertake this framing as they selectively ignore other options to connect with the existing public perception of HIV (Entman 1993). Jamaican journalists should be discouraged from using the code AIDS orphan as it may stigmatize children who have HIV or have lost parents to AIDS-related medical complications (PAHO 2006). Alternatives such as children affected by HIV or orphan(s) neutralize the topic without adversely impacting younger people. This is one way to ensure that Jamaican journalists are sensitive to their audience (Barnes et al. 2008). Similarly, the term *sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)* is criticized for its misleading connotations because the term disease is associated with symptoms that may be noticed by others. Naturally, this is not the case with HIV, and the term sexually transmitted infection is a more apt sociocultural, linguistic response to the reality of the illness (PAHO 2006).

In short, this discussion underscores the fact that challenging and subsequently transforming the discursive narrative on HIV is a collective process. Current conceptualizations about HIV and people with HIV are only confronted by "speaking through" (Hall 2021: 181) the linguistic elements that circulate in society.

Responsibility and accuracy are tenets that all journalists reporting on HIV should actively uphold. By adhering to PAHO's (2006) recommendations and employing appropriate terminology, journalists in Jamaica may positively contribute to increased public understanding of HIV and its related topics, reduce stigma, and support effective HIV prevention and control efforts on the island. This paper presents a disarticulation or re-examination of the ideological linguistic elements in society that are necessary to reposition HIV in Jamaica. It is clear that Jamaican newsroom culture, evidenced by *The Daily* and *The Sunday Gleaner's* published HIV-related stories, contains ideologies that blend into taken-for-granted, biased assumptions that are assimilated into the readers' common-sense consciousness.

CONCLUSION

Receiving comprehensive training from a reputable international organization on the best practices of HIV reporting did not deter journalists at Jamaica's number one newspaper company from using inappropriate language. This phenomenon signals the need for

researchers to take a closer look at newsroom operations. Training journalists is not influential enough to dismantle social systems of inequality rooted in a language structure. These metaphorical linguistic roots are reminders of an oppressive past overshadowing mindful movements for a progressive and egalitarian future. “These “traces” as Gramsci called them, and historical connexions – the terrain of past articulations – are peculiarly resistant to change and transformation” (Hall 2021: 182). This study is an eye-opening probe into dislodging the position occupied by linguistic ideologies that do not serve the Jamaican public in HIV-related discourse.

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APPENDICES*Appendix A*

HIV-Related Language PAHO 2006 Update

Avoid	Prefer	Reason
People living with HIV/AIDS	People with HIV or person with HIV	“People ‘living’ with HIV” was used to emphasize that HIV is an infection that can be managed. While the phrase may have advanced that goal, it is now unnecessary since more people are aware of that fact.
PLWHA (and its variations)	People with HIV or person with HIV	Although widely used, even by people with HIV, acronyms are labels, and labels contribute to stigma. As a rule of thumb, avoid using acronyms for people.
HIV-positive, infected people, seropositive	People with HIV or person with HIV	Those are stigmatizing terms that focus on an individual as a carrier of the infection.
AIDS Orphan	Orphans, children affected by HIV, children orphaned by HIV or children with HIV (use the most appropriate)	This term may stigmatize the child and may also be misinterpreted to mean that the child has HIV. The child may not have HIV but may have lost one or both parents to HIV.
Military terms (fight, combat, war, target), particularly in documents for public use.	Response to HIV or HIV care and prevention	Military metaphors give people an inaccurate understanding of the epidemic. When possible, try to use vocabulary from public health. “Response to HIV,” and “HIV care and prevention” are among the alternatives.
Sexually transmitted diseases (STD)	Sexually transmitted infections (STI)	Disease is usually associated with clinical manifestations. Many STI may have no evident symptoms, especially among women. The term “sexually transmitted infections” and its acronym, STI, are broader and more encompassing than “sexually transmitted diseases” or “STD.”

Avoid	Prefer	Reason
Promiscuous	Person with more than one sexual partner or no monogamous	This is a value judgment that should be avoided. It does not accurately reflect the social context of transmission. People who are called "promiscuous" are unlikely to listen to or empathize with the message.
Commercial sex worker	Sex worker	"Commercial" has negative connotations because it implies that the human being can be a sellable good or merchandise. Sex worker is perceived as less judgmental.
Judgmental, accusatory or dehumanizing language to refer to people with HIV (victims, sufferers, murderers, criminals, those people, serial killers, etc.).	When writing about people with HIV, use respectful, nonjudgmental language.	The use of judgmental or accusatory language generates stigma. HIV is only a health condition, and people with HIV have the same virtues and defects as other people.
Source: PAHO (2006). <i>HIV-related Language: PAHO 2006 Update</i>		

BACKGROUND NOTES

1. 1 "HIV" instead of "HIV/AIDS" or "AIDS." This is recommended for the following reasons:
 - a) As treatment becomes increasingly available, fewer people develop clinical manifestations of AIDS; thus, the term becomes less useful. In countries that provide treatment, the news media now refer mostly to HIV.
 - b) There is no universal meaning for "AIDS." The definition varies from country to country and has changed many times since the beginning of the epidemic. "HIV," on the other hand, is a precise term. It is the name of a virus.
 - c) "HIV" is more relevant to measure the epidemic and the response to it.
 - d) Using "HIV" helps to focus on prevention and early diagnosis.
 - e) "HIV" can be used in all contexts, including mother-to-child transmission.

- f) People avoid messages that contain the word “AIDS” because it is associated with stigma and fatalism.
- g) “HIV” is what people live with. “AIDS” is what people with HIV usually die from.
- h) The existence of two words makes it more complicated, rather than easier, to explain how HIV is transmitted and the different stages of the infection.

Recommendation: Prefer “HIV” to “HIV/AIDS” or “AIDS.” Use “AIDS” only when it is necessary to refer to the “advanced stage of the HIV infection.”

2. “People with HIV” instead of “People living with HIV,” “PLWHA” (and variations), “HIV positive,” “infected people,” and “seropositive” - The use of “people living with HIV” was promoted as a linguistic way of countering the perception that people who are infected with HIV would die immediately. While this language may have contributed to this purpose, it now sends a confusing message. More people are aware of the fact that people can live with HIV, and the use of the word “living” may cast doubts on this perception rather than reinforcing it. The use of the acronym PLWHA (Person Living with HIV/AIDS) and its variations attempted to focus the attention on people rather than on the infection. These terms were better than “AIDS victims,” “AIDS sufferers,” or “AIDS patients.” The downside of acronyms, particularly when used to refer to people, is that they are labels, and labels can contribute to stigmatizing those who are labeled. In an effort to reduce stigma against people with HIV and to normalize the epidemic, it is advisable not to use acronyms for them. Several NGOs now advocate for this change. They argue that reducing people with HIV to letters robs them of their dignity. The terms “HIV positive,” “infected people,” and “seropositive” should also be avoided, as they suggest that people, not the virus, are the infecting agent.
3. Recommendation: Replace all acronyms and the expression “people living with HIV” with “people with HIV” (or “person with HIV”). Use this term in the same way one would use “people with flu” or “people with dengue” to describe people affected by these diseases.

*Appendix B*Coding sheet
CODING INSTRUCTIONS

Coder initials: _____

Date of coding: _____

Story number: _____

Purpose: To describe the type of language used by the Gleaner Company Ltd in reporting HIV-related issues.**Unit of analysis:** Story headlines and the accompanying first paragraph comprise the unit of analysis.**Categories:** The unit of analysis could be assigned to more than one of the following categories.

CODING CATEGORIES	YES	NO
People living with AIDS (PLWA)		
HIV positive		
Infected People		
Seropositive		
Men who have sex with men (MSM)		
Catch HIV		
Aids Orphan		
Military terms (fight, combat, war, target)		
Intravenous Drug user		
Sexually transmitted Diseases		
Promiscuous		
Commercial sex worker		
Judgmental Language (victims, sufferers, murderers, criminals, those people, serial killers)		
HIV/AIDS		

Instructions: Please read the numbered story headline and first paragraph and identify whether the following coding categories are present by ticking **YES** or **NO** where appropriate.



Special Slums: Chengzhongcuns in China

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Abstract

This paper explores the emergence and socio-economic dynamics of chengzhongcuns (城中村, “urban villages”) as a manifestation of social disorder within China’s rapid urbanization, driven by neoliberal reforms. It examines how chengzhongcuns developed as rural areas engulfed by expanding cities; the hukou (户口, “household registration”) system and land ownership policies from the Mao era continue to shape these spaces. Chengzhongcuns are not fully integrated into formal urban planning due to the unique land ownership system, where rural land remains collectively owned by villagers, unlike urban land, which is state-owned. This paper highlights the key differences between chengzhongcuns and slums in other developing countries, particularly how chengzhongcuns are legally distinct and intentionally maintained within the current land and governance framework rather than being a product of government failure. The socio-economic challenges faced by migrant workers in these spaces, especially the rise of the Sanhe dashen (三和大神, “Sanhe gurus”) subculture, further illustrate the marginalization and inequality within China’s urban economy. By situating chengzhongcuns in both local and global contexts of informal urbanization, this paper offers insights into China’s unique approach to urban development, emphasizing how the persistence of chengzhongcuns reflects broader patterns of social inequality in rapidly urbanizing countries.

Keywords: *neoliberalism, urbanization, hukou, chengzhongcun, Sanhe dashen*

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Special Slums: Chengzhongcuns in China

China's rapid urbanization, driven by neoliberal economic reforms, has led to the emergence of *chengzhongcuns* (城中村, "urban villages"), which exemplify the social disorder resulting from uneven urban development (Buckingham and Chan 2018). This paper explores how chengzhongcuns represent a critical intersection of neoliberal policies, urban disorder, and social inequality within China's political and economic context.

Researching chengzhongcuns, like many other urbanization issues in China, poses unique challenges due to the country's distinct development trajectory. Scholars, particularly those outside China, face several gaps in understanding this phenomenon. First, understanding chengzhongcuns requires a deep exploration of the historical, political, economic, and social backgrounds that contributed to their emergence. Second, this review will explore universal theories that help explain the dynamics of chengzhongcuns within the broader framework of urbanization and neoliberalism. Third, comparative analysis is used to identify similar urban phenomena globally, helping scholars from diverse contexts relate chengzhongcuns to other forms of informal urbanization.

This paper takes a scoping review approach to understand the existing literature on chengzhongcuns, focusing on their historical, socio-economic, and cultural aspects. The relevant literature for this review includes peer-reviewed articles, government reports, and influential books by established scholars. By organizing the selected literature thematically, this review creates a deeper understanding of how various historical, economic, and social factors have shaped the development of chengzhongcuns. This approach provides a comprehensive overview that offers a nuanced perspective on the socio-political dynamics influencing these chengzhongcuns.

Horizontally, this review uses a thematic and chronological analysis to highlight China's responses to Western influence, particularly through the adoption of neoliberal economic policies during Deng Xiaoping's leadership. Western neoliberalism inspired China to pursue market-oriented reforms to modernize and integrate the economy into the global market. These reforms triggered rapid urbanization, widened socio-economic gaps, and contributed to the distinct cultural identity of chengzhongcuns. Vertically, a comparative analysis highlights the differences in slum characteristics across developing countries and applies the 'twilight areas' concept from British cities to better understand Chinese chengzhongcuns.

This review aims to offer scholars, particularly those unfamiliar with China's unique urbanization processes, insights into the ongoing urban disorder within chengzhongcuns. Furthermore, by drawing parallels to global urbanization challenges, the paper provides valuable lessons for urban planners and policymakers seeking to improve conditions for marginalized urban groups, promote socio-economic integration, and develop more inclusive urban strategies.

A HEAVY LEGACY: ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND URBANIZATION IN THE POST-MAO ERA

On September 9, 1976, Mao Zedong passed away, marking a pivotal moment in China's history. Domestically, Mao is regarded as the founder of the People's Republic of China and a leader who advanced industrialization (Kueh 1989; Robinson 1988). However, his policies, including the hukou system and various political campaigns, caused immense suffering and millions of deaths (Meng, Qian, and Yared 2015; Pye 1986; Wu and Treiman 2004).

Internationally, Mao's late-era diplomacy played a key role in China's future reforms. Following the 1969 Sino-Soviet conflict, Mao sought to ease diplomatic isolation, particularly by improving relations with the United States. This effort began with easing trade restrictions in 1969 and culminated in President Nixon's 1972 visit to China, resulting in the Shanghai Communiqué (Cowen and Sutter 1998; Radchenko 2009). In 1978, China signed a *Treaty of Peace and Friendship* with Japan. In 1979, the United States, under President Carter, established formal diplomatic ties with China, providing a strong geopolitical foundation for future reforms (Lee 1979).

Economically, China was entering a global environment increasingly shaped by neoliberalism and globalization. The 1970 "Nixon Shock," which ended the Bretton Woods system, marked the decline of Keynesianism and paved the way for free-market policies (Billa 1979; Bordo 2020; Zeiler 2013). In the 1980s, leaders like Reagan and Thatcher promoted neoliberalism, which helped China integrate into global markets (Harvey 2007). China's domestic reforms, including creating special economic zones in cities like Shenzhen and Zhuhai, further accelerated urbanization and economic growth (Chaolin, Liya, and Cook 2012).

In China, a dual-sector model similar to that proposed by William Arthur Lewis has emerged (Chan and Wei 2021). It comprises two sectors: a low-productivity, labor-intensive subsistence sector involving essential agriculture and services and a more advanced capitalist sector with higher productivity and wages, such as mining and construction (Gollin 2014).

However, the *hukou* (户口, “household registration”) system continues to regulate the labor movement from traditional to modern sectors, a structural legacy from the Mao era. Instituted in 1958, the State designed the hukou system to stabilize urban centers by categorizing the population as either rural or urban, effectively restricting rural-to-urban migration (Liu 2005). In tandem with China's planned economy, this classification system entrenched the rural-urban divide by tying rural residents to agricultural production through state-enforced quotas (Liu 2005; Zhang & Song 2003). While the hukou system once played a crucial role in maintaining social and economic order during the initial stages of industrialization, it now represents a significant impediment to labor mobility and economic reform, particularly in integrating rural migrants into urban labor markets and social services (Chan 2009).

Deng Xiaoping's ascent to power significantly shifted China's labor mobility and economic development approach. Post-reform, China opened its doors to foreign investment attracting Western industries, particularly in low-end manufacturing, to urban areas (Harvey 2007:135). This industrial shift necessitated an increased labor force prompting China to ease restrictions on rural-to-urban migration (Song 2014). In the early 1980s, the administration of the hukou system began to be decentralized, granting local governments more autonomy in setting hukou admission criteria and quotas within their jurisdictions (Song 2014).

In China, 12 of the 31 provinces (primarily in the eastern region) have removed the distinction between agricultural and non-agricultural hukou. Smaller cities have also simplified the process for wealthy investors, homebuyers, and formally employed individuals to acquire local urban hukou (Chan 2012). However, these reforms have had minimal impact on low-skilled and less-educated inter-provincial migrants from underdeveloped central and western regions. These migrants often face significant challenges in obtaining local hukou through investment or skilled migration routes at their destinations (Chan 2012). As a result, they represent a sizable portion of China's internal migration but remain primarily excluded from the benefits of the current hukou reforms.

At the same time, Deng Xiaoping promoted rural reforms, advocating for the household contract responsibility system, which the State officially implemented in 1982. This system, first adopted in agriculture in 1979, made households responsible for the profits and losses of their contracted land (Lin 1988). Since then, the State has characterized the land ownership system by the following: farmers act as a relatively independent economic entity, contracting collective land and other large production resources, and producing and operating independently according to their contracts. Except for a small portion of their operating income, which is paid to

the collective and state taxes according to the contract, all other income goes to the farmers (Krusekopf 2002). This reform transformed the previous collective farming model into a system where individual households manage their farming operations. Land use rights are allocated to each household through contracts, allowing farmers to manage production and distribution independently. However, the land remains collectively owned by all the villagers, preserving the communal ownership structure (Lin 1988).

Since the 1980s, China's urban redevelopment, particularly in older city areas, has resulted in extensive gentrification. This process typically relocates inner-city residents, often from Soviet-style Khrushchyovka² (Хрущёвка), to new housing on city outskirts, while transforming their original neighborhoods into commercial and high-end residential areas, often auctioned to developers (Cheng 2012; He et al. 2023; Zhang, Schoonjans, and Gantois 2023). This urban transformation, termed "state-centered triangular embedment" by He (2018), reflects a balance struck by an authoritarian regime influenced by neoliberal economics, amidst pressures from the state, market, and society.

Moreover, in addition to state-led urbanization, there is also informal urbanization. Like other developing countries, as the agricultural sector shrinks and rural off-farm economic activity declines, a large portion of the rural population leaves their homes and migrates to cities for work (Lanjouw and Lanjouw 2001; Zhang and Diao 2020). This migration stems from the spontaneous efforts of local villagers and migrant workers; a result of housing development and service provision that the State does not control or regulate. However, because of the hukou system, many of them, although able to move to urban areas, are, in fact, unable to acquire full urban residency status. (Chan 2012; Wang 2000; Wu 2006).

Overall, the historical background illustrates the evolution of China's policies from the Mao era to the period of economic reforms, including the establishment of the hukou system, and reforms, and the push for greater openness. These policy changes promoted economic growth and urbanization and created a significant urban-rural divide, profoundly affecting the position of rural migrants in urban areas. These historical factors are crucial for understanding the unique trajectory of China's urban development. These urbanization and gentrification processes eventually led to special gray areas in Chinese cities with characteristics similar to "twilight areas," a concept from British cities. These gray areas are characterized by a mix of old

² A Khrushchyovka is a type of economical apartment building, typically three to five stories high and constructed with concrete panels or bricks. These buildings were developed in the Soviet Union during the early 1960s under the leadership of Nikita Khrushchev.

buildings, unauthorized new constructions, and the intermingling of industries and workshops (Medhurst and Lewis 1969). The demographics are heterogeneous and fluid, including young people from all over the country and older adults who remain in the area (Mellor 1973). Although not defined as slums in other parts of the world, they often function as slums in China. They can be viewed as China's "twilight areas."

CHENGZHONGCUN: THE TWILIGHT AREA IN CHINA

The emergence of slums is a pervasive phenomenon resulting from urbanization and neoliberal policy shifts in developing countries (Davis 2011; 2013; Marx, Stoker, and Suri 2013; Roy et al. 2014). Slums typically form when urban growth exceeds the capacity of formal housing and infrastructure, particularly in cities unable to manage unplanned development (Marx, Stoker, and Suri 2013). As rural populations migrate to cities for economic opportunities, poor governance and inadequate public services contribute to the rise of informal settlements, often in marginal areas where residents lack legal ownership (Davis 2006: 26).

In contrast, many studies have noted that the phenomenon of slums is not prevalent in most cities and towns in China despite the rapid urbanization that China has been experiencing. Some scholars, therefore, argue that slums do not exist in Chinese cities. They believe that this is the embodiment of China's "institutional superiority" and put forward "Chinese exceptionalism" based on the concept of "American exceptionalism" proposed by Tocqueville (Zhang 2013). For example, Zhang (2021) compares the slums in China and India from the perspective of comparative sociology; slums do not exist in China because the Chinese government has more protection for rural resources and assets, providing farmers with certain resource rights that contribute to realized self-development. Meanwhile, Zhang (2021) also points out the existing problem of "quasi-slums," which have the potential to degenerate into slums. Liu and Zhang (2020) and Chan (2007) make it clear that the reason there are no slums in China is not complicated: China's poor do not live in officially defined cities but in *chengzhongcuns* (城中村, "urban village").

With the implementation of China's economic reform in the more than 30 years since the beginning of reform and opening-up in 1978, the geographical boundary between city and country began to break down. On the one hand, the rapid development of urbanization has gained increasing geographical space, which has put pressure on the cultivated land in the surrounding rural areas; on the other hand, the development of cities requires a large amount of labor (Guan et al. 2018). Some of these so-called *chengzhongcuns* are located in built-up areas of cities, while others are close to cities, but the extension of urban space eventually engulfs

them. As a result, some rural areas were surrounded or annexed by newly advancing urban territories, forming a distinct entity – chengzhongcuns, which means the “village-in-the city” in Chinese (Peng and Baek 2014).

Chengzhongcuns exhibit landscapes analogous to “twilight areas,” a concept introduced by Medhurst and Lewis (1969). In examining the urban decline in British industrial cities, Medhurst and Lewis defined twilight areas as neighborhoods experiencing social and physical decline, where marginalized populations resided in spaces overlooked by formal urban planning. Mellor (1973) further elaborated on this concept, defining twilight areas as zones situated between slums and suburban districts characterized by social and economic obsolescence. These areas, though not physically degraded like slums, face serious issues such as overcrowding, stagnation, and inadequate infrastructure. They house marginalized populations, including low-income workers, immigrants, and the unemployed, who have limited housing options.

Mellor (1973) categorizes twilight areas into three distinct types: (1) zones in transition, where businesses encroach upon residential neighborhoods, leading to rising land values and displacement of the original population; (2) gray areas, which are densely populated areas that are not slums, yet suffer from poor living conditions; and (3) areas of special need, where a diverse, transient population struggles with inadequate housing management and a lack of social cohesion. The social fragmentation in twilight areas poses significant challenges for urban planning, as Mellor notes. These areas lack cohesive communities, with distinct groups competing for space and resources, making coordinated improvements difficult. Beyond physical decay, there are broader issues of poverty and inequality that redevelopment alone cannot resolve.

Roy (2005) further proposes the concept of “urban informality,” arguing that such twilight areas are not merely challenges for urban planning but represent a core mechanism of urbanization. Rather than anomalies or peripheral zones, twilight areas exemplify a “state of exception” deliberately created and sustained by state planning to enable flexible governance (Roy 2005). Urban informality, as Roy contends, reflects a system in which legal and illegal, formal and informal, intertwine, allowing the state to enforce policies and allocate resources selectively. Neoliberal practices shape this selective governance. States, pursuing austerity measures, legitimize privatization and promote self-help models, thereby reducing direct state support and intervention (Jessop 2002; Roy 2005).

The "urban informality" mechanism became central to China's approach to managing these "twilight areas" following China's urbanization policies. Unlike in the Western world, China's unique political and economic system has made urban expansion without necessarily integrating rural settlements and populations into urban organizational structures (Chung 2009). In China, this mechanism of urban informality operates through the legacies of land ownership and the hukou system from the Mao era, which maintain a flexible and ambiguous governance framework. China's unique land ownership and land use rights are one of the major obstacles to urban annexation of the countryside. China practices "socialist public ownership" of land--ownership by the whole people and collective ownership by the working people. The country's land is divided explicitly into "urban land," which belongs to the state, and "rural land," which belongs to peasant collectives, except for land legally owned by the state (Lin and Ho 2005). From the perspective of land use rights, urban land use rights can belong to both the state and private. In theory, village owners collectively possess the right to use rural land, but in practice, the land is divided among each household (Ho 2001; Tang and Chung 2002). Once rural residents are converted into urban residents and their land is expropriated, they give up their ownership and right to use most of the land. Second, there are structural disparities in education and social insurance between rural and non-rural hukou residents. Rural hukou holders who want to attend urban schools have a higher threshold and may have to pay a fee to attend, as well as meet a series of conditions such as having an urban residence permit, paying social security for a certain number of years, and owning an urban property (Montgomery 2012; Zhou and Cheung 2017).

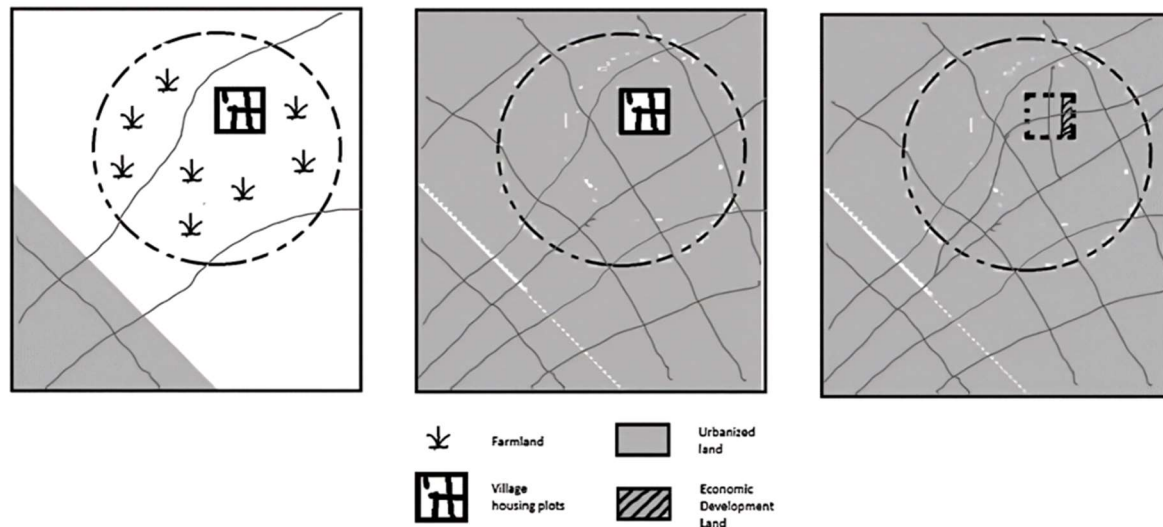
Much like the liminal nature of twilight areas (Mellor 1973), chengzhongcuns exist in a transitional state between rural and urban systems. The transformation of rural residents into urban residents creates a financial burden for cities, leading them to evaluate costs and revenues before annexation and often exclude areas considered less valuable (Guo 2001). Therefore, in the process of urban annexation of rural areas, there is a complex transfer of land ownership, right of land use, and hukou system. The land ownership status of chengzhongcuns in China can be roughly divided into three categories:

1. **State-Expropriated Land.** The state has expropriated land, eliminating collective land ownership among farmers. The city completely engulfs the villages, and original farmers are transformed into urban residents, though they retain traditional rural living habits. Experts broadly refer to this land as chengzhongcuns. These areas have been integrated into the city and are no longer targeted for chengzhongcuns transformation by the

government (Lai et al. 2014; Lai and Tang 2016; Wang, Wang, and Wu 2009).

2. Partially Requisitioned Land. Most of the land has been requisitioned in these cases, with ownership shared between the state and collectives. However, the original farmers have not transitioned to urban resident status (Lai et al. 2014; Tian 2008; Wang et al. 2009)
3. Collectively Owned within Urban Framework. These areas are included in the urban framework, but all land remains collectively owned (Tian 2008; Wang et al. 2009).

The situation of the latter two types of chengzhongcuns is commonly what the Chinese government intends to transform (Lai et al. 2014). Additionally, although chengzhongcuns are rural enclaves within the city (geographically), chengzhongcuns have become part of the city in structure. Often, these areas no longer have the character of agricultural land. People who used to live in the first type of chengzhongcuns received substantial compensation for demolition in other parts of the city (including ownership of multiple homes in other parts of the city), and the unemployed among them will also receive unemployment benefits (Wang, Wang, and Wu 2009). For the original residents of the latter two types of chengzhongcuns, after the government has requisitioned the farmland, the villagers still own the land for the homestead (collective construction land for building houses and their ancillary facilities) (Wang, Wang, and Wu 2009). Farmers are allowed to conduct non-agricultural activities on these lands and capitalize on them (Buckingham and Chan 2018; Sun and Ho 2018). Most will become wealthy landowners (Peng and Baek 2014). Figure 1 shows the transition from a village to a Chengzhongcun.

Figure 1. From a village to a Chengzhongcun

Source: Buckingham, Will and Kam Wing Chan. 2018. "One City, Two Systems: Chengzhongcun in China's Urban System." *Journal of Contemporary China* 27(112):584-595.

How did chengzhongcuns become China's special type of slum? Three primary factors contribute to the chengzhongcuns becoming de facto slums. As with twilight areas, chengzhongcuns face exclusion from formal urban planning processes, leaving them disconnected from the surrounding urban governance systems (Mellor 1973). First, although chengzhongcuns are spatially within urban boundaries, administratively, they are excluded from urban development planning and urban governance systems. Since some chengzhongcuns are not under the municipal government's authority, the city cannot directly manage and plan them. These chengzhongcuns became de facto independent kingdoms and were separated from urban planning and infrastructure development policies. However, due to the loss of arable land, the villagers rent out their old houses to migrant workers, while they often move to better new houses in other areas.

Much like the urban informality of twilight areas (Mellor 1973; Roy 2005), chengzhongcuns also operate outside formal governance as a deliberate state strategy. The local administrative system regards some chengzhongcuns as administrative villages; therefore, villagers' committees manage them.³ Tang (2015) pointed out that the role of the newly formed neighborhood committees is mainly symbolic. The "villagers' committee" in chengzhongcuns

³ Administrative villages are the smallest grassroots autonomous units in China's local administrative system. Their management organs are villagers' committees. See Guo and Thomas (2004).

has become the “landlords’ committee” -- their urban planning often involves the illegal construction of more houses, such as “small property rights housing,” which are not subject to government control or planning supervision, thus forming an informal housing market in chengzhongcuns (Liu, Yi, and Zheng 2018; Sun and Ho 2018). These chengzhongcuns often have harsh environments and poor sanitation. Illegal buildings are often too dense, and most of them do not meet the requirements of government building safety and fire protection (Liu et al. 2010; Tian 2008).

As seen in twilight areas (Mellor 1973), the marginalization of low-income residents also characterizes chengzhongcuns, where rural migrants face significant exclusion from formal urban systems. Liu and Zhang (2020) refer to the second factor in China’s urbanization process as informal urbanization, which involves interprovincial immigration that has brought large numbers of people, primarily rural migrants, to cities in search of employment opportunities. Low-skilled people who come to work tend to opt for convenient and cheap accommodation (Tian 2008). Workers in manufacturing and construction often live in employer-provided dormitories or construction sites, while workers in low-paid informal jobs are provided accommodation in private rental housing (Tian 2008). Indigenous villagers, seeking financial gain from the increasing number of migrant workers in need of affordable housing, are inclined to capitalize on this opportunity by constructing and renting out houses in chengzhongcuns. However, the transfer of ownership to non-village residents is prohibited (Tian 2008). Chengzhongcuns’ low rent and location advantages have become their first choice for staying. Therefore, they have created an active but unregulated housing rental market that accommodates relatively low rents. Large numbers of low-income migrants live in illegally built housing, otherwise known as informal sectors (Zhang 2011).

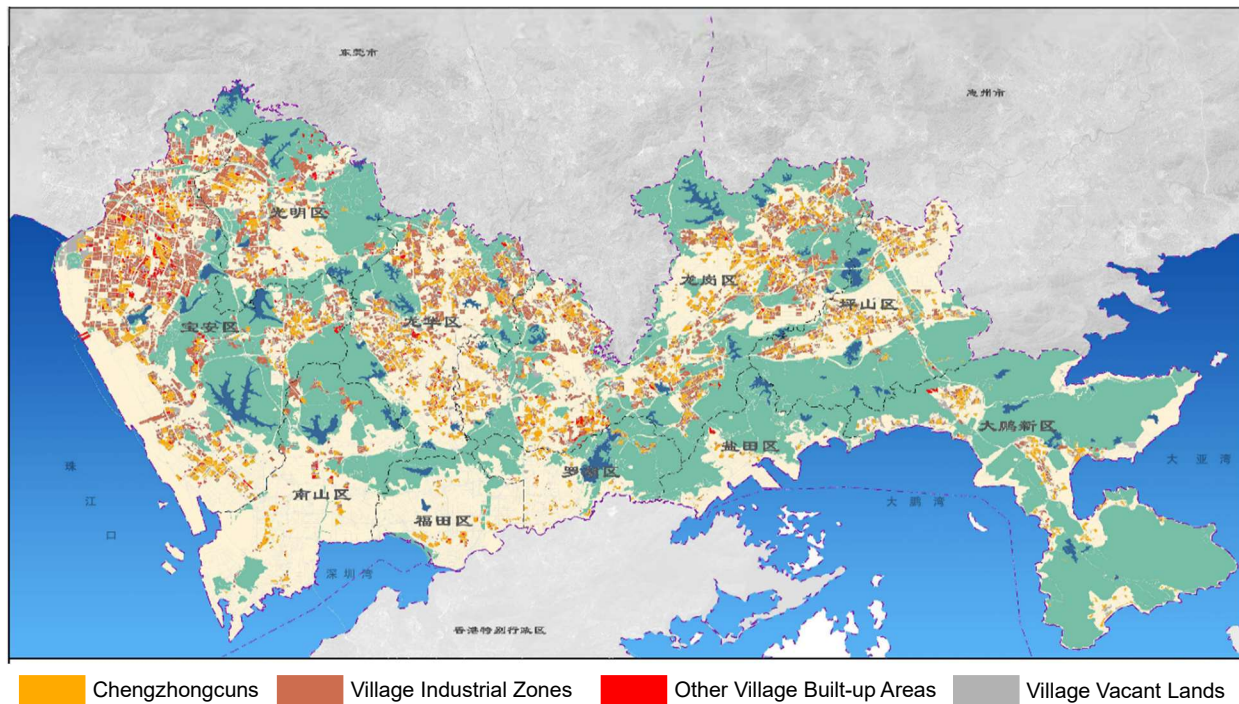
The third factor is the gentrification process in China (He 2018). The process of outright urban annexation of rural areas involves compensation and resettlement of original rural residents, which makes urban governments want to develop these lands more quickly to reduce costs (Shin 2015). Additionally, the rapid increase in housing prices during urbanization has led city governments to favor constructing high-end residential and commercial buildings for greater economic benefits, a process in which they align firmly with real estate developers to amass substantial wealth (Kan 2021). As village houses and farmland are demolished to make way for upscale apartments and commercial buildings, the city’s new boundary extends to the edge of rural areas, continuing its expansion until new chengzhongcuns are formed, and the cycle

repeats. The migrants living in the original chengzhongcuns are forced to move to the new chengzhongcuns further away from the city (Buckingham and Chan 2018).

These factors lead chengzhongcuns to mimic the universal characteristics of slums. Neoliberalization policies in China have created around 100 million disenfranchised, displaced, and exploited rural migrants (Davis 2004:60). Shrinking public sector employment has led to the expansion of the informal sector, often a last resort for poor residents (Kombe 2001). In the slums, in order to protect its meager interests from other competing informal sectors, and due to the lack of forced labor rights, the informal sector often becomes a semi-feudal realm riddled with kickbacks, bribes, and other fraudulent activity (Davis 2004:185).

The chengzhongcun is home to lower-socioeconomic workers from all over the country and has become the natural soil for the development of the informal sector due to its unregulated characteristics and related social disorder (Zhang 2023). Most people in chengzhongcuns are low-income groups, and the restriction of spending power makes the internal economy of chengzhongcuns different from the outside cities (Li and Xiong 2020). In chengzhongcuns, small vendors can sell products that do not meet quality inspection standards at low prices, restaurants serve food without operating licenses, and many illegal hotels and internet cafes provide cramped but cheap accommodations (Bach 2010; Chung 2010; Kochan 2015).

There is both competition and cooperation among the informal sectors. The handling of these relationships is often rife with criminality (Lui and Chan 2022; He and Wang 2015). Violence, prostitution, drug abuse, and other incidents make chengzhongcuns into the “urban sores” of the city. (Zhang 2011; Zhong 2013). For example, the Shenzhen Municipal Government has identified chengzhongcuns in planning documents (see Figures 2 and 3) as unwelcome landscapes and hotbeds of social ills that hinder foreign investment and urban development (Hao 2015). Aiming for substantial economic benefits, underworld organizations in some chengzhongcuns have long controlled grassroots political power and interfered in reconstruction. These organizations rig elections through intimidation, violence, and vote-buying while also recruiting corrupt state officials as “protective umbrellas” to illegally dominate these areas (Cheng 2019; Tian 2008). People living in chengzhongcuns are generally affected by crime (e.g., economic vulnerability, violence, and sexually transmitted diseases), which can lead to legal charges and convictions for its inhabitants, potentially depriving them of the possibility of obtaining employment in the formal sector (Cheng 2019; Tian 2008).

Figure 2. Chengzhongcuns in Shenzhen

Source: SUPB. 2019. "Shenzhen Urban Village (old village) Master Plan (2019-2025)." Shenzhen, China: Shenzhen Urban Planning and Natural Resources Bureau.

Figure 3. Chengzhongcun Gangxia Village in Shenzhen



Source: <https://kknews.cc/zh-sg/news/nrnkkvq.html>

In addition, institutional constraints also play a role in the informal sector in chengzhongcuns. According to Amaral and Quintin (2006), in developing countries, the informal sector emphasizes low-skilled jobs because informal managers receive less external funding and choose to replace physical capital with low-skilled labor. Even if the labor market is perfectly competitive, there are systematic differences in the characteristics of formal and informal workers. In order to compete with the formal sector, the informal sector can only reduce costs to a minimum by lowering wages and avoiding additional expenses. Research by Jiang, Qian, and Wen (2017) shows that employers in the informal sector (especially those with rural or out-of-town hukou) are more likely to “opt out of social insurance” because of the cost. Informal employees in chengzhongcuns often hesitate to join social insurance schemes, as they perceive the protection offered to be inadequate and the additional financial burden of paying for social insurance to be too high (He and Wang 2015). Despite policy support, the informal sector is extremely difficult to convert into the formal sector, and low-skilled employees who refuse to join

the social security system make it virtually impossible to enter the formal sector (Reutersward 2005).

Chengzhongcuns, initially seen by marginalized immigrants as temporary havens offering affordable housing, have increasingly become inescapable swamps for low-skilled migrants (Chen and Jim 2010). The combination of skyrocketing urban housing prices, low wages, excessive work hours, and lack of social mobility impedes these migrants' transition to urban residency, leaving most to realize that their stay in chengzhongcuns is not transient but permanent (Bach 2010; Wang, Wang and Wu 2009). Most will realize they are stuck in these swamps forever, with no viable path forward or opportunities for economic advancement. This situation exacerbates class segregation, as urban spaces, products of social constructs, foster distinct cultural identities and deepen societal divisions (Fainstein and Campbell 2011). "Although the growing wage inequality has hurt both low-skilled men and women, the problem of declining employment has been concentrated among low-skilled men" (Wilson 2011:25). In this desperate atmosphere, low-skilled male immigrants created a new subculture group within chengzhongcuns – *Sanhe dashen* (三和大神, "Sanhe gurus") (Gong 2019; Peng 2021).

TRAPPED IN SWAMPS: SANHE GURUS AND TWILIGHT LANGUAGE

The word Sanhe comes from the name of the largest human resources company in the region. Many job agencies and labor dispatch companies, mainly "Sanhe Talent Market," have settled in the chengzhongcuns of Shenzhen, gradually forming a "job street" for the recruitment of general workers (Gong 2019; Peng 2021). Some job seekers stay here for a long time, forming a unique subculture group. Workers who escape from factory assembly lines, work primarily as daily paid temporary workers, and have no fixed abode are often jokingly called "Sanhe gurus" (Dong 2022). Some individuals, having sold their resident identity cards to illegal organizations for money, find themselves unable to enter legal factories or afford the fare home due to not having their identity cards (NHK 2018; Whitworth 2022:60).

For Sanhe gurus, chengzhongcuns "had become a ceaseless conveyor belt that looped back on itself; it sustained their life at the margins of existence but at the same time confined them there, not providing opportunities to move away or to change their precarious state" (Whitworth 2022:59). They navigate an informal world where daily survival is prioritized over long-term security, reinforcing their marginalization within the urban space (Dong 2022). Their choice to work in the informal sector is not necessarily voluntary but rather a reflection of their limited opportunities due to lacking legal documentation. The hukou system continues to regulate labor mobility, often preventing migrants from accessing urban benefits such as

healthcare, housing, and stable employment (Chan 2012). This exclusion from formal employment and social services mirrors the broader struggles of low-skilled migrants in China, who navigate informal housing, labor, and social networks to survive (Wu and Treiman 2004).

Academics often translate the term *dashen* (大神) as “gods” (Gong 2018; Huang 2019); however, in this context, I have chosen to use the Sanskrit-derived term “guru,” which closely aligns with the connotation of *dashen*. In Chinese slang, *dashen* commonly refers to people who have reached an elevated level in a particular field. Similarly, a guru in pan-Indian traditions is more than a teacher. They are revered guides who shape values, impart knowledge, and foster spiritual growth (Mlecko 1982).

In addition, gurus in pan-Indian philosophical texts use a form of “twilight language,” akin to the obscure languages that are difficult for outsiders to understand (Bucknell and Stuart-Fox 2013:11). In *chengzhongcuns*, Sanhe gurus have also developed their own form of “twilight languages.” These unique terms reflect their way of life within *chengzhongcuns*. These “twilight languages” were created naturally and derived from life experiences in *chengzhongcuns* (Whitworth 2022). For instance, adhering to a belief in only accepting same-day pay jobs, they frequently use the internet slogan “one day for work, three days for play” (Dong 2022). Table 1 lists some of their commonly used slang terms:

Table 1. Common Slang Terms Used by Sanhe Gurus

Slang Terms	Meaning
Treasure Hunt/ Opening Treasure Chests (开宝箱)	Rummaging through the trash to find food and things to sell for money.
The Big Water (大水)	A cheap and high-capacity bottled water. People think drinking this water can relieve hunger.
Hang Up/ Hang-up (挂逼)	The symbolic concept of Sanhe gurus often refers to encountering a particularly difficult situation (in big trouble), such as being penniless and sometimes dying. But most of the time, it refers to a state of being basically penniless and having nothing to do. It could also be used as an adjective to describe the cheapest food or service to help "maintain vital signs" when the body is almost overwhelmed (See Figure 4), e.g., hung-up noodles, hung-up beds.
Haixin Hotel (海信大酒楼)	"Haixin Human Resource Market," the activity center of Sanhe Gurus. Because many Sanhe gurus sleep at the door of the "Haixin Building" at night.
Car Repair (修车)	Soliciting prostitutes
The Great Communal Bed (大通铺)	A flat area on which many Sanhe gurus sleep, usually a square or park.
Black/Shady Factory (黑厂)	Factories with terrible working conditions and not paying minimum wage.

Source: https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_1778563

Figure 4. A "hanging up" *Sanhe* gurus who fainted from starvation.



Source: <https://auzhu.com/game/539041.html>

Another reason for adopting the term “guru” is that the values and lifestyles of *Sanhe* gurus resonate with more young people who are dissatisfied with reality (Kan 2013; Li and Cheng 2023). They are hailed (both seriously and playfully) by young people as exemplars in life. Under the background of the domestic economic downturn, the difficulty of class mobility caused by the fixed social class, and the harsh treatment of employees by capitalists, more young people have joined the construction of this subculture out of disappointment with the real environment (Kan 2013; Li and Zhu 2017; Ngai and Chan 2012). Young people began to pursue a new way of life: not buying a house, not falling in love, not marrying, not having children by maintaining a minimum standard of living, and refusing to be exploited by Chinese capitalists (Di 2023). With the China real estate crisis, the acceleration of the declining birthrate, and population aging, urban pessimism pervades China’s young people (Bai and Lei 2019; Chiang, Hui, and Chen 2021; Gupta and Kaur 2023; Liu, Xing, and Zhang 2020).

DISCUSSION

Chengzhongcuns are a unique hybrid space in urban theory, shaped by neoliberal forces, urban informality, and the persistence of informal urbanization. These urban villages

emerged during China's rapid urbanization, driven by reforms that accelerated city development. However, chengzhongcuns occupy an in-between space—neither fully rural nor urban, neither entirely formal nor informal (Buckingham and Chan 2018). This blurred status highlights the tension between China's top-down urban expansion and the influence of rural governance and land ownership (Lin and Ho 2005).

Chengzhongcuns illustrate the impact of neoliberal reforms, which emphasize market-driven growth, leading to uneven urban development and marginalizing low-skilled migrants in informal labor and housing (Harvey 2007). The hukou system further exacerbates exclusion by limiting rural migrants' access to urban services like healthcare and housing (Chan 2012). Gentrification has also isolated chengzhongcuns, reinforcing their status as informal spaces with precarious labor and substandard living conditions (He 2018). This system is similar to Medhurst and Lewis's (1969) concept of "twilight areas," zones in transition facing social and economic decline.

Roy's (2005) concept of "urban informality" demonstrates how informal practices are integral to state strategies, allowing selective tolerance to maintain control. Roy (2005) also explains how reduced state intervention under neoliberal policies exacerbates inequality and exclusion. These theories highlight the challenges of managing urban informality under neoliberalism, where the state leverages informality for flexibility but fails to address social inequalities. The Chinese experience with semi-regulated urban informality reveals significant challenges, including persistent inequality, exclusion from formal services, and governance issues. Managing chengzhongcuns demonstrates the difficulty of maintaining social stability while keeping marginalized populations outside formal urban systems, underscoring the negative consequences of selective integration and the limitations of informal governance structures in addressing urban inequality.

The long-term existence of chengzhongcuns shows they are far from temporary. Despite reforms, rural migrants still face significant barriers to becoming full urban residents, primarily due to the hukou system (Chan 2012). While China's neoliberal economic model drives rapid growth, it also entrenches inequality. Chengzhongcuns have become a permanent feature of the urban landscape, reinforcing these disparities (Liu and Zhang 2020). For the Chinese government, maintaining chengzhongcuns is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, these areas provide affordable housing and a flexible labor force; on the other, they highlight the challenge of managing semi-informal spaces outside formal urban governance. This creates

ongoing issues with infrastructure, sanitation, and crime, reflecting broader themes of social disorder that are a critical focus of this paper (Whitworth 2022; Zhang 2021).

While the primary focus of this paper is on the chengzhongcuns within China, similar phenomena of informal settlements exist worldwide, often influenced by global economic trends and domestic governance policies. For instance, the existence of informal settlements like favelas in Brazil or slums in India highlights how neoliberal reforms and rapid urbanization contribute to marginalized communities across different political and social environments (Ren 2018). Unlike chengzhongcuns, which are partly integrated into the state's governance system, informal settlements in other nations often reflect government neglect and a hands-off approach (Roy 2011).

The lesson from China's experience for other countries is the need to balance urban development with social and environmental considerations. To avoid the adverse outcomes of China's rapid urbanization, other countries should aim for a development model that integrates both urban and rural needs, emphasizing equity and sustainability. A balanced approach is crucial to prevent issues like rural decline, environmental degradation, and social inequality (Li et al. 2018). Instead of focusing solely on economic growth and urban expansion, countries should foster comprehensive urban policies that address the needs of all urban and rural residents. This means promoting inclusive urban planning that integrates informal areas into formal governance structures, improving living conditions and providing equal access to essential services (Guan et al. 2018). By learning from China's challenges, other nations can pursue sustainable urbanization that not only supports economic growth but also promotes social stability and environmental health.

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Book Review

Sun, Wenkai. (2022). Population and Labor Market Policies in China's Reform Process. Routledge. ISBN: 9781032263915

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Book Review

In "Population and Labor Market Policies in China's Reform Process," Wenkai Sun, Professor at Renmin University's School of Economics and Associate Dean at the National Institute of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME), provides a meticulous exploration of China's shifting population policies from the late 1950s until 2016. Drawing on his expertise in labor and developmental economics, Sun employs a blend of historical narrative, empirical analysis, and insightful commentary to unravel the complexities of these policies and their profound influence on the lives of ordinary Chinese citizens. The book is structured to illuminate three broad dimensions of China's population policy: the hukou system, the one-child policy, and the country's social and economic inequality.

Sun's examination begins with an in-depth exploration of the household registration system, or Hukou, shedding light on its role in regulating internal population movements and shaping labor market dynamics. While historically aimed at controlling rural population growth for agricultural purposes and restricting access to megacities like Beijing, the Hukou system inadvertently fostered inequalities in income and welfare. State efforts to establish agricultural and non-agricultural Hukuo categories exacerbated individuals' access to big cities. A key reason was that social benefits like education, healthcare, and housing were tied to Hukou status, barring rural residents from urban resources and limiting their mobility. Strict entry requirements—such as employment restrictions, high taxes, and homeownership—further disadvantaged rural migrants. These barriers perpetuated existing inequalities and hindered economic development, particularly urbanization.

Sun delves further into China's family planning policy, commonly called the one-child policy. Despite its controversial nature, Sun argues that it was designed to regulate population growth and promote economic stability by encouraging smaller families, later marriages, and longer birth intervals. While the policy successfully lowered birth rates, it also created long-term demographic challenges, including an aging population, labor shortages, and gender imbalances, particularly in rural areas. Sun's analysis finds minimal evidence that these restrictions transformed societal behaviors, as families with one child showed no significant differences in marriage, entrepreneurship, or elder care compared to those with multiple children. The policy's unintended consequences eventually led to reforms allowing more children, challenging previous assumptions about its societal impact and contributions to China's development.

In the book's closing section, Sun tackles the intricate dynamics of income inequality and gendered income disparities exacerbated by population policies. This analysis serves as a

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crucial bridge between the book's overarching themes, connecting the implications of population policies explored in earlier sections to broader societal and economic dynamics.

One of the book's notable strengths lies in its presentation of data and methodology, accompanied by clear explanations accessible even to non-experts in quantitative methods. While Sun provides a broad exploration of China's population policies, the book's structure is somewhat disjointed, comprising different articles on broader topics related to China's population policy. Each chapter incorporates data analysis and measurement, but the primary focus is on individual and social behaviors rather than an in-depth policy evaluation. Moreover, the liberal lens through which the policies are analyzed can sometimes lead to a narrow perspective, lacking nuanced critique. Sun's most substantial contributions appear in the first section and the closing chapter, where he successfully links empirical research to broader policy implications. However, in the middle chapters, this connection weakens, as findings are presented without sufficient engagement with relevant policy significance. Despite these shortcomings, the book remains a valuable resource for understanding China's policy landscape; it effectively outlines key policy shifts, historical context, and social repercussions.

Population and Labor Market Policies in China's Reform Process caters to a broad spectrum of readers, from specialists and advanced graduate students to individuals with a general interest in China's policy landscape. For specialists and academic researchers, the book's incorporation of quantitative methods and historical analysis provides valuable insights into China's demographic and labor policies. The book is most effective when linking empirical research to policy implications, yet it sometimes prioritizes data presentation over deeper critical analysis. Despite these limitations, the author's clear explanations and accessible style make it an informative resource for scholars and general readers interested in China's population policies and development trajectory.