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The Northwest Journal of Communication (NWJC) is a scholarly, peer reviewed publication dedicated to understanding human and mass communication in all forms. The journal is indexed by Ebscohost.

Aims and Scope

NWJC represents the diversity of the discipline, thus we welcome contributions related to any area of communication and from all theoretical and methodological perspectives. Submissions are expected to make original contributions to academic research in communication studies and should be theoretically sophisticated, methodologically sound, and make important advancements to human or mass communication scholarship. Manuscripts will be considered as they are received, and all submissions undergo rigorous peer review. Acceptance rates range, depending on the issue, from 15–20 percent.

Author Guidelines

Manuscripts are accepted on a rolling basis, and may be submitted electronically at any time to the editor. See the website for his or her contact information: http://www.northwestcomm.org/journal. Manuscripts should not exceed 7,000 words excluding references and tables and figures (exceptions may be made at the editor's discretion) and should not have been published in any prior form. The journal follows a policy of blind review; authors should avoid any identification in the body of the manuscript or abstract.

General Formatting and Style Guidelines

Manuscripts should be submitted electronically as a Microsoft Word file. The main document should be double-spaced, in Times New Roman font, with one-inch margins on all sides, and all pages should be numbered consecutively. Manuscripts should conform to the most recent edition of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (APA).

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1. *Letter to the editor*: Please include a brief summary of your submission, its significance, and explain why the readers of our journal would be interested in your submission. Please also confirm the work is original and not published (or in consideration for publication elsewhere). Finally, please disclose any funding sources or potential conflicts of interest.
2. *Cover page*: Please include the full names of all authors, affiliations, postal addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses. Please also note all details required by your funding and grant awarding bodies.
3. *Main document*: Please include a title page, abstract, key words, and the complete manuscript. Please include all tables and figures in this document. Please remove all identifying information from this document to allow for blind peer review. Please ensure identifying information is also absent from the electronic file information.

Process

Manuscripts that fit the interests of the NWJC and align with the submission requirements will be sent out for peer review, typically to two reviewers. The NWJC is committed to a timely review of manuscripts and in most instances, authors can expect a submission decision within 90 days.

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The Power of Teacher Supportive Communication: Effects on Students' Positive Emotions and Engagement in Learning

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There has been a growing recognition that student emotions are essential to academic achievement as a critical source of bonding and engagement with the process of teaching. Focusing on positive behaviors and emotions in higher education, this study aims to examine the relationship among college instructors' supportive communication, students' positive academic emotions (pleasure, hope, and pride), and students' engagement in learning. Under the guidance of emotional response theory, this study found that student emotions about learning mediate the relationship between teacher support (consisting of informational, emotional, esteem, and network) and student academic engagement. Findings are discussed as they relate to theoretical and practical contributions to social support and student emotion and learning.

KEYWORDS: Student positive emotions, social support, learning engagement, teacher–student relationship

Over the past decade, the academic community has come to a growing recognition that student emotions are critical to academic achievement. They are a crucial source of faculty fulfillment and student motivation for learning and mastery (Titsworth, McKenna,

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Mazer, & Quinlan, 2013; Titsworth, Quinlan, & Mazer, 2010; Zhang & Zhang, 2013). As a fundamental, inseparable part of students' academic and social lives, emotions about learning influence students' ability to focus on academic work and promote their engagement with the lessons learned (Fredrickson, 2013; Kashy-Rosenbaum, Kaplan, & Israel-Cohen, 2018).

To study classroom communication and emotions, Mottet, Frymier, and Beebe (2006) developed emotional response theory (ERT), which explains the process through which external stimuli are perceived and students' emotions and subsequent behaviors occur. Taking a relational perspective, ERT assumes that teachers' verbal and nonverbal communications deeply affect students' emotional reactions to learning and in turn influence the students' approach or avoidance behaviors toward the classroom and its content (Titsworth & Waldbuesser, 2018). Using the guidance of ERT, studies of positive or negative classroom emotions and students' self-reports on learning have demonstrated that they were strongly related to various faculty communicative behaviors, including messages about justice and injustice (Chory, Horan, Carton, & Houser, 2014; Horan, Martin, & Weber, 2012); swearing (Generous, Frei, & Houser, 2015); confirmational behaviors (Goldman & Goodboy, 2014); and immediacy, clarity, and communication competence (Mazer, McKenna-Buchanan, Quilan, & Titsworth, 2014; Titsworth et al., 2013).

Given compelling evidence that teachers' behavior impacts student emotions in pursuit of learning success, it is important to examine a variety of teacher communication behaviors, in or outside the classroom. The previous research has focused on the teaching-related classroom behaviors and immediate student affective responses. However, as teachers and students engage in communication to "develop professional working relationships with each other" (Myers, 2006, p. 293), such communication can also happen during one-on-one interpersonal conversations outside the

classroom, particularly when students have academic or personal issues that need support from the teacher. As college students are highly vulnerable to mental illness (Quintero Johnson, Yilmaz, & Najarian, 2017), teachers are likely one of the primary sources of social support, especially when maintaining academic success is a major cause of stress (Beiter et al., 2015).

Studies have shown the effect of teacher support on improving student learning initiatives and outcomes (Danielsen, Wiium, Wilhelmsen, & Wold, 2010; Ruzek et al., 2017). However, little evidence has been found about different types of teacher support, as well as how supportive messages influence students' emotional experience of learning. To fill this gap, this study aims to investigate the relationship between various types of teachers' social support, students' positive emotions, and engagement in learning.

TEACHERS' SUPPORTIVE COMMUNICATION

A bright side of interpersonal communication, social support plays a crucial role in the health and well-being of individuals engaged in diverse social relationships (Burleson, 2008, 2009; Burleson & MacGeorge, 2002; Goldsmith, 2004; Kashy-Rosenbaum et al., 2018). Based on early traditions from sociology and psychology, communication scholars define social support as communication that involves verbal and nonverbal behaviors that assist others with difficulties and distress (Burleson & MacGeorge, 2002).

Diverse and multidisciplinary social support literature (Goldsmith, 2008) uniformly suggests the benefits of positive communication for the physical and psychological health of individuals (Pauley & Hesse, 2009). Consistent with this, considerable research has examined social support and personal well-being among family members and spouses (Fisher, 2010; Xu & Burleson, 2001); with friends (Frisby & Martin, 2010); in the workplace (Jia & Shoham, 2012); in health care contexts (Miller-Ott & Durham, 2011); and

through computer-mediated sources, such as online forums (Aakhus & Rumsey, 2010; McCosker, 2018), among others.

As an important component contributing to mental health and relational goals, social support comes in various forms and includes emotional, informational, esteem, network, and tangible support (Xu & Burleson, 2001). *Emotional support* involves expressions of love, care, and nurturance (Cutrona, 1996); *informational support* aims to reduce uncertainty and stress by providing advice and information; *esteem support* focuses on boosting others' self-image by demonstrating respect and affirmation; *network support* refers to a sense of belonging or social connection; and *tangible support* emphasizes concrete services or resources.

Although the preceding typology has rarely been applied to the instructional context, previous literature has examined how various teacher supportive behaviors, considered an instructional resource, can benefit students' emotional responses and learning. For example, Jones (2008) reported that students' perceptions of out-of-class support contribute to their learning motivation and relationship satisfaction with the instructor, particularly with highly supportive teachers. Teacher confirmation, which offers acknowledgment and acceptance of students' efforts to boost their self-esteem through learning and achievement, was positively related to cognitive learning, affective learning, and participation (Goodboy & Myers, 2008). When responding to more specific situations, such as student unwanted sexual attention, college professors are more likely to provide problem-solving strategies than emotional support (Bingham & Battey, 2005). In addition, Mortenson (2006) explored students' negative emotions associated with academic failure and how those stimulated self-coping strategies or attempts to seek social support, thus suggesting the increasing importance of psychosocial mentoring to students.

We should note that although some studies did not address the concept of social support, the teachers' behavior in these studies was

supportive in nature. For example, teacher clarity may be related to informational support, while immediacy is a way to convey emotional support. Furthermore, teacher confirmation may be important components of the esteem support. However, a holistic examination of how different types of social support from teachers can improve college students' emotions regarding learning is needed. Therefore this study investigated the relationship between students' perceptions of support provided by their teachers (i.e., emotional, informational, esteem, network) and their learning engagement, as well as the potential mediating role that students' positive academic emotions (enjoyment, hope, and pride) play in this process.

STUDENT EMOTIONS ABOUT LEARNING

The ERT establishes a theoretical linkage among the external stimulus received from students, student emotions, and their subsequent behavioral tendencies. Emotion is distinguished from mood due to its short duration and intimate link with a certain behavior or stimulus from the surroundings. Moods are more enduring and less related to a specific stimulus (Frijda, 1993). Student emotions are stimulated by the teachers' communication behaviors, such as immediacy, clarity, and competence (Titsworth et al., 2013; Titsworth et al., 2010); appropriate use of power (Horan et al., 2012); expression of empathy (Jia, Li, & Titsworth, 2015); and politeness (Zhang, 2011). In addition, individuals' experience of emotion "manifests itself as an action tendency" (Lord & Kanfer, 2002, p. 6), which indicates its guidance of a certain behavior.

Students' emotional responses may help predict their engagement in behaviors like cognitive and affective learning (Horan et al., 2012), interest in learning over time (Dong & Yu, 2007), and academic engagement (e.g., Horan et al., 2012; Linnenbrink-Garcia & Pekrun, 2011; Zhang & Zhang, 2013). Students' positive academic

emotion was also found to moderate their self-regulation and achievement (Villavicencio & Bernardo, 2013). In addition, Mega, Ronconi, and De Beni (2014) reported that positive emotional experiences help students use more effective strategic choices in their academic performances. Therefore a student's decision to approach or avoid the instructor, according to the ERT, is influenced by the emotional experiences the student has had in relation to the instructor's communicative behaviors.

A growing body of scholarship has attempted to take an emotion-centered approach to understanding teaching and learning. Based on ERT, Titsworth and his colleagues (Titsworth, Quinlan, & Mazer, 2010) developed the Classroom Emotions Scale to explore connections between teachers' communication behaviors and students' emotions relative to their classroom experience. They suggested three aspects of student emotional reactions, which include *emotional valence*, or the general positive/negative responses to other people (Andersen & Guerrero, 1998); *emotion work*, or students' intentional suppression or control of their emotions; and their perception of *emotional support* received from instructors. Titsworth, McKenna, Mazer, and Quinlan (2013) further expanded the previous study by developing the connection between "emotional processes" (i.e., emotional support and emotion work; Titsworth et al., 2013, p. 193) and discrete emotional outcomes as the extension of emotional valence. Their study indicated that teachers' use of immediacy, clarity and communication competence is inversely related to the need for students' emotion work; and students' perceived emotional support is associated with teacher competence (Titsworth et al., 2013).

Additionally, emotional support is positively related to and predictive of student enjoyment, hope, and pride, whereas student emotion work negatively influences these emotions (Titsworth et al., 2013). Titsworth et al. later built another model with specific negative emotions, suggesting that student emotion work

and emotional support mediate the relationship between teacher behaviors and student anger, anxiety, shame, hopelessness, and boredom (Mazer et al., 2014). Consistent with these findings, other researchers provided evidence on teacher communication and student emotional processes and outcomes. For example, students experience relatively intense hurt and decreased pleasure in response to classroom injustice and associate low emotional support with an unfair teacher (Chory et al., 2014). Goldman and Goodboy (2014) also reported that confirmation by the teacher contributes to student emotional interest, perception of emotional support, and positive emotional valance.

This study focused on specific student emotional outcomes, instead of the emotional processes, owing to its direct connection to behaviors. Pekrun and colleagues (e.g., Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun, Goetz, Frenzel, Barchfeld, & Perry, 2011; Pekrun, Goetz, Titz, & Perry, 2002) have developed a typology for emotions in academic settings, which provides a solid foundation for studying student emotions in learning. Although the literature has featured extensive research on negative feelings, such as anxiety and anger (e.g., Boekaerts, 1993; Hembree, 1988; Ma, 1999), students experience a wide diversity of emotions in academic settings (Pekrun et al., 2002). Based on Pekrun's series of studies over the decade, nine types of emotions about academic activities have been identified—enjoyment, hope, pride, relief, anger, anxiety, hopelessness, shame, and boredom—that exist in the learning-related, class-related, and test-related contexts.

The focus of this study is positive, learning-related emotions because of their critical role in fostering student problem solving, promoting well-being, and shaping beneficial behaviors (see Frenzel, Goetz, Ludtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009). The positive feelings broaden students' momentary thought–action repertories and build long-lasting physical, psychological, and social resources (Fredrickson, 2013). Over the past 10 years, studies have consistently

supported the benefits of positive emotions related to learning, documenting that they enhance academic achievement (Kashy-Rosenbaum et al., 2018; Pekrun, Frenzel, Goetz, & Perry, 2007); improve engagement and critical thinking (Zhang & Zhang, 2013); and contribute to better student cognition, motivation, and self-regulated learning (Pekrun et al., 2002). These emotional experiences, as suggested by ERT and previous literature, are a response to teachers' behaviors. Aiming to expand the social support and academic emotion literature, this study examines student emotions of enjoyment, hope, and pride in relation to supportive instructional communication. Specifically, we propose the following:

H1: Teachers' supportive communication (emotional, informational, esteem, and network) positively correlates with students' emotions of enjoyment (H1A), hope (H1B), and pride (H1C) regarding learning.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN LEARNING

Conceptualized as "the time and efforts students give to educational endeavors" (Linvill, 2014, p. 205), student engagement includes a wide range of participation, such as note taking, attentive listening, questioning, and interacting with teachers, among other academic activities; these activities have been empirically connected to desirable learning outcomes (An, 2015; Frymier & Houser, 1999; Kuh, Cruce, Shoup, Kinzie, & Gonyea, 2008; Lei, Cui, & Zhou, 2018). Research has measured student engagement through various forms of active participation (Bolkan, 2015; Denker, 2013; Galanes & Carmack, 2012) that involve affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions (Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003). The affective dimension emphasizes feelings, attitudes, and emotional reactions to teacher, classmates, and studying; behavioral engagement involves academic activities; and cognitive engagement involves students' attention

and effective cognition during learning (Zhang & Zhang, 2013). In a recent meta-analysis of student engagement and academic achievement, Lei and colleagues (2018) reported that behavioral engagement and academic achievement had the highest effect size, followed by cognitive and emotional engagement.

In a study of elementary and middle school students, Klem and Connell (2004) reported that under high levels of teacher support, elementary students were 89% more likely to feel engaged than with low teacher support, and middle school students were almost 3 times more likely to engage. However, whether this applies to college students is unknown. Previous literature on college students showed that their engagement is typically associated with teacher behaviors, such as self-disclosure (Cayanus, Martin, & Goodboy, 2009), immediacy and clarity (Mazer, 2013), active and collaborative teaching (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005), and the teacher's positive emotions in the classroom (Zhang & Zhang, 2013). Meanwhile, higher education studies have also explored how student emotions and behaviors improve engagement, which includes student emotional and cognitive interest (Mazer, 2013), need for cognition (Linvill, 2014), affective states (Linnenbrink-Garcia, Rogat, & Kos-key, 2011), diversity of achievement emotions (Pekrun et al., 2011), and coping with boredom (Nett, Goetz, & Hall, 2011). Based on the literature, it would be reasonable to assume that students' positive academic emotions would direct how they engage in learning:

H2: Students' emotions of enjoyment (H2A), hope (H2B), and pride (H2C) regarding learning positively correlate with their academic engagement.

Aligned with ERT (Mottet et al., 2006), some studies have used a model involving teacher communication, student emotional experiences, and subsequent student behavior. For example, student happiness was indicated as a mediator between the politeness of

teacher requests and student compliance (Zhang, 2011). It was also shown that teacher immediacy and clarity positively predict student emotional and cognitive interest, which eventually results in higher engagement (Mazer, 2013). In another study, Zhang and Zhang (2013) reported that teachers demonstrating positive emotions engender similar student emotional reactions, thus contributing to enhanced student engagement. This study aimed to examine whether students' positive academic emotions mediate the relationship between their perceived support from the teacher and their engagement in learning. Therefore the last hypothesis is proposed (the hypothesized model is shown in Figure 1):

H3: Students' learning-related emotions of enjoyment, hope, and pride mediate the relationship between perceived teachers' supportive communication and students' engagement.

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

A total of 140 students (105 women, 32 men, 3 not reporting) at a large western university participated in the study. The average age of the participants was 22.65 years (SD = 6.61). The participants represented a wide range of majors and years in school, with the majority being seniors (n = 66, 47.1%), followed by juniors (n = 33, 23.6%), sophomores (n = 22, 15.7%), and freshmen (n = 14, 10%). Five participants did not answer this question. Students had an average grade point average of 3.23 (SD = 0.51).

After approval from the institutional review board, we contacted instructors in the Department of Communication to recruit their students to participate in an online survey. The data collection occurred during a 2-week period right after the midpoint of the term. Extra credit was offered the participants. Adopting a

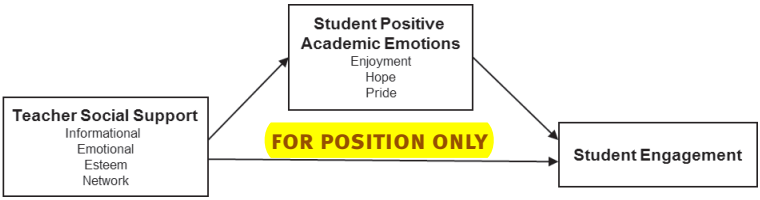

Figure 1. *Conceptual model of teacher social support and student engagement illustrating direct and indirect effects.*

common approach in instructional communication research (e.g., Jia et al., 2015; Titsworth et al., 2010), we asked participants to identify the class they had just attended before they started the survey, and teachers from that class were used to answer all questions. Students were asked to provide demographic information about themselves, the target class, and the target teacher. In addition, they completed three surveys concerning teacher supportive communication, student academic emotions, and student engagement in learning.

Instruments

Teachers' supportive communication. A revised Social Support Scale (Xu & Burleson, 2001) was used to measure students' perceptions of the type of social support they received from the target teacher. Originally developed for romantic relationships and later used in a wider interpersonal context, this scale has 35 items under five dimensions. Only four dimensions were employed in the study (emotional, informational, network, and esteem support). The other dimension (tangible support) was not used due to a lack of relevance. A few items were removed or modified to fit the teacher–student context. One sample question was "My instructor expresses esteem or respect for a competency or personal quality of mine as a student."

The scale has demonstrated good reliability and validity in previous studies (Cronbach's alpha ranged from .72 to .87 for all

the dimensions, with an average of .80; see Xu & Burleson, 2001). The final scale included four types of supportive communication, contained 27 items, and used a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*Don't receive at all*) to 5 (*Receive a great deal*). In this study, the measures had alpha reliabilities of .90 for emotional support ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.02$), .94 for esteem support ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.10$), .92 for network support ($M = 2.91$, $SD = 1.11$), and .91 for informational support ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 0.98$).

Students' academic emotions. A part of the Achievement Emotion Questionnaire (Pekrun et al., 2011) was used to examine students' reports of positive emotions related to academic achievement, including enjoyment, hope, and pride. These three subscales are 5-point Likert type, ranging from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*) on students' feelings about learning the target class. This section includes 10 items for learning-related enjoyment (e.g., "I study more than required because I enjoy it so much"), six items for learning-related hope (e.g., "I have an optimistic view toward studying [for] this class"), and six items on learning-related pride (e.g., "When I solve a difficult problem in my study, my heart beats with pride"). Previous studies have demonstrated good reliability and validity for the scale (e.g., Pekrun et al., 2011; Titsworth et al., 2013). The measures had alpha reliabilities of .90 for enjoyment ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 0.81$), .91 for hope ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 0.83$), and .81 for pride ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 0.62$).

Students' engagement in learning. A 13-item, 7-point bipolar Student Engagement Scale (Mazer, 2012) was used to investigate how students are motivated to participate in studying the target class (e.g., "During the semester, I participated during class discussions by sharing thoughts and opinions"). Previous research has found an average Cronbach's reliability coefficient of .85 (Mazer, 2013). In this study, the reliability estimate was .82 ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 0.75$).

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for All Variables*

Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Emotional support	3.23	1.02	–						
2. Esteem support	3.17	1.10	0.89	–					
3. Network support	2.91	1.11	0.80	0.82	–				
4. Informational support	3.46	0.98	0.80	0.81	0.80	–			
5. Enjoyment	3.38	0.81	0.53	0.58	0.52	0.61	–		
6. Hope	3.64	0.83	0.49	0.51	0.42	0.51	0.81	–	
7. Pride	3.86	0.62	0.35	0.37	0.34	0.33	0.56	0.69	–
8. Engagement	5.18	0.75	0.36	0.43	0.39	0.44	0.67	0.40	0.40

Note. All correlations are significant at $p < .001$.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, and Pearson correlations for all variables, are presented in Table 1. H1 suggested that different types of teachers' supportive messages are positively related to students' positive emotions. Pearson correlation results indicate significantly positive correlations (rs = .33–.61) among teacher support (emotional, esteem, network, information) and students' positive emotions (enjoyment, hope, and pride), thus supporting H1.

H2 predicted that students' emotions are positively related to their academic engagement in and outside of classrooms. Pearson correlation results indicate significantly positive correlations between student academic engagement and types of emotion (r = .62 for enjoyment, r = .40 for hope, and r = .40 for pride), thus supporting H2.

The last hypothesis predicted that the relationship between teacher support and student engagement would be mediated by students' positive academic emotions. The mediation effect was tested according to Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure, which includes three separate regression analyses (Table 2, Equations 1–3). The mediating effect is confirmed if the following requirements are satisfied: (a) significant effect of the predictor on the outcome in Equation 1; (b) significant effect of the predictor on the mediator in Equation 2; and (c) significant effect of the mediator on the outcome after controlling for the predictor in Equation 3.

Note that the correlations among types of teacher support (rs = .80–.89) and dimensions of student emotion (rs = .56–.81) indicate high multicollinearity and made it difficult to detect unique effects of theoretically separate constructs. Thus the four types of support were combined into a single construct of teacher support, and the three dimensions of student emotion were also combined into a single construct of student emotions.

Table 2. *Testing the Mediation Effect of Teacher Social Support on Student Engagement*

Predictor	Equation 1 (criterion student engagement), *b* (*SE*)	Equation 2 (criterion academic emotions), *b* (*SE*)	Equation 3 (criterion student engagement), *b* (*SE*)
Teacher support	.462 (.062)**	.603 (.074)**	.177 (.095)*
Academic emotions			.459 (.092)**
R^2	.207	.359	.328
n	122	124	120

Note. Each column is a regression equation that predicts the criterion at the top of the column. All predictors were transformed into standardized *z*-scores. Missing cases were excluded listwise.

*$p < .10$. **$p < .001$.

Results from the mediation analysis show that student positive emotions completely mediated the relationship of teacher support and student engagement. This conclusion is drawn from the following results: (a) Teacher support significantly predicted student engagement (Equation 1, Table 2; $b = 0.462$, $SE = 0.062$, $p < .001$); (b) teacher support significantly predicted student academic emotions (Equation 2, Table 2; $b = 0.603$, $SE = 0.074$, $p < .001$); (c) after controlling for teacher support, student academic emotions still significantly predicted student engagement (Equation 3, Table 2; $b = 0.459$, $SE = 0.092$, $p < .001$), to the extent that the effect of teacher support was no longer significant ($b = 0.177$, $SE = 0.095$, $p = .062$).

DISCUSSION

The principal objective of this study was to examine how student learning engagement, as an "emotionally driven action" (Titsworth & Waldbuesser, 2018, p. 140), is related to teachers' supportive communication. Supporting the ERT (Mottet et al., 2006) and echoing the call by Titsworth et al. (2013) to test the complete model of ERT, including actual student behaviors, this study showed the mediating effects of student emotions about learning between teacher social support and student academic engagement.

More specifically, the results indicate that teachers' use of informational, emotional, network, and esteem support would enhance student enjoyment, hope, and pride, which in turn would help students become more engaged. Stated simply, when teachers are perceived as supportive in providing helpful advice, in caring, and in boosting student self-esteem, students are more likely to enjoy learning the curriculum of that course and feel confident and optimistic about their competence with and mastery of it.

As scholars believe that student affect is critical to effective instruction (Lane, Frey, & Tatum, 2018), this study further validates

the importance of students' positive emotions and the contributions of supportive behaviors from the teachers. It worth noting that due to multicollinearity, the model could not separate the four types of teacher support and test each of their unique effects regarding student emotion. This finding indicates that teachers tend to use a combination of various types of support in a message, such as offering advice with a welcoming facial expression and a confirming tone (a combined use of informational, emotional, and esteem support), and any single type of support message might be less likely to occur. Therefore, when students assess teacher support, they would evaluate the supportive process in a holistic manner.

In addition, among the four types of support, informational support had the highest mean score (M = 3.46), which suggests that students believe teachers are a primary source of uncertainty reduction and problem solving. This is consistent with Myers's (2006) argument that students are engaging in a "professional working relationships" (p. 293) with the teachers, during which the teachers are treated as credible providers of academic guidance. The finding is also in line with Mazer's (2013) study concerning teachers' clarifying behaviors and student interests. He suggested that the teacher should be clear when defining concepts, providing examples, and reviewing main points to inspire student cognitive and emotional interest in learning. Providing informational support is one way to demonstrate clarity, which could involve behaviors such as giving students advice, analyzing and offering options, or helping them understand why they do or do not do something correctly. Network support, although less frequently used (M = 2.91), still helps students access diverse academic resources and accumulate social capital, which benefits their overall feelings toward studying and engagement.

On the other hand, students also appreciate receiving a positive appraisal from the teacher. Supporting Goldman and Goodboy (2014), the results show that teachers' empathy and confirmational

behaviors, through the expression of respect, assertion, and agreement, would significantly contribute to students' positive emotional experiences. In addition, these emotions regarding learning were found to enhance their engagement, which links emotions to subsequent actions. According to Scherer (1994, 2007), emotion involves not only the component of subject feelings but also potential action or behavioral tendencies. The multifaceted nature of emotions explains why students' engaging behaviors are stimulated by their feelings and experiences.

This study contributes to the scholarly dialogue in two ways. First, it empirically confirms and further develops ERT (Mottet et al., 2006). Since ERT was proposed, scholars have attempted to use the theory (or part of it) to better understand teacher–student relationships, as well as student emotional and behavioral outcomes (e.g., Horan et al., 2012; Mazer, 2013; Zhang & Zhang, 2013). In an article about the development of ERT, Mottet and colleagues (2006) suggested that future research should address the "specific instructional communication behaviors or conditions [that] lead to enhanced student emotional responses, which then result in increased learning" (p. 264). According to Titsworth and Waldbuesser (2018), previous literature has expanded ERT in three ways: first, to examine instructor behaviors that stimulate emotional reactions from students; second, to study possible moderating variables like student emotional contagion and emotional intelligence (Wang & Schrodt, 2010); and finally, to identify processes during which students react to an instructor's messages, such as perceived emotional support and emotion work (Titsworth et al., 2010, 2013). This study contributes empirical evidence to the first category—specific instructor behaviors. In addition, the previous literature has primarily focused on in-class behavior and immediate emotional responses but has ignored the one-on-one interpersonal context, where teachers are more likely to offer social support to students who need help. This study investigated teacher

supportive communication as a critical educational resource that elicits positive student emotions about academics and, in turn, improves engagement.

Second, this study adds depth and detail to the literature on positive emotions in teaching and learning. Positive psychology in education merits attention because pleasant emotions build the foundation of interest (Schiefele, 1991) and consistently engage students in academic endeavors (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Therefore enhancing positive emotions about learning should be a critical goal of teaching, particularly in a "knowledge-based society [that] requires life-long learning" (Frenzel et al., 2009, p. 705). Because positive emotion in student learning is still understudied in instructional communication (Zhang & Zhang, 2013), this study has attempted to fill this void through the exploration of student enjoyment, hope, and pride and so has added building blocks to the literature.

These findings also have some practical applications. College instructors should be aware of the stress experienced by students and their need to receive social support from teachers. Not only is informational support needed (to improve clarity and offer advice) but other types, such as network support, are equally important. Based on the current mean scores, students reported that they are less likely to receive network support from their teachers (M = 2.91); however, teachers should realize the benefits of social capital that students can derive from social relationships and broadened networks (Sias, 2017). On an institutional level, different units of the college (departments, career services, writing centers, counseling services, among others) should increase cooperation opportunities so the teachers would be more capable of offering network support. Additionally, teachers may need to receive some training and attend workshops on how to improve their emotional support skills for students, which is also essential to the affective aspects of students' learning and engagement.

Limitations and Future Studies

Although this study offers important insights into instructional communication research, it is not without limitations. First, the participants were recruited from communication majors; most students just used their communication courses for convenience, despite our instructions regarding the target class. Therefore those participants' observations were perhaps limited to a smaller sample of supportive communication behaviors by teachers. Future research could collect data from students of classes of different disciplines to combat that effect. As Titsworth and Waldbuesser (2018) suggested, additional work is necessary to explore how a "classroom environment [especially class size and field of study] affects the emotional processes" (p. 147). Second, the majority of the participants were women (75%), and their perceptions of received support and emotional experience were examined. Previous literature has shown that women are generally better at "doing [experiencing/expressing] emotion" than men (Musson & Marsh, 2008; Pugh, 2002). Some scholars proposed that women are more attentive to the emotions of others and can interpret nonverbal cues more accurately (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994; Wagner, MacDonald, & Manstead, 1986). However, other studies did not support this finding (Hatfield, Bensman, Thornton, & Rapson, 2014). Future studies should continue to explore the possible role of gender and whether the primary finding of this study can apply to a male-dominant population. Furthermore, owing to multicollinearity, this study was not able to distinguish types of social support or students' emotions of enjoyment, hope, and pride. In addition to the explanations in the discussion, future studies should further test the possible reasons and examine ways to reduce multicollinearity.

Positive emotions are important for teacher–student relationships, as well as for student learning in and out of class. Guided by the ERT (Mottet et al., 2006), this study showed that the relationship of teacher support and student engagement is mediated by

student emotions. The findings offer important implications for teacher training regarding efforts to elicit positive emotions from students to promote desirable learning outcomes.

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The Proliferation of Pop-Up Shop Marketing and the *Kairotic* Consumer Experience

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As brick-and-mortar stores continue to suffer at the hands of a rapidly increasing e-commerce industry, marketers have embraced an alternative form of guerrilla marketing with the hope of rekindling consumer engagement and maintaining a pulse on the physical and digital shopping divide. Valued to be a $50 billion industry in 2016 and continuously growing, pop-up shop marketing is an ephemeral and unique way to appeal to consumers by reshaping the shopping experience and the way brands interact with their consumers. This marketing tactic is redefining the way consumers experience a brand, not just relationally, but also through time and space. Relying on rhetorical and phenomenological constructs of temporality, this project seeks to advance how pop-up shop marketing is a pragmatic response to the hypermodern consumer since it alters the temporality of consumption—ultimately impacting consumer attitudes toward a particular brand.

KEYWORDS: Marketing, pop-up, temporality, shopping, *kairos*, consumption

Marketers have searched and continue to search for new and innovative ways to attract and retain consumers. A paradigmatic shift in the way individuals consume products and services has rendered most traditional marketing strategies ineffective. Emphasis on autonomy and choice in the buying process permits the consumer to make decisions based on personal motivations or desires, whether they be "irrational, superstitious, traditionalist, or experimental" (Douglas & Isherwood, 1978, p. 36). Because consumer preference is

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both dynamic and transient, creative ventures within the marketing industry showcase just how far brands are willing to go to entice and entertain their consumers. Oftentimes, this entails monopolizing unusual public spaces and redefining the limits of artistic license.

Since consumers have been identified as those who are able to circulate value within the marketplace and culture (Arvidsson, 2006), guerrilla marketing strategies aimed at creating organic, consumer-centric messages have increased. Doing so aims to maximize consumer exposure to brand messaging. Approaches like this give marketers the ability to enforce a pull versus push strategy (Serazio, 2012), while inventing novel consumer touch points. This endeavor is a response to a precarious historical moment afflicted with the downturn of typical shopping experiences that traditionally have been the main arena for brand exposure. Since the rise of e-commerce giants like Amazon and eBay, and technological-savvy consumers, however, a steady decline in brick-and-mortar spaces continues to trend.

In 2017, the retail industry saw a closure of almost 9,000 stores, and 2018 surpassed that number by almost 30% (Crawford, 2018). More recently, the investment banking firm UBS has projected that by 2026, another 75,000 stores could close their doors (Whiteman, 2020). The closure of retailers' doors additionally impacts malls and shopping plazas that operate on cotenancy leases. Stores that still maintain a storefront also face the threat of premature closure; since the 1990s, a lease's life-span has plummeted from an average of 20 years to a current average of 5 years (Embrey Medina, 2017). Rather than try to revitalize these stagnant spaces or preserve traditional shopping ones, reclamation of temporality as a new strategic marketing tool has materialized itself in pop-up shops. Low overhead costs, abundant empty spaces with flexible or temporary leases, and a target consumer market predisposed to the affordances of the pop-up retail experience have prompted a new wave in retail shopping. Valued to be over a $50 billion industry

in 2017 (Embrey Medina, 2017; Steimer, 2017) and still growing, the pop-up shop movement is evidence of a paradigmatic shift in what consumers expect and demand from the brands they support.

But perhaps most important to the growth and success of pop-up shops is their inherently suitable conditions for how consumers today encounter and experience temporality. Today, consumption is impacted by temporal boundaries and variants. For instance, Lipovetsky (2005) argued that temporality has been both accelerated and commodified to the extent that it has produced a social and cultural milieu debilitated by a hyperurgency he refers to as "hypermodernity." The impact of time is so substantial that Augé (1995) asserted that space is able to entrap time. The role of temporality as part of the consumer experience, as well as its effect on pop-up shop spatiality, underscores the profound influence that this type of marketing is having on the retail industry and consumption practices across the globe.

As a result, the relationship between pop-up shop marketing and consumer-experienced temporality offers a unique area of engagement. Overdiek (2017), drawing on the work of philosopher Henri Lefebvre, explained that pop-up shops are interstitial spaces since they can disrupt rhythms "such as trajectories and aesthetics of the surrounding spacing, and thereby [pull] everyday users out of their routine" (p. 124). This article extends that assertion more directly to temporality and stresses that pop-up shops are also experienced as unique interstitial spaces where time straddles linear, measurable *chronos* and seasonal, abstract *kairos*.

Utilizing phenomenological perspectives, this article argues that this interstitial space where *chronos* and *kairos* converge contributes to a historical moment defined by acceleration, consumer urgency, and ephemerality. In turn, this hyperreality ultimately contributes to the commodification of time. Additionally, this work suggests that as long as time continues to be characterized as a commoditized resource in a capitalist marketplace, consumers will ultimately seek

more extreme experiences and nontraditional avenues to satisfy feelings produced by such commoditized urgencies. This project first offers an overview of pop-up shop marketing, including its historical genesis, a typology of pop-up shops, and its relevance to current marketing strategies. Next, this project will discuss temporality, *chronos* and *kairos*, as rhetorical and phenomenological phenomena. Using a phenomenological method offers an understanding of how an individual's lived experience as a consumer is influenced by time. This is an appropriate approach since phenomenology is a method that fosters a deeper understanding of how an event or phenomenon is experienced (Teherani, Martimianakis, Stenfors-Hayes, Wadhwa, & Varpio, 2015). Lastly, the article will argue that pop-up shops' dependence on temporality as a strategy to entice and engage consumers is collectively impacting consumption practices and, as such, ultimately redefining the way consumers are interacting with the world to produce meaning.

POP-UP SHOPS: AN OVERVIEW

The concept of the pop-up shop is neither a new or a novel idea. However, the proliferation of pop-up shops caught fire during the recession of the early 2000s (Embrey Medina, 2017) and saw exponential growth in 2013 (Baras, 2016). Various perspectives acknowledge that pop-up shop marketing encompasses a wide range of consumption experiences, including traditional ones, such as farmer's markets and food trucks. By definition, a pop-up shop refers to a shop founded in a temporary location that is intended to be functional for only a short duration of time (Baras, 2016). Klein, Falk, Esch, and Gloukhovtsev (2016) defined a pop-up shop as a "retail environment that carries a single brand, are controlled by the brand's manufacturer, and are operated with the intention of reinforcing the brand experience rather than selling products at a profit" (p. 5762). Haas and Schmidt (2016) extended this

perspective and explained that shops can differ based on objectives and duration. For instance, short-term pop-ups tend to be "distribution-oriented" and focused on maximizing profit quickly, while long-term pop-ups tend to be more "communication-oriented" (Haas & Schmidt, 2016, p. 90). Surchi's (2010) work categorized pop-ups into four types: guerrilla stores, nomad stores, temporary online stores, and temporary outdoor sites. Johnson (2017) asserted that the more typical and "homegrown" types of pop-up shops are ones traditionally driven by sales and that, historically, are more familiar to consumers. Conversely, a contemporary and more "corporate" type of pop-up has started to emerge and is focused on driving innovative and creative marketing strategies and practices for companies. Rather than profitability, this particular concept concerns itself with objectives such as increasing brand awareness, promotion, and data collection (Johnson, 2017).

Baras (2016) indicated that while pinpointing the number of pop-ups in operation is difficult because of a lack of a universal definition of what exactly constitutes a pop-up shop, they nevertheless have become a "disruptive force" in today's consumer market. In fact, details surrounding one of the earliest exemplars was a spontaneous discovery. In 1999, what would be considered a corporate-type pop-up shop was developed in Tokyo by a manager at the clothing line retailer Vacant named Russell Miller. After having to close his brick-and-mortar shop for a short period of time, Miller noticed a sudden increase in consumer demand for this product and made the decision to close his permanent storefront. He then decided to reopen it temporarily in various places (Haas & Schmidt, 2016).

Similar to Miller's situation, empty retail space and unaffordable rents have propelled business owners to seek alternative ways to market and sell their products. Johnson (2017) asserted that this is an appealing venture for landlords who are trying to fill empty space, albeit temporarily. The phenomenon is not one restricted to the United States. Internationally, pop-ups have begun to take

hold in the daily fabric of marketing initiatives as part of campaigns and have ignited a creative outlet in various industries. From Finland's Restaurant Day, started in 2011, all the way to supper clubs in Latin America, Baras's (2016) research indicated that pop-ups are a universal movement benefiting consumers across the globe. The universal appeal of this experience makes it a marketing asset that is able to traverse diverse markets and target key audiences.

Aside from the economic downturn in the United States, other drivers leading to a pop-up shop movement include an intensification of consumer interest in hyperlocal products and services as well as FOMO, or "fear of missing out" (Baras, 2016). In regard to the latter, Hodkinson's (2019) work explained that FOMO is so powerful that it has the ability to "stimulate demand during the consumption and post-consumption phases," especially in situations where "social participation or group consumption and peer pressure may be present" (p. 80). These drivers not only reflect the evolution of consumer trends but also demonstrate a shift in the current cultural paradigm. Research has indicated that marketing strategies have been reinvented to appeal to a consumer market that is interested in the opportunity for collaboration and co-creation with brands and companies (Lusch, 2007). Pop-up shops are just one new tactic that help strengthen that agenda and are an appropriate response to consumers who demand stronger brand responsiveness and commitment to the consumer–brand relationship.

Chen (2017) extended this notion by suggesting that pop-up shops are being used to assist companies in shifting their bottom lines from profitability to meaningful brand experiences. Focus on brand experience is simultaneously an opportunity for marketers to experiment with new or existing products and gauge consumer interest of a product (Chen 2017; Pomodoro, 2013). Not only does the pop-up shop give the marketer the ability to explore product viability but it also functions to increase brand awareness, develop brand image, and strengthen a currently existing brand community

(Pomodoro, 2013). In other words, pop-up shops reflect an affordable and alternative entry point into a brand conversation that requires few resources but offers huge returns on earned media and consumer data. Above all else, "the focus on creating a superior brand experience and the focus on triggering WOM(M) (word of mouth marketing) (rather than on selling a product) differentiates pop-up brand stores from so called flash retailing and seasonal pop-up stores, such as Halloween or Christmas stores" (Klein et al., 2016, p. 5762). The heavy reliance on WOM and a lack of stringent control on traditional marketing communication techniques lend themselves to the "unconventional" nature (Surchi, 2010, p. 263) of the store itself. WOM is particularly effective as it relates to the pop-up shop movement because it plays into several key consumer experiences that emerge from engagement with the store.

For instance, Berger (2014) indicated that the five primary functions of WOM are "impression management, emotion regulation, information acquisition, social bonding, and persuasion" (p. 589). Based on their oftentimes unique and unorthodox user experience, aesthetic, transience, and lack of marketer messaging, consumers use WOM to obtain information, gain knowledge, or try to make sense of the pop-up experience. Additionally, because all consumers share an exclusive experience with other consumers who may also have limited knowledge about the pop-up shop, WOM can function as a means of social bonding and rapport building with other interested brand users, particularly through social media channels and platforms.

Undoubtedly, the pop-up shop movement continues to have success, which, according to Baras's (as cited in Embrey Medina, 2017) work, continues to attract consumers with the shops' unique services and products, localization, optimal pricing, convenience, and fun experience. Although this research is not indicative of a new or unusual consumer desire, it does reflect a shift in how the consumer prioritizes aspects of the consumption experience.

Pop-up shops illustrate that though traditional advertising methods still exist, consumers are drawn toward brands and products whose advertising does not feel methodical or intrusive. For years, marketers have attempted to take advantage of this perspective by tapping in to areas of the consumer lifestyle that seem unobtrusive and natural (Serazio, 2012). Although pop-up shop retail seems antithetical to this idea, because it promotes events that *interrupt* daily social conventions and is often found in unusual areas, such as unoccupied storefronts, alleys, or fields, what it does solidify about Serazio's (2012) notion of new marketing strategies is that individuals are drawn to experiences that do not *feel* like aggressive advertising or marketing stunts. Sometimes the planting of a brand is so conspicuous that it appears natural and, in turn, does not interrupt the consumer in ways that traditional marketing has in the past. Rather, these experiences are oftentimes seen as "serendipitous, covert, and niche-oriented" (Serazio, 2012, p. 15). As such, pop-up shops are able to create an environment that attracts individuals looking for experiences that feel exclusive or private—events that perhaps they are singularly aware of, rather than all of their friends.

This element of exclusivity reflects the notion that pop-up shops play into a marketing agenda that attempts to manifest in subculture trends that have become part of mass culture (Heath & Potter, 2004). For instance, in 2016, the organic dairy company Organic Valley decided to open a temporary storefront space in Manhattan. The concept was simple: take a traditional coffee shop concept and flip it on its head. Instead of having customers buy cups of coffee and then place their cream or sweetener in themselves, Organic Valley sold different amounts of creamer portions, and customers would then add coffee (Humanaut, n.d.). While the concept was simple, it created a Rabelaisian rhetorical interruption in conversation and WOM surrounding coffee shops and coffee drinking. More importantly, the campaign shifted the focus from

coffee as the most important ingredient in a good cup of coffee to the creamer. Because the ideas were novel and intriguing, Organic Valley was able to sell the creamer shots for $2 and was able to reinforce its slogan: "Great coffee isn't made. It's milked." In just two short days of business, the pop-up shop yielded 500,000 landing page visits on its website and 50,000 product locator searches (Humanaut, n.d.).

While the consumer experience is paramount to the success of a pop-up shop space, temporality (alongside space and geographical location) is also seen as a "weapon" utilized to entice consumers (Pomodoro, 2013). Utilizing both a rhetorical and phenomenological framework, this project next explores temporality as it is situated within the current historical moment. Understanding the significance of the relationship between temporality and pop-up shops ultimately encourages a discussion about how time as a phenomenological experience contributes to hyperevents primed for consumption. Ultimately, it will be argued that pop-up shops produce and contribute to key hypermodern features, such as urgency and anxiety, by the way individuals encounter and experience time. This encounter has the ability to reify the utility and practicality of pop-up shops.

TEMPORALITY AS A CONSUMPTIVE COMMODITY

Historically, the experiencing of time was an interest within ancient communities. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus tried to reconcile his ideas about change by comparing man's experience with time and the inevitability of passing time by arguing that it was impossible to step in the same river twice. His argument was that a person and his or her experience with the world are constantly changing and, as such, impossible to recapture. St. Augustine of Hippo (2012), grappling with the concept during the fifth century, explored time in Book XI of the *Confessions* by writing that time is

a creation of God and also a phenomenon that individuals experience consciously. He wrote,

> In what space then do we measure time passing? In the future, whence it passeth through? But what is not yet, we measure not. Or in the present, by which it passes? [B]ut no space, we do not measure: or in the past, to which it passes? But neither do we measure that, which now is not. (p. 216)

Here Augustine illustrated the difficulty of knowing if and how time is passing because it is difficult to measure time while being in a moment of time. As time is always already passing and always yet to come, its transience makes it elusive.

Throughout history, concepts of time have shifted and evolved. A modernist paradigm promotes the indispensability and importance of time in daily life. Unlike premodern societies, modernity marked an interstice in which space and time were disconnected from one another (Giddens, 1991). This is made apparent in emerging industrial societies of the 18th and 19th centuries that sought to control time. In fact, it is difficult to understand industrialism and a capitalist-driven culture without the recognition and impact that time had on production, work days, habits, and lifestyles. As Marx (1887/1990) noted, labor, commodity, and production are inherently tied to time, and "the worker is nothing more than personified labor-time" (pp. 352–353). One of the most notable inventions that impacted the concept of time as *chronos* was the man-made invention of the clock. The genesis and advancement of industrialized economies were able to flourish as a result of this technology, and subsequently, consciousness of time became explicitly apparent (see Eisenstein 1979; Innis, 1950; Postman, 1993). Mumford (1934/2010) remarked,

> When one thinks about space, not as a sequence of experiences, but as a collection of hours, minutes, and seconds, the habits of

> adding time and saving time come into existence. Time took on the character of an enclosed space: it could be divided, it would be filled up, it could even be expanded by the invention of labor-saving instruments. (p. 17)

Time, as with other major topics of thought associated with Enlightenment progress, was seen as just another facet of human life that individuals believed they had the knowledge and capacity to control. Mumford's description transforms time into a materialized entity that individuals attempted to grasp and manipulate through an intensified alertness toward it. The obsession with time during modernity represented a pathology driven by control. While time today is still a large concern of society, the way individuals experience consumption is indelibly tied to time. Castree's (2009) work, for instance, explained how the materialization of space and time is necessary to the healthy functioning of capitalism and that capitalism is essentially "constituted" through these two constructs. We understand time as being experienced both in a linear, absolute fashion and as an ontologically existential phenomenon. The former is an exemplar of *chronos*, or time that is driven by linearity, homogeneity, and materiality. Other features that define *chronos* include its relationship with change, motion, and process. This type of time is linked to movement. Smith (1969) wrote that *chronos* is what allows chronological history to be constructed and recorded. However, Smith went on to argue that *chronos* is preceded by *kairos*, because *kairos* is vital to the function of *the former* since it is what essentially makes an event or moment meaningful within the continuum of history.

Kairos is a type of time grounded in ancient rhetoric and is indicative of special moments in time that are worthy of capture. Smith (2002) remarked that *kairos* has a qualitative nature and denotes "the special position an event or action occupies in a series, to a season when something appropriately happens that cannot happen just at 'any time,' but only at *that* time, to a time that marks an

opportunity which may not recur" (p. 47). Paul Tillich (1948) defined *kairos* through its experiential quality, calling it a "fulfillment of time" (p. 369). Here *kairos* is experienced as it relates to an occurrence or happening that has special significance during a specific time. As such, *kairos* does not occur within a vacuum. It unfolds only through those events and actions that demarcate a unique set of circumstances or a momentous occasion, providing value to an otherwise ordinary event. Aside from a demarcation of the "right time," other features of *kairos* must include a moment when there is conflict, crisis, or tension as well as sufficient opportunity to change the movement of time as a result of such conflict, crisis, or tension (Smith, 1969). To experience *kairos*, a shift in external or internal circumstances must be so significant that time itself is affected. Not only does this effect influence the circumstances but it also imparts a revised experience of time to an individual.

Both *chronos* and *kairos* function as additional facets of the market that capitalism works to commodify because both are capable of influencing consumer behavior and decision-making. As Lipovetsky (2005) noted, individuals were at one point fixated on how time as *chronos* could be compressed or reduced for the sake of profit and production, but now time is being reengineered to encompass various types of chronic and kairotic temporalities: holidays, health endeavors, and varied working hours. Time has also become an object of desire: free time, downtime, flextime, teatime, and so on. All conjure up various ways individuals have become accustomed to interpreting a temporal moment. This new definition of time is both relevant and fitting of what is the linchpin of hypermodernity—one distinguished by paradoxical extremes of chaos/order and excess/moderation and that still ascribes to the tenets of both a modernity defined by fixity and linearity and a postmodernity defined by fluidity and fractured, competing narratives (Lipovetsky, 2005).

Competition for an excess of extremes contributes to the idea

that because universal norms and standards are cursory, the search for truth and validation has become a personal enterprise for the consumer. The development of consumer hyperconsciousness has led to the emergence of an "individual-for-the-future" (Lipovetsky, 2005, p. 48). The individual-for-the-future has become fixated on the present and the short term, in order to address or avoid critical issues or catastrophe. In other words, individuals have become immersed in finding solutions that serve a preemptive purpose; attempting to control the future means focusing on what can be done in the present. This behavior is driven by the commodification of time and the insatiable fear that the passing of *chronos* and *kairos* may generate new personal anxieties or exacerbate preexisting ones. For example, recent extremist health fads, such as cleanses, Whole30, CrossFit, and intermittent fasting, represent the growing societal tendency to embrace radical fixes of the self within the present. Access to an infinite or excessive amount of information intensifies the urge to explore products that will aid in the creation of personal identity and consciousness of the self. In amplifying self-identity, the individual becomes largely aware of how time also affects the self and tries, in turn, to combat and control such temporal afflictions.

One way to alleviate this existential search of self-identity is largely grounded in consumption. Consumption offers individuals the ability to control their behavior and, in turn, create and maintain a selfhood (Buehler Hunter, 2016). As a result, consumerism has increased because of existential distress and the pleasure one derives from change. Consumers are able to oscillate between desire and fulfillment in their daily lifestyles, *ad infinitum* (Lipovetsky, 2005). The decision to purchase products or services reflects a concern for instant gratification, a desire to satiate current feelings toward self-identity, or the current challenge of trying to define oneself through consumption. A unique aspect of consumption is that not only does it have the ability to alter self-identity or how we

identify with others but it also offers individuals a transcendental, albeit transient, experience. Many individuals cite shopping as therapeutic, and researchers in corollary fields have indicated that consumption can produce an increase in serotonin and feel-good hormones, which can alter a person's mood and inevitably contribute to feelings of happiness (Buehler Hunter, 2016). But just as quickly as consumption can produce positive feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, so, too, can it generate a desire to buy more and more. This is largely supported by the element of temporality and how the consumer experiences it simultaneously with consumption.

EXPERIENCING TEMPORALITY AND CONSUMER ANXIETIES

Undoubtedly, consumption and time are intertwined by a vast number of variables. In fact, some scholars maintain that particular acts of consumption are constituted and are able to thrive by the way time is experienced by the consumer within those acts. Woermann and Rokka (2015) acknowledged that consumption encompasses its own *timeflow*, a term that describes "a practice's ability to induce a certain pattern of experienced temporality in those performing the practice" (p. 1487). Individuals are drawn to this particular consumptive experience because it exhibits an unconventional and alluring experience with how time passes, one that most consumers have not encountered. For example, *timeflow* can be distinguished either by how fast or slow it may be. Grocery shopping at a big-box retailer, such as Costco or Sam's Club, and grocery shopping at a local, privately owned corner store produce drastically different *timeflows*. Lifting weights will offer a far different *timeflow* than taking a spin class. As such, consumers can be partly drawn to a product or service based on the fastness or slowness of the *timeflow* associated with it and seek out these embodied experiences of time. Gibbs (1998) echoed this notion by

reinforcing the novelty and intrigue of time such that "when we leave the security of that capsule to dream, fantasize or regress we enter a temporal environment where everyday notions of space and time lose their saliency" (p. 994). This is the fulcrum of the pop-up shop experience.

As mentioned earlier, pop-up shops are able to take a unique angle because of their ability to utilize time in vastly unconventional ways compared to traditional consumption experiences. In many ways, they are also able to create spaces where time is experienced as both *chronos* and *kairos*. Whereas brick-and-mortar retail spaces are static, fixed, and often selling products or services that can be anticipated, pop-up shops monopolize the elements of time and space and are able to uniquely create a *kairotic* space in the midst of chronic, linear time. This is ultimately due to their transience, and rather than being experienced as materialized, stable, solid spaces, they are experienced as *events* (Pomodoro, 2013). This reinforces the essence of *kairos* as a meaningful moment in time that surfaces during a moment of tension within the current historical moment that, in a similar vein to Lipovetsky, Bauman (2000) called "liquid modernity," a historical juncture in which the fixity and permanence of modernity have been replaced with more fluid, ever-changing structures impacting all facets of life and leading to an "era of instantaneity" (p. 128). The *kairotic* nature of the pop-up shop is also reified by the space it occupies. Because pop-up shops are traditionally erected in unorthodox and unanticipated areas, they disrupt the linearity of the shopping experience to create a moment of eventfulness for the consumer.

The concurrence of *chronos* and *kairos* in pop-up shops raises important concerns about the types of challenges consumers face when engaging in traditional consumptive experiences. The linearity and fixity of brick-and-mortar stores no longer serve the same purpose they once did. As consumers continue to move toward online shopping and more pragmatic, immediate shopping

options, such as curated and customized monthly subscription boxes and curbside or delivery services, the tension between traditional consumption practices and new, emerging ones is working to turn the old ones on their heads. This has become increasingly more apparent and highlights why pop-up shopping is an advantageous pursuit for both the company and the consumer.

In addition to scaling the business to meet new consumer needs, the challenge of satiating these needs quickly has become a topic of inquiry. Bauman (2000) foresaw these arising issues associated with instant gratification and noted, "Duration changes from an asset into a liability; the same may be said about everything bulky, solid and heavy—everything that hinders and restricts the move" (p. 128). In other words, the less stable, fixed, and enduring, the better. In many ways, this illustrates the unparalleled success that pop-up shop marketing continues to experience. The pop-up sh experience is reified by its ability to straddle an online versus of- fline shopping, retail environment (Steimer, 2017). In many ways, pop-up shops continue to defy the traditional understanding of retail shopping and illustrate the growing enthusiasm for extending principal ideas underpinning pop-up shop retail into unconventional social spaces because of the spectacle created as a result of disrupting conventional boundaries of time and space that society has set forth. The idea of pop-up shops as spectacle is also opined through consumers' interactions with the space itself. Ritzer's (1999) early work detailed how meccas of consumption, such as shopping malls, have morphed into figurative places of worship, or "cathedrals." While he cited places like casinos, cruise ships, and megachurches as being the ideal cathedrals of consumption, the construct is fittingly more applicable to pop-up shops because these projects encourage "other kinds of behavior . . . such as sitting, gazing at the setting, watching other people and wandering about" (Ritzer, 1999, pp. 42–43). These public spaces are tangible forms of spectacle, created for consumption. Marxist Guy Debord

captured the symbolic power and control of consumption by asserting that the commodification of goods has catapulted capitalist desires and numbed the human capacity to reject its aims. Debord (1967/1994) wrote,

> The spectacle subjects living human beings to its will to the extent that the economy has brought them under its sway. For the spectacle is simply the economic realm developing for itself at once a faithful mirror held up to the production of things and a distorting objectification of the producers. (p. 17)

Drawing on Debord, Ritzer (1999) defined spectacle as a "dramatic public display" (p. 104). Oftentimes, pop-up shops induce a psychosis of enthrallment simply based on their aesthetic appeals and because of their ability to disrupt preconceived understandings of appropriate times and spaces marked for consumption. For instance, every year around the holidays, Christmas-themed cocktail bars pop up around the United States and the world. One particular chain of pop-up Christmas bars goes by the moniker "Miracle" and opens for just a few short weeks. Upon entering the oftentimes abandoned retail storefront, imbibers are not greeted but rather ambushed with nauseating nostalgic nods to Christmases past: colorful lights, tinsel, ugly sweaters, old-fashioned trinkets and ornaments one would expect to find at a grandmother's house, and appropriately themed cocktails. At one of Miracle's locations, drinks such as the "You'll Shoot Your Rye Out" are sold to patrons. What makes this concept successful is not just its transience but its ability to transmute chronic temporality into a *kairotic* event driven by nostalgia. What is old becomes new again, and present time as an ontological event becomes an amalgam of an individual's personal memories (past), the universal narrative of holidays marked by seasonal time (past), the present spectacle, and, mostly importantly, Lipovetsky's (2005) "individual-for-the-future." Present time

becomes the juncture at which an individual becomes conscious of his or her past to address present anxieties.

Although the Christmas bar is an extreme example of the pop-up shop as spectacle, less unobtrusive ones have proven to be just as successful. Such was the case with Facebook's 2019 creation of pop-up "privacy cafés" in the United Kingdom. In response to the slew of privacy scandals, such the one involving Cambridge Analytica, the cafés were positioned as quick opportunities for users to learn more about how to manage their privacy settings on the social networking platform. Those participating received free coffee and a free crash course on how to tweak their platform settings. Returning to Smith's (2002) definition of *kairos*, which argued that this type of temporality is dependent on a tension or conflict, the Facebook cafés presented a disruptive response to those concerned with personal information and privacy. This is indicative of a pop-up shop whose presence was justified based on the urgency of the moment and existing privacy issues. Even established brands like Nike have taken advantage of the concept by hosting "sneakeasy" pop-up shops in a handful of U.S. cities and Toronto to celebrate its annual Air Max Day.

Addressing issues within the present is a tool for today's consumer who works to abolish the possibility of these anxieties in the future. For the pop-up shop driven by exclusivity and extraordinary product offerings or services, evoking the anxious, time-conscious, self-preserving consumer is paramount to its functioning. This is also indicative of Lipovetsky's (2005) argument that within hypermodernity, history itself is made into a spectacle to consume. Marketers rely heavily on persuasive appeals like tradition and nostalgia in their advertising to connect with existing and new consumers. But pop-up shops are able to push that tactic to the extreme, engage it with excess, and, in doing so, not just present nostalgic copy or imagery to the consumer but also construct a temporal moment of *kairos* in which an individual is

ontologically aware of how time is pressing upon them and is persuaded by temporality itself. This moment of time-as-event enriches the shopping experience and is effective because the consumer is able to alleviate the existential stress of the present. This experience is wholly unique since the spectacle is not just the physical event but the experience of temporality that the space is able to create and sustain, albeit for a short period of time. In this sense, pop-up shops offer the ultimate hypermodern consumer experience.

Additionally, pop-up shops redefine not only the way a consumer experiences a product or store but also how his or her encounter with time influences social interactions with other consumers. Whereas shopping can be a traditionally individualized act, pop-up shops are able to create a pseudo-sociality based on the premise that their exclusivity and ephemerality draw individuals looking to participate *in* or be part *of* the pop-up shops. As such, other consumers are not just consumers but consumers who also share an awareness of a rare event or space. This creates an immediate sense of community in which those experiencing a pop-up shop identify those other individuals in attendance as part of an elite or exclusive group that was able to seek out the same spectacle. Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) explained that these are powerful communities constructed off of commonalities and are able to reinforce membership loyalty because they are defined by "shared consciousness, rituals and traditions, and a sense of moral responsibilities" (p. 412) that are expressed in various ways based on how they are situated within society. This idea indicates that individuals are able to situate themselves within community and social networking opportunities in alternative ways other than those traditional avenues, such as at church, organized clubs, or work. They are likewise able to segregate others though the mobility of the space. Creating mobile rather than fixed spaces often precludes others by making the space unreachable (Brighenti, 2014). This reinforces the exclusivity of the

pop-up shop and potentially creates stronger feelings and attitudes toward brands.

However, other scholars maintain that this cultivated collectivity is just an effect of the pop-up shop and lacks an organicity that is fundamental to a legitimate community. As Bauman (2000) suggested, it does not matter how crowded a space may be—"there is nothing 'collective' in the places of collective consumption" (p. 97), because "the task of consumption is consumption, and consumption is an utterly, irredeemably, *individual* past time, a string of sensations which can be experience—lived through—only subjectively" (p. 97). Putnam (2000) echoed this idea by explaining that community is based on *social capital* or the idea that social relationships are based on pillars like reciprocity and trustworthiness rather than just organizational membership and that there is both an individual and social aspect to them. This highlights the idea that *kairos* is both a personal and social experience. Time moves at varying degrees, based on the moment and how the individual perceives the experience individually and socially.

CONCLUSION

Understanding the dynamic relationship between pop-up shops and temporality permits both practitioners and scholars a better understanding of the intangible elements that impact and motivate consumer purchases. The success of pop-up shops is just one example of how marketers have remained attentive to their consumers' evolving needs and wants, but acknowledging the influence of temporality offers novel information that may be of benefit for future marketing strategies and tactics. As mentioned earlier in this article, pop-up shops both satisfy and invoke consumer desires and anxieties constituted by their transience, as well as the search for self-identity and community. This is especially relevant because individuals continue to experience identity as being

both "autonomous and dependent" (Lipovetsky, 2005). Exposure to novel and seemingly exclusive events, products, and services continues to help consumers navigate a hypersaturated marketplace. But most effective about pop-up shops as *kairotic* events is their ability to create a rhetorical space that communicates to the consumer a perception of an appropriate occasion or timeliness. Because *kairos* is largely linked within the purview of rhetoric that focuses on human action (Smith, 2002), the *kairotic* event can be understood as an event meant to persuade and communicate a message to its audience. Doing so transforms the chronic, quantitative linearity of the pop-up shop space into a meaningful occasion for consumers. As consumers continue to seek out more extreme experiences and nontraditional avenues to satisfy anxieties produced by such commoditized urgencies, it is worth thinking about how marketers must continue to explore new consumptive strategies that embrace temporality as a fundamental linchpin of a holistic consumer experience.

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"Woman as Sign," Class, and the 1972–1982 Equal Rights Amendment Controversy

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After nearly 50 years of legislative consideration, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) passed both houses of Congress, who then submitted the constitutional amendment to the states for ratification in 1972. This study extends previous feminist rhetorical scholarship on the 1972–1982 ERA controversy by foregrounding the extent to which considerations of class, labor, and economics were a major part of arguments on all sides of the ERA debate. Analysis of a wide range of news and archival materials was undertaken by utilizing the theoretical research on "woman as sign," which encourages considering the subjectivity of speakers in ERA debate and the figures of women created and employed in this debate. ERA debate contested the characteristics of "woman as sign" in class-based ways, including speaking for the "average American woman," "woman as homemaker," and "woman as laborer." Curiously, this rhetorical class warfare mirrored earlier 1920s ERA debate despite wholesale changes in the legal and political contexts and the political positions of the speakers.

KEYWORDS: Equal Rights Amendment, protective legislation, class, disingenuous controversy, "woman as sign," Phyllis Schlafly, feminism

Although the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was first introduced in Congress in 1923, it took nearly 50 years before the idea that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex" was submitted to the states for ratification in 1972. As the ERA passed through both houses of Congress, the public controversy that erupted brought a myriad of feminist and antifeminist perspectives to the

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fore. This essay concerns itself with the disingenuous controversy (Fritch, Palczewski, Farrell, & Short, 2006) generated as both pro- and anti-ERA advocates claimed to represent the best interests of working-class women. Thus the ERA controversy took on the language of class warfare, pitting leisure-class and working-class women against each other, as constituencies on all sides of the debate (re)negotiated the relationship between the ERA and recent legislative changes for women wage earners.

Most of the existing rhetorical scholarship concerning the 1970s ERA controversy has focused on the success of opposition arguments from figures like Phyllis Schlafly and the failure of pro-ERA feminist arguments (Foss, 1979; Kruse, 1983; Miller, 2015; Solomon, 1978, 1979, 1983). This article extends previous feminist work by attending to the social class dimensions of this period of ERA controversy, working to correct a more general lacuna regarding class within rhetorical scholarship (Cloud, 2002). Although there is a significant history of activist women's disagreements over the ERA based on various women's roles in the official labor market, this history has yet to be explored in rhetorical criticism. This study augments rhetorical scholarship on the ERA controversy by foregrounding the extent to which considerations of class, labor, and economics were a major part of arguments on all sides of the ERA debate. I situate my analysis of ERA debate in the context of shifting labor law that shaped arguments for and against the ERA in the 1970s and 1980s. In so doing, this rhetorical analysis centers labor history, thus not only accounting for how and why many labor organizations, such as the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), threw their support behind the ERA after years of steadfast opposition but also illuminating ERA opponents' disingenuous cooptation of labor's earlier anti-ERA arguments. After reviewing the creation of the archive for analysis and the theoretical literature guiding the analysis, this essay overviews the contextual changes in sex-based

protective laws in relation to the ERA, then analyzes the empty signs of "women" created and employed in ERA controversy.

The analysis examines competing figures of women as economic subjects and objects in ERA debate at a moment when political positions on the ERA were in flux. Following Woods's (2012) injunction to resist writing feminist rhetorical history as though the interlocutors were "stuck in time," and rather to "study relational movements and shifts over time" (p. 84), the analysis addresses consistency and change in the ERA controversy. Using this method means a critic must gather a variety of texts and analyze those texts' relationships in the time of their original creation and in relation to other time periods. The critic must understand the wider context of ERA debate over the 20th century, track the movement of coalitions built and unmade in 1972–1982 ERA debate, and chart arguments as they are adopted and abandoned. Focusing on shifts over time in 1972–1982 ERA debate is important specifically because of the shifting context regarding sex-based labor legislation and the shifting commitments of labor unions and labor feminists at the time. The analysis highlights a peculiar feature of this discourse in context. Although sex-specific protective legislation had been ruled unlawful by many states' attorneys general, federal courts, and federal agencies by 1969 (Baer, 1978, p. 5; Cobble, 2004, pp. 188–189), 1970s ERA debate mirrored earlier 1920s debate that hinged on those sex-specific protective labor laws—but with a reversal in speakers. By 1973, it was labor activists who promoted the ERA as central to all women's economic health and middle-class ERA opponents who decried its consequences for working-class women. This meaningful moment of change in sexed/gendered norms and the circulation of a figure of working-class women in this public discourse have much to teach us about how our society understands women, working-class women, and women's participation in the official labor market today.

WOMAN AS SIGN

To create the archive for analysis in this project, texts were collected that would track mainstream thinking and argument as courts; other public, federal entities; and social movement groups began to interpret the Equal Pay Act and Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act as in conflict with protective labor laws for women. First, mainstream newspaper and newsmagazine coverage of the ERA related to women's employment issues between 1970 and 1982 was collected using the Reader's Guide Retrospective, Nexis Uni, and ProQuest Historical Newspapers databases. Searching for the keywords "Equal Rights Amendment" and (employ*, labor*, or econ*), then scanning the results for relevance yielded 132 news articles that were analyzed. These database searches located coverage from elite newspapers, including the *New York Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Christian Science Monitor*, coupled with that of widely circulated newsmagazines, such as *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *Business Week*, and niche publications like *Christian Century* and *Vital Speeches of the Day*.

Additional historical texts became part of the archive analyzed. I read ERA-specific congressional debates from the 91st and 92nd sessions of the U.S. Congress, particularly those published in *Congressional Digest* and Catherine Stimpson's (1972) edited book *Women and the "Equal Rights" Amendment: Senate Subcommittee Hearings on the Constitutional Amendment, 91st Congress*. Finally, I sought out brochures, newsletters, and advertisements created by the primary advocacy groups engaged in the controversy, such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), ERAmerica, STOP ERA, and unions including the AFL-CIO. Research for ERA-related materials in archived papers of several unions and union leaders as well as the website for the *Phyllis Schlafly Report* yielded 49 different publications, including brochures, newsletters, and memos/letters that were analyzed.

Feminist rhetorical criticism is often interested in how women developed the authority to speak in public (Campbell, 2005; Dow, 2016), and feminist criticism often focuses on women as subjects and objects of representation (Cowie, 1997; Doane, 1982; Friedan, 1963/2001; Gilbert & Gubar, 1979/2000; hooks, 1996; Mulvey, 1988; Tuchman, 1978/2012). This article utilizes the theoretical research on "woman as sign" to analyze the archive and consider the subjectivity of speakers in ERA debate and the figures of women created and employed in this debate. Cowie (1997) developed the theory of "woman as sign" to analyze representations of women by drawing on Levi-Strauss's theorization of kinship and the creation of women through their exchange between men (father and husband) to understand "the institution and construction of social definitions" (p. 12), as these "social discourses constitute the category of woman through which woman is then defined and hence recognised or interpellated" (p. 3).

Levi-Strauss's structural anthropology draws on Saussurean linguistics and its theorization of signification through a system of signs. Saussure (1972/1986) conceptualized language as a system of signs that all derive their value in their difference from other signs in the system. The components of each sign are a signifier (the spoken or written word) and a signified (the concept that word represents). The relationship between any signifier and signified is arbitrary and culturally created. A linguist, Saussure focused on the literal signification of signs, but Barthes's (1957/1972) insight that cultural critics ought to focus on connotation—the second-order ideological significations attached to certain signs—is foundational to the analysis provided here.

Cowie's (1997) mobilization of Saussure through Levi-Strauss explains that the sign "woman" derives its meaning via its difference from other signs in the signifying system, such as "man," and it is this empty signification of woman that allows her to be exchanged among men. To think of woman as a sign means that there is no

question of correct or incorrect images, just the structuralist conception that "the category 'woman' is the product of specific discursive practices . . . legal, medical and political discourses of an historical moment which each construct definitions of 'woman' which may not be, and often have not been the same" (Cowie, 1997, p. 17). Cowie shows that both sexist and feminist discourses construct figures of women. Finally, the system of signification produces subjects and objects, those with power and those without. The act of communicating creates the communicator as a subject, and the word or woman that a communicator exchanges is an object and sign reflecting the speaker's subjectivity and power (Cowie, 1997).

Cowie (1997) analyzed classical Hollywood film, and Rakow and Kranich (1991) showed the theory's usefulness for analyzing how women functioned as signs in a realist medium, television news. Past journalism research indicated that women appear "infrequently in news stories, and since they always sign as 'woman' (unlike men, who do not ordinarily carry meaning as 'man' because the culture assumes maleness as given), their function as sign is unique" (Rakow & Kranich, 1991, p. 13). Rakow and Kranich analyzed a month of the nightly newscasts of ABC, CBS, and NBC, finding that women seldom appeared and, when they did, always signified as objects carrying meaning rather than as speaking subjects advocating for women. Women were used to illustrate emotional, personal consequences behind significant news events, such as a natural disaster, or to endorse a non-/antifeminist organization. The sign of "woman" was always represented by a White woman and was connoted to be naturally conflict-prone. Finally, women who voiced feminist demands were represented as unusual and were not asked to comment on political events with the frequency and breadth of content as conservative political commentators were.

The archive analyzed in this article is primarily linguistic, lacking the rich imagery of film or even television news. Nonetheless, we can see speakers/subjects and objects/signs within these texts

and look at the connotations attached to "women as sign" in the debate. Starting from the semiotic method outlined by Barthes (1957/1972), Cowie (1997), and Rakow and Kranich (1991), I read the texts focusing on what significations were put into the empty sign "woman" by looking at the surrounding words and sentences. What descriptions, attitudes, or concepts were attached to "woman"? Then, I looked for trends in what "woman" connoted for these speakers, categorizing like connotations. Finally, I followed Cowie's and Rakow and Kranich's guidance that this kind of analysis is an analysis of power and subjectivity, so it should ask who holds the power as the speaking subject in the artifacts. How do they style themselves and the world, including their connotations for other signs, such as labor, family, and feminism? Before discussing the results of this analysis, the context setting the stage for wage-earning women's changing relationship to sex-specific protective legislation and the ERA is reviewed.

HISTORICAL CHANGES IN U.S. PROTECTIVE LEGISLATION FOR WOMEN WAGE EARNERS

Sex-specific protective legislation formed the basis by which broad constituencies of women chose to oppose or endorse the ERA between the amendment's 1923 introduction and 1964, when that same legislation came under fire as potential sex discrimination in employment. This historical context is vital to understanding the shifting ground of ERA argument analyzed later in the article. When protective legislation for women emerged in the late 19th century, the labor movement was embroiled in several fights for worker protections, including advocating for a federal minimum wage and a 10-hour and, later, 8-hour day. Because the dominant unions in the United States were hostile to women wage earners (Sklar, 1995), and women typically worked longer hours for less pay than men worked (Baer, 1978), advocacy groups sought protective

legislation to ameliorate women's particular situation in the official labor market. In addition, cultural ideology about womanhood and motherhood provided the conditions of possibility for sex-specific legislation. Although protective laws could be passed for men or for workers regardless of sex, cultural assumptions regarding women's physical weakness and parental responsibilities led to women, rather than men, being granted such protections (Crenshaw, 1995; Lehrer, 1987). After 30 years of advocacy for state laws protecting all workers, only laws protecting women and minors had passed (Cott, 1987).

These protections for wage-earning women came to be the central point of contention in ERA debate prior to the failed ratification period. The Women's Trade Union League and National Consumers' League feared that the ERA would invalidate the protective legislation for which they had worked so long and hard. Members of the national feminist organization who originated the ERA, the National Woman's Party (NWP), differed widely in their perspectives on protective legislation (Cott, 1987). NWP leadership ultimately decided that sex-specific protective legislation trapped women in lower ranks of the workforce and could be used in service of sex-based discrimination broadly (Woodyard & Cady, 2019). NWP did not work on promoting protective labor laws regardless of sex after 1923 (Cott, 1987), and class-based distrust flourished between the middle- and professional-class NWP, who favored legal equality for women, and the middle- and working-class reformers, who favored more nuanced thinking regarding which differential treatment and laws benefited women (Cobble, 2004).

The basic stances in the ERA controversy and the basic arguments about the ERA did not change for 40 years. Then, the Equal Pay Act of 1963 and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 shifted the grounds for both supporting and opposing the ERA. First, the Equal Pay Act revised the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 by outlawing sex-based differential pay in jobs that were similar (Baer,

1978). Next, and ultimately more significantly, Title VII included sex as a protected category, thereby disallowing sex discrimination in employment, and created the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) to enforce fair treatment of women and minorities. Many states repealed maximum hours laws in the wake of Title VII, offering the chance for overtime pay to women, but leaving all workers vulnerable to involuntary overtime and overwork (Cobble, 2004). By 1971, six states had repealed all of their sex-specific protective laws, seven states' attorneys general ruled that Title VII superseded such laws, and other states were busily amending laws (Hardesty, 1971). In addition, a series of legal decisions and EEOC statements moved in the direction of determining that sex-specific workplace protective legislation was in violation of Title VII. A federal district decision in *Rosenfeld v. Southern Pacific Company* (1968) found that California's protective laws restricting women's pay, hours, and weightlifting violated Title VII (Baer, 1978). In 1969, the EEOC announced that sex-specific protective legislation was in conflict with Title VII and endorsed the *Rosenfeld* decision (Baer, 1978; Emerson, Brown, Falk, & Freeman, 1971; Kessler-Harris, 2001). Subsequently, all federal courts likewise ruled that women's protective legislation was unlawful (Baer, 1978). Consequently, before the ERA reached the states for consideration, protective legislation for women, historically the most important issue in the ERA controversy for labor activists, was significantly changed.

Feminists and feminist labor activists were thoughtfully trying to analyze what stance to take in the wake of these legal changes. Some remained committed to fighting for workers' protections and maintaining sex-specific protections that many women perceived as advantaging them. They argued that protective laws should be individually studied so those truly protective might be extended to workers regardless of sex and truly discriminatory laws could be struck down (Cobble, 2004). Others, and increasingly those

long in favor of protective legislation, decided that the context had changed enough that an equal rights amendment was a better strategy for ensuring women's rights in the workplace. Stating that "history is moving in this direction, and I believe women must move with it," former assistant secretary of labor Esther Peterson wrote to a colleague in the U.S. House of Representatives that recent legislation was improving women's lives and made sex-specific laws untenable (Kessler-Harris, 2001). Working-class women themselves were starting to rebel against protective legislation. The plaintiffs in most EEOC cases challenging sex-specific protective laws[1] were working-class women employees who were represented by lawyers from NOW (Mayeri, 2011). In 1970 testimony to the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments, Georgianna Sellers of the League for American Working Women and a plaintiff in *Bowe v. Colgate* stated, "It is an insult to women that such laws or rules are referred to as 'protective' when their sole function is to exclude women from the higher paying jobs" (Stimpson, 1972, p. 201).

Title VII's impact in the United States was significant overall, and the law influenced how labor activists felt about the ERA. In 1970, both the Department of Labor and its subset the Women's Bureau reversed their traditional positions in favor of protective legislation and endorsed the ERA (Kessler-Harris, 1982). That year, the United Auto Workers (UAW) and a few other unions with male-majority memberships were the first in organized labor to support the ERA (Cobble, 2004; Deslippe, 2000). Women members and leaders of the UAW had been influential in liberal feminist groups, including being among the founders of NOW (Cobble, 2004; Deslippe, 2000). Their relative privilege in comparison to women in female-majority jobs like textile factories—being covered by federal law as well as collective bargaining agreements, having opportunities for advancement and higher pay, competing directly with men for jobs—may account for their liberal feminist stance of seeking gender-neutral equality (Cobble, 2004). They had more ability to

see themselves as and to function as individuals rather than economically interdependent family members (Kessler-Harris, 2001). After the ERA passed Congress in 1972, more unions abandoned their long-standing anti-ERA stances, as did the AFL-CIO in 1973 (Cobble, 2004; Deslippe, 2000). ERA opponents could no longer insist that the amendment would undo protective legislation, as many such laws as well as the organizational support for them had already dissipated due to Title VII. Working-class women also began to support the ERA. The 1960s United States' relative prosperity led to increasing numbers of women, including working-class women, becoming college educated (Cobble, 2004). Expectations for their lives and their overall worth were changing, and women were distressed by their lack of ability to get higher paying jobs (Cobble, 2004). Other demographic shifts, such as more middle-class and elite women engaging in paid work and more woman-headed households, converged so that women across class lines began supporting the ERA (Benowitz, 2015; Cobble, 2004).

ANALYZING THE SHIFTING SIGNIFICATIONS OF "AVERAGE AMERICAN WOMEN"

The following analysis examines contestation over "woman as sign" in the ERA debates as speakers sought to define who "average American women" were, what they needed, and what they labored at. Contrasting class-privileged and working women, speakers created figures of so-called average women opposed to "'unusual signs' or 'feminists'" (Rakow & Kranich, 1991, p. 17–19), figures of women as "average American homemakers," and figures of women as paid laborers. The binary opposing class-privileged and working-class women sounded surprisingly like late 1920s ERA debate,[2] except the speakers' positions in ERA controversy all shifted over time in important ways. Feminists, other ERA proponents, and Phyllis Schlafly all claimed that they were on the side of "average

women," while their opponents were out of touch with the needs of these women. In these connotations tied to "woman as sign," we see not only a populist antifeminism and the beginnings of the 1980s "backlash" but also a discourse of class warfare similar to the discourse that animates our contemporary political context. ERA supporters were forced to appease traditionalists, and opponents adopted rhetoric charging that the ERA would privilege elites and lead to working-class women's exploitation.

Average American Women as Sign

Opponents of the ERA told a story of "average American women" overrun by patronizing feminists. The February 1972 *Phyllis Schlafly Report* article "What's Wrong with 'Equal Rights' for Women?" established feminists as outsiders wrongly claiming to represent women:

> Women's libbers are trying to make wives and mothers unhappy with their career, make them feel that they are "second-class citizens" and "abject slaves." . . . Women's libbers do *not* speak for the majority of American women. American women do *not* want to be liberated from husbands and children. We do *not* want to trade our birthright of the special privileges of American women—for the mess of pottage called the Equal Rights Amendment. ("Women's Libbers Do NOT Speak for Us")

New York senator James Buckley (1972) also raised opposition to the ERA by pitting "average American women" against the "unusual sign" of unsexed "representatives of the women's liberation movement":

> The most conspicuous and outspoken representatives of the women's liberation movement have a habit of talking as if they were the duly appointed guardians of the women of America.

> Whether the women of America want or need this kind of guardianship, however, is another matter altogether. I am unaware of any plebiscite granting representative authority to the women's liberation movement from the women of America, nor am I aware of any demonstrable indication that the women of America approve of what their self-appointed guardians would have delivered up for them. (p. 495)

The groups are connoted as one that is recognizable and human ("American women") and another that is a faceless movement ("representatives of the women's liberation movement").

Both Schlafly (1972) and Buckley (1972) represented feminists as manipulative and antidemocratic. These pundits' language of guardianship suggested that feminists were infantilizing U.S. women. They also voiced the common critique that feminists claimed to represent all women yet did not actually represent the majority of women (Miller, 2015). This trope of sisterhood conflating feminism and all women is deeply problematic for feminism as a contextual political practice (Deem, 1999). If feminists do not support all women and/or women do not support feminism, the logic of sisterhood demands that feminism must be corrupt and feminists labeled hypocrites (Deem, 1999). Signifying feminists as domineering, shrill whiners who speak too much was widespread at that historical moment, particularly in news (Douglas, 1995; Dow, 2014; Foss, 1979; Solomon, 1978). Schlafly's and Buckley's demand for direct democratic representation to all women constrained the arguments available to support the ERA. Taking that argument to its logical conclusion, ERA advocates could not make claims about what legislation does to women as a group without getting majority permission from women first. Reasoned, data-driven debate would have no role in trying to win majority opinion according to this ideology. As the next sections illustrate, ERA proponents often resisted signifying the "average American woman," instead filling

the sign "women" with a wide, pluralistic view of class-diverse women who labored in different ways and needed different things, all of which could be addressed by the ERA.

Woman as Homemaker

ERA debate mobilized the empty sign of woman in a second way that was more specifically class and economically based, "woman as homemaker," and speakers on all sides of the controversy attempted to speak for women as homemakers. This was the primary meaning with which anti-ERA speakers filled the sign the "American woman." Phyllis Schlafly, the central ERA opponent, always signified women primarily as wives and mothers. Furthermore, she connoted women's economic position as one of "privilege" because of their role as homemakers in bourgeois families. "What's Wrong with 'Equal Rights' for Women?" began, "Of all the classes of people who ever lived, the American woman is the most privileged" (Schlafly, 1972). Schlafly's sign of woman is singular, rather than the plural "women," thus she connoted a universal and undifferentiated woman whom America created. Schlafly (1972) claimed that this privilege stemmed from women's role in the family. Her vision of the family was specific and narrow. Its origin was "Judeo-Christian tradition." It financially supported women. It was controlled by an ill-defined tradition she labeled the "Age of Chivalry." According to Schlafly, chivalry dictated opening doors for women and other such niceties, but it also meant giving wealth to women:

> Good manners are merely the superficial evidences of a total attitude toward women which expresses itself in many more tangible ways, such as money. . . . In America, a man's first significant purchase is a diamond for his bride, and the largest financial investment of his life is a home for her to live in. American husbands work hours of overtime to buy a fur piece or other finery to keep their wives in fashion, and to pay premiums on

> their life insurance policies to provide for her comfort when she is a widow. ("The Financial Benefits of Chivalry")

These economic privileges supposedly held by "the American woman" were the center of Schlafly's campaign. Her group STOP ERA was founded in September 1972 (Benowitz, 2015, p. 244) as STOP, an acronym for "Stop Taking Our Privileges."

Schlafly's (1972) singular sign, "the American woman," contrasted with the pluralistic and intersectional signification of women favored by ERA proponents. Supporters argued, "Only a small minority of women—approximately 14 to 16 percent—live in the traditional nuclear family with the male as the sole wage earner" (Orth, 1981, p. 290). Letters to the editor blasted the classism and racism in Schlafly's vision of women's economic dependence on a husband (Marriott, 1973; Ruth, 1973). For example, one such letter in the *Chicago Tribune* stated,

> Phyllis Schlafly is a most eloquent spokesperson for the middle-class, infantile, white woman. The many prerogatives that she lists as the right of the American woman when she marries are unknown to the poor, the black, and the chicano—many of whom expect to work after marriage and do not, realistically, expect such an uxorious husband. (Ruth, 1973)

Schlafly frequently discussed women/wives/mothers as a general group but did not talk in any way about the intersectionality of gender, class, and race that is and was functioning in most women's material reality. At times, ERA proponents inflected the public discussion surrounding the amendment with valuable feminist, class-conscious, and anti-racist ideals.

In response to Schlafly, pro-ERA pamphlets relied on the argumentative strategy of listing several of the most egregiously discriminatory laws and practices leveled against women as a

varied group (as wives, as laborers, and as mothers) to show what equal justice for people regardless of sex could do. They focused on subjects that directly responded to Schlafly's (1972) claims concerning women's special privileges in U.S. law and Judeo-Christian custom. Schlafly asserted that a homemaker had the right to be supported by her husband, the right to child support, the custom of maintaining full custody of children in a divorce, and the right to her husband's estate. Schlafly contended that the ERA "would deprive the American woman of many of the privileges we now enjoy, and especially the greatest rights of all: (1) NOT to take a job, (2) to keep her baby, and (3) to be supported by her husband" ("The Right NOT to Take a Job"). Feminist publications countered that courts rarely forced husbands to support wives, that the meaning of "support" varied widely, and that courts rarely awarded child support to women in divorce cases (American Association of University Women [AAUW], n.d.; Lear, 1976). They indicated ways that wives did not have acceptable rights to husbands' estates and even their own money, such as in probate, when "a joint bank account is considered to be solely the property of the husband" (National Organization for Women [NOW], 1976).

Also in contrast to Schlafly, pro-ERA feminists frequently promoted the ERA's value to "women as homemakers." A subgenre of "I am a homemaker, and I support ERA" confessionals appeared in late-1970s and early-1980s women's magazines (Follis, 1979, 1982). Some texts generally attested that the ERA would help homemakers. This *Christian Science Monitor* report is a good representative example of such statements:

> The constitutional amendment will be of greatest benefit to lower income women, Mrs. Smeal says, because they are more likely to be in jobs that are sex-discriminatory. But she maintains that the ERA is important for all women, whether homemakers, working people, or those on social security. (Irwin, 1980,

> p. 20; see also American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, n.d.)

Some sources promoted the case in more strength and detail. For example, an op-ed written by Anne Follis (1979), president of Housewives for ERA, argued,

> Denied many basic legal rights, American homemakers . . . are in a very precarious legal position and must depend on weaker state constitutions and on the whims of lawmakers and the courts. A survey of state laws that discriminate against married women makes it dramatically clear that no one stands to gain more from ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment than the homemaker. (p. 27)

The ERA could help homemakers by eliminating discrimination in Social Security, disability benefits, pensions, property rights of married women, and credit and by recognizing the economic value generated by homemakers' work in several ways, such as crediting work to earn disability insurance and curbing estate taxes charged to widows.

ERA proponents attempted to strategically shift the discourse of "woman as homemaker" by resignifying spokeswomen Schlafly as an elite careerist and NOW's president Eleanor Smeal as a housewife and mother. For example, a 1981 *Vogue* article contrasted Schlafly, figured as a careerist woman with a law degree who aggressively pursued speaking and writing in public life, with then-president of NOW Smeal, who was primarily described as "the married mother of two children" (Orth, 1981, p. 327; see also Malone, 1982). Such descriptions of Smeal echoed earlier press accounts of feminists meant to reassure men that they, marriage, children, and heterosexuality were not feminists' enemy (Dow, 2014). Other editorials consistently brought attention to Schlafly's public debating and

writing credentials (Wall, 1979) and the uncomfortable fit between her view of women's familial role and her own biography (Lelyveld, 1977). One *Time* letter to the editor said, "Go home, Phyllis Schlafly! Who is washing and cooking and cleaning for your husband? Who is taking care of your six children?" (Welz, 1973, p. 7). Even after the amendment failed to gain enough state ratifications, this attention to Schlafly's professional credentials and personal inconsistency with her politics continued. For example, a news report about a 1982 gala ball held after the amendment expired described Schlafly's appearance: "elaborately gowned for the victory celebration, [Schlafly] epitomized opponents' views of her as a smug, insensitive elitist" (Solomon, 1983, p. 109).

Woman as Paid Laborer

Third, speakers throughout the ERA controversy presented arguments that filled the sign "women" with connotations constructing them as paid laborers. Much pro-ERA argument throughout early-1970s congressional debate and the ensuing state ratification process figured "women" as "laborers" and focused on the economic exploitation of women as a problem that the ERA could fix. In anti-ERA uses of "woman as laborer," striking shifts over time emerged. In the early 1970s, anti-ERA speakers representing labor unions characterized "women as paid laborers" as vulnerable in their workplaces in ways middle-class ERA proponents did not understand. By 1972, Schlafly adopted this signification of "woman as paid laborer."

Arguments in favor of the ERA consistently represented wage-earning women as exploited. For example, the first day of testimony in the May 1970 Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments hearings centered on women's labor and financial well-being as the reason for adopting the ERA (Stimpson, 1972). NOW consistently promoted the ERA as a "bread and butter issue" for women who did wage work with unequal pay and

opportunity; for homemakers regarding pensions; and for all women concerning Social Security benefits, credit, and property rights (AAUW, n.d.; Irwin, 1980; NOW, 1976). After Congress extended the deadline for ratification, the *Christian Science Monitor* reported, "Supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment say the issue behind it is economic justice. They contend that American women have a monetary disadvantage that can only be corrected through a strong constitutional measure" (Irwin, 1980, p. 20). As Dow (2014) pointed out, arguments about women's economic position were what made the ERA seem reasonable to the largest number of people.

The persistent wage gap between men and women was the most commonly used symbol of the economic disadvantage suffered by women, and pro-ERA arguments regularly began their pleas by citing the wage gap. In the opening of the 1970 Senate Subcommittee hearings, chair Birch Bayh noted that women earned only 59.5% of what men earned and that the gap had been widening (Stimpson, 1972). Women lobbying for the ERA in state capitols wore buttons that read "59¢," in reference to the wage gap (Mansbridge, 1986). Citing the wage gap as a first step into pro-ERA argument remained consistent from 1970 to 1982 (e.g., Carter, 1979).[3] ERA proponents believed that the amendment would strengthen the Equal Pay Act by elevating the dictate of "equal pay for equal work" to constitutional fact, thus speeding up the pace of narrowing the sexed wage gap (AAUW, n.d.; NOW, 1976).

Additionally, pro-ERA speakers who tied the sign "women" to the idea that they were exploited objects of the economy tied the sign "women" to the sign "family" (Griffiths, 1971; Tarr-Whelan, [1974]). Women's exploitation affected men and children in this conceptualization. Calling for a vote on the amendment, Representative Martha Griffiths discussed the Fifth Circuit's 1969 ruling in *Phillips v. Martin-Marietta Corp*. In this case, the plaintiff claimed that she suffered sex discrimination in hiring: She was denied a job

because she had preschool-aged children, whereas the company would hire men with young children. Griffiths raged about the court's denial of the plaintiff's claim, arguing,

> What they really were saying was that the children of women can starve, or the mother can work for $1.00 per hour, where no one bothers to ask how many children you have. . . . The discrimination against women applies not only to them, but also to their husband and their children. It is, in fact, a discrimination against families.[4] (p. 18)

Griffiths's argument hinged on equating sex discrimination with discrimination against men, children, and the family. Despite the heterosexist assumption written into this statement, Griffiths's equation attempted to change the terms of the larger debate concerning family values. Tying "family values" to supporting the economic interests of the family unit, including a wage-earning mother, allowed for a different set of politics and policies than the traditionalist valorization of a nuclear family with a breadwinning father and a housekeeping mother that is so closely associated with the rights vision of family values (Mayeri, 2011).[5]

In the early 1970s, labor union speakers contested this pro-ERA signification of "woman as paid laborer." Early-1970s statements from the labor movement tended to emphasize a schism between middle-class ERA supporters and working-class ERA detractors. AFL-CIO legislative director Andrew J. Biemiller's (1970) statement to the Senate Subcommittee on Constitutional Amendments developed such a position against the ERA through aligning the ERA with middle-class women and against working-class women. He argued that "middle-class feminists"—such as President Nixon's Commission on the Status of Women, which was "noticeably unrepresentative of any group except business and professional women"—devised the amendment in cahoots with employers

and other "enemies of labor legislation" (p. 4). He was correct to be concerned with ERA opponents' at times cavalier disregard of the long history of pro-working-class women and groups opposing the ERA, but this antifeminist populism effectively flattens the complex interactions of sex and class, asserting that feminism is necessarily at odds with working-class people.

Another widely cited example of labor unions' anti-ERA, antifeminist, populist connotation of "woman as paid laborer" was the 1971 Senate testimony of Myra K. Wolfgang of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union. She began her testimony saying,

> My concern with the Equal Rights Amendment, Senator, is not an academic one. It embodies the problems [of working women] that I work with day in and day out. . . . Now is as good a time as any to remind you that only one out of ten women in the work force have had four or more years of college, so I am not speaking of or representing the elusive "bird in the gilded cage." I speak for "Tillie the Toiler." (Stimpson, 1972, p. 91)

This opening divided "woman as sign" with familiar idioms (she is an elite trapped bird or "Tillie the Toiler"), reifying the assumed schism between supposedly class-privileged feminists and working-class women. Wolfgang's rigid separation between academic training and daily work removed contemplation as a serious value when making public policy. It did so by advancing the assumption that activities associated with academics—such as research, study, and analysis—are substantially less valuable than lived experience when considering the ERA.[6]

The labor movement was conflicted at the time about laws restricting hours for women. They questioned what would be better for women, protecting those in jobs with the fewest protections from enforced overtime or allowing those in unionized jobs with the strongest protections to earn premium pay for chosen overtime

(Gabin, 1991). Illustrating the conflict, in these same Senate hearings, Olga Madar of the UAW entreated Wolfgang,

> I would hope that this concern for the interests of the women on the part of the waitresses' union would spread to seeing to it that they have placement opportunities at these other places where they could make higher income as well as opening up some of the job opportunities, such as being able to tend bar as well as wait on tables and carry the heavy trays of dishes. (Stimpson, 1972, p. 208)

Madar argued that protective legislation was born out of good intentions for women in a context when that was all they could do. She concluded, "The problem is that we did not move up to date fast enough in the realization that a new type of strategy was possible to get the whole loaf of bread rather than just half a loaf of bread" (Stimpson, 1972, p. 212).

In 1970 and 1971, some labor union speakers divided "women as sign" into middle-class feminists and working-class women laborers, while other labor union speakers (from the UAW or working-class litigants represented by NOW) did not. We can see the shifting positions inside the labor movement here. By 1972, Schlafly—herself hostile to the labor movement—began to divide "woman as sign" in the same class-based way labor movement speakers had earlier.

Schlafly's arguments constituted anti-ERA forces as the rightful heirs of populism and the true guardians of working-class women. "What's Wrong with 'Equal Rights' for Women?" ended by asserting that feminists were not truly concerned with women's wage work: "The women's lib movement is *not* an honest effort to secure better jobs for women who want or need to work outside the home. This is just the superficial sweet talk to win broad support for a radical 'movement'" (Schlafly, 1972). "What's Wrong with 'Equal Rights' for Women?" tied the sign "woman" to the sign "wife and mother," but

this aside at the end tried to ensure that Schlafy addressed those wives and mothers who happened to work outside of the home.

As the 1970s went on, the *Phyllis Schlafly Report* and STOP ERA pamphlets continued to assert that they spoke on behalf of "factory woman as sign." In the July 1973 issue of the *Report*, Schlafly claimed that the idea that sex-specific protective laws were discriminatory was

> the smug attitude of a business or professional woman who sits at a comfortable desk all day in a relatively clean and spacious office. . . . This is not the point of view of the factory woman who works only to help supplement the family income, who stands on her feet all day in front of a machine, whose work may be sweaty or exhausting, and who is eager to go home to take care of her children.[7]

This is a good representative example of how Schlafly coopted labor movement arguments from before Title VII. The *Phyllis Schlafly Report*'s or STOP ERA's statements regarding wage-earning women often parroted Myra Wolfgang's figures of women: one woman ERA supporter who was class elite, educated, and had a physically easy work life as an office worker, a professional, or a teacher, and the other woman who opposed the ERA, who was a working-class factory operative suffering from physical strain and alienated labor. Contextually, all such statements by Schlafly were several years after the 1969 EEOC administrative statement discounting sex-specific protective legislation and also after all major U.S. labor unions dropped their opposition to ERA. Schlafly repeated arguments from the time before these changes and accused ERA supporters of elitism.

Other gestures were made in STOP ERA materials. STOP ERA pamphlets listed "Women in Industry" near the end of the list of opponents of the ERA (e.g., STOP ERA, n.d.). The group likely used

this vague label because no organized group of women in a labor alliance like a union contested the ERA after 1973. That pamphlet's further information about workplace issues also was out of step with what Title VII was already doing: "ERA will deprive women in industry their legal protections against being involuntarily assigned to heavy-lifting, strenuous, and dangerous men's jobs, and compulsory overtime." These arguments exploited the class-based divisions of the previous 75 years with vague metaphors or vague statements meant to speak to and on behalf of working-class women. The *Phyllis Schlafly Report*'s cooptation of speaking for "factory woman as sign" contrary to "middle-class feminist as sign" represented "disingenuous controversy that is stoked not in order to expand the spaces of argumentative engagement, but to close off disagreement and re-center dominant memories, reactions, and interpretations" (Fritch et al., 2006, p. 202). Like arguing that wives and mothers were economically privileged because of their bread-winning husbands, these arguments on behalf of factory women were just another way Schlafly reiterated traditional gender roles. Furthermore, her group's material impact on working-class people is suspect. For example, the Coalition of Labor Union Women's (1974) resolutions passed in their first meeting stated that part of what right-wing anti-ERA groups did was create an organizational apparatus that also worked on antiunion legislation (see also Smeal, 1977; United Auto Workers, 1977).

Many of the modalities available for swaying public opinion about the ERA involved familiar significations of women that were particularly antifeminist. Schlafly used a time-worn idiom of middle-class ERA proponents who were out of touch with women who worked for wages. The centrality of "woman as housewife" tapped into cultural stereotypes of women that represented White, middle-class women's experience as universal (hooks, 2000). Eleanor Smeal's signification as a mother and wife, pro-ERA writings by "women as homemakers," Representative Griffiths's attaching

the sign "family values" to economic concerns, and other signs of feminists' heterosexual familial enmeshment circulated in this context alongside the Right's focus on the family. For right-wing women, the sign "pro-family," which hinged on abortion, LGBTQ people, and working mothers as imperiling the "traditional family," was politically impactful (Benowitz, 2015). Pro-ERA statements attempting to resignify family or homemakers were a reaction to these significations of family established in anti-ERA argument. There were even particularly antifeminist statements in pro-ERA discourse. For example, *Vogue* stated, "Hardly anyone admits to being a 'women's libber' anymore" (Orth, 1981, p. 290). It is doubtful, of course, that anyone ever identified as that insulting term. This antifeminist statement was directly followed by an affirmation of feminist goals, continuing, "Fine. But that doesn't mean we don't want equal rights or that we're willing to live with economic discrimination." Taken as a whole, these sentiments exhibit acquiescence to the now familiar subjectivity created by saying, "I'm not a feminist, but I do support equal work for equal pay." In many ways, conservatives and anti-ERA factions established the terms of debate in the ERA controversy: Proponents were forced to attempt to resignify "average American woman," "woman as housewife," "family," and "woman as laborer."

CONCLUSION

Class and economic dimensions of "woman as sign" were central to ERA debate. Speakers in the 1972–1982 ERA controversy constructed "woman as sign" in class-based ways, including speaking for the "average American woman," "woman as homemaker," and "woman as laborer." These class-based signs highlight constraints placed on the terms of the debate, delimiting who could speak and how—as if intellectuals would have nothing to say to women who worked as waitresses, or as if a woman should deny being a feminist

despite her demands being feminist demands. What becomes clear in this binary logic is that the privileged woman who would ride to political power on the backs of working women is very much a straw figure. Women could speak only if they disassociated themselves from the very privilege that allowed them to speak, and they did this by claiming to represent working-class women, both wage earners and homemakers. What is also clear is that few working-class women represented themselves in mainstream debate despite being spoken for. It would seem, then, that the working-class "factory woman" circulating in these discourses is as much a straw person as the middle-class "bird in a gilded cage" and functioned as its foil. Pitting an empty sign of an overworked working-class woman and an empty sign of a self-interested professional-class woman against each other was a surprising reiteration of arguments from 1920s ERA debate (Woodyard & Cady, 2019). Familiar arguments coopted from genuine efforts to improve life for women were used "to distract from the realities and policies that exacerbate inequality and immobility" (Serazio, 2016, p. 192).

This analysis also highlights the peculiarity of STOP ERA's timing when mobilizing figures of working-class and professional-class women. Attending to speakers' shifts over time (Woods, 2012) as well as questioning if the arguments made were "the right words at the right time" is important to rhetorical criticism of controversy (Fritch et al., 2006) and something that was amiss in STOP ERA's arguments. By the time of the publication of Schlafly's first major anti-ERA statement in 1972, the legal and political contexts surrounding sex-based protective legislation had absolutely changed. While the status of century-old sex-specific protective laws was uncertain post-Title VII in 1964, the *Rosenfeld* decision in 1968, EEOC's 1969 memo, and the state law repeals that followed indicated that fighting for women's workplace rights would no longer be accomplished through sex-specific protective legislation. Reiterating a time-worn figure—the out-of-touch middle-class feminist—at

this moment is "overripe," focusing the audience on emotion and tradition rather than substance (Fritch et al., 2006).

The ERA fell due to a confluence of forces. According to Mansbridge's (1986) postmortem, the ERA became harder to argue for in the later 1970s, as several legal reforms, including the U.S. Supreme Court deciding that the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause applied to women, increased women's legal equality (see also Mayeri, 2011). Mansbridge's (1986) analysis of polling data also found that feminism represented fundamental changes in gender roles that made a majority of citizens uncomfortable. The appeal of STOP ERA's public rhetoric was its emphasis on safety and tradition rather than exploration of new ways of structuring society (Solomon, 1978). Schlafly's cooptation of early 20th-century labor reformers' arguments pitting elite and working-class women against each other was one way of emphasizing traditional gender roles. Finally, support for abortion and the rights of lesbian women as well as the ERA in the 1977 National Women's Conference platform mobilized religious conservatives against the ERA, and overall, a rightward swing in U.S. political culture was under way at the time (Dow, 2014).

The analysis presented here indicates that there was a class component to the ERA's failure. Tracking the significations of class conflict in ERA debate let us see how effortlessly the *Phyllis Schlafly Report* and STOP ERA pamphlets in 1973 and 1974 coopted the words of labor movement representatives like Myra Wolfgang and Andrew Biemiller from a few years earlier. This shows an early example of Republicans' method of building and maintaining hegemony through coopting populist rhetoric that continues today (Serazio, 2016). Pro-ERA and feminist groups worked hard to say and show that they were sensitive to working-class women's issues. That Schlafly could so obliquely accuse the ERA of being for professional-class and middle-class women shows that there must have been some such feeling out there.[8] If a constituent

could say that this is not for me because I am working class or could say ideals of patriarchal protection matter more for me than legal equality enshrined in the Constitution, pro-ERA argument had not yet changed attitudes fundamentally. This analysis adds to the literature called for by Fritch et al. (2006) that attends to controversy's "dark side," when a speaker constrains discussion through disingenuously recentering tradition, like Schlafly did when coopting labor activists' arguments.

This analysis of ERA debate also found some important information about women speakers that furthers the analysis of "woman as sign" in public, political, realist genres offered by Rakow and Kranich (1991). Rakow and Kranich found that women appeared as agentic speakers in news primarily when they could serve as spokespeople for an organization or if they occupied the "unusual sign" of "feminist." Although several such agentic women speakers appeared in ERA debate, such as Myra Wolfgang and Olga Madar from labor organizations or Eleanor Smeal from NOW, there were also women speakers who spoke on behalf of only "woman as sign" groups, such as homemakers or mothers. Several ERA texts featured women, both feminists and antifeminists, as sources and newsmakers, which is qualitatively and quantitatively different from the television news analyzed by Rakow and Kranich. Additionally, these ERA texts repeated a pattern discovered by Rakow and Kranich in which, "because 'all signs are alike,' only white women are allowed to signify as 'woman'" (pp. 19–20). The 1972–1982 ERA debate rarely represented Women of Color, and Rakow and Kranich's analysis clearly showed how news outlets' tendency to represent feminism with only White women, and to only represent Women of Color in news stories concerning race, led to the familiar public perception that feminist issues only concern White women.

In addition to enhancing rhetorical scholars' knowledge about the class dimensions of the 1970s ERA controversy and the research on "woman as sign" in public discourse, the analysis presented here

can illuminate class issues in contemporary U.S. political culture more broadly. Contemporary U.S. Republicans often accuse neoliberal Democrats of practicing "class warfare" (Nunberg, 2011; Zelizer, 2011)—particularly when policies other than a tax cut for the rich are proposed (Nunberg, 2011). This analysis of ERA debate illustrates another case when the Right used class-based statements and populist charges of elitism as a rhetorical strategy to forward their political interests, which is paradoxical given their political activities on behalf of the wealthy against the poor and against the working and middle classes (Serazio, 2016). Anti-ERA charges of feminism's elitism by Schlafly can be understood as disingenuous given her larger perspective that favored antiunion activity and other political action on behalf of the wealthy. The same may be said of our current populist-in-chief, Donald Trump; his populist rhetoric stands in contrast with his policies, such as the 2017 tax cut that favors the rich and is growing the deficit (Frazee, 2018).[9] Miller (2015) proposed a different and valuable way to theorize political conservatives' use of positive ideographs ("Right to Life," "Religious Liberty") and their appeal. But we should not lose sight of the manipulative rhetoric that such positive ideographs are and call them out.[10] Viewed in the context of her larger political activity, Phyllis Schlafly's self-presentation as a political advocate on behalf of working-class women is questionable.

In her speech "The Backlash Phenomenon," Helen B. Wolfe (1976) of the AAUW stated, "Only if ERA is as valid for the homemaker as it is for the working women, and perceived as such, will it succeed" (p. 671). The ERA, with its ability to reform probate and Social Security law, school admission practices, and labor law, very likely could be socially and economically progressive for many different groups of women. Yet the rhetorical straitjacket of a fight between privileged and working women not only occluded much discussion about this but also constrained the way that women might speak about it. Even if the ERA had no direct

effect on women's economic situation, its symbolic "moral commitment" to women could have led to women being more likely to demand more equitable treatment and could have encouraged more equitable court rulings (Mansbridge, 1986). In light of the recent assaults on gender-based federal legislation, such as Title IX, the lack of such a codification of women into the U.S. Constitution is surely regrettable.

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NOTES

1 The cases included *Weeks v. Southern Bell T and T Co.*, *Bowe v. Colgate Palmolive, Mengelkoch v. California*, and *Phillips v. Martin Marietta Corp*.

2 Miller (2015) noted that Schlafly [illegible]sed this argument, which labor unions dropped in the early 1970s, but does not explore the rich rhetorical and political significance of this switch in signs and speakers. For analysis of this class dimension of 1920s ERA debate, see Woodyard and Cady (2019).

3 According to the National Committee on Pay Equity (n.d.), the wage gap between men and women had **increased** from 60.7% in 1960 to 59.7% in 1979 (and remains at 80% now, nearly 60 years after passage of the Equal Pay Act).

4 The U.S. Supreme Court overturned the Fifth Circuit's decision in 1971. Justice Marshall's opinion in favor of the petitioner emphasized that companies cannot predict job performance by such generalities as gender as it relates to family structure.

5 Mayeri (2011) analyzed Schlafly's and other conservatives' arguments promoting "family values" and how they used such arguments in an attempt to undermine affirmative action in employment.

6 Wolfgang headed the ad hoc group interested in keeping protective legislation in Michigan because she represented women in low-paid and sex-typed jobs. Cobble (2004) explained that the specter of mandatory overtime haunted Wolfgang's words here. Just 2 years before this testimony, the Michigan

legislature repealed the law capping weekly hours at 54. Hours laws such as Michigan's were the result of years of hard work by activists like Wolfgang to ensure that people would not have to work overtime if they did not want to and that they could earn premium pay if they chose to work overtime. Munts and Rice (1970) showed that the Michigan hours law repeal did cause conditions of overwork in auto plants.

7 Schlafly cited Biemiller's and Wolfgang's 1970 testimony, but later, in 1973, Biemiller's union endorsed ERA. See also McDaniel (1974) for an example of a letter to be written to state legislatures that made a similar class division.

8 For illustrative examples of such feelings, see the oral histories of Klaner (1982) and Peick (1982). The interviewer and interviewees in both of these oral histories stated that working-class women did not understand ERA, thought it was for middle-class women, and firmly believed that it was not relevant to them. Both interviewees were longtime women leaders in international unions. Similar ideas were expressed in mainstream news (e.g., Lear, 1976).

9 Congressional Budget Office (2020) forecasts consistently documented the deficit growth caused by this tax reform.

10 For example, Solomon (1978) noted that Schlafly's arguments often showed a disregard for justice. Schlafly's advice that women use their children as pawns in a divorce to get money and keep sole custody regardless of how much a man might want to spend time with his children was rightly judged by Solomon as callous and manipulative.

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"Doing It for the Dream": Neoliberal Narratives of Working-Class and Immigrant Employees on CBS's *Undercover Boss*

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The neoliberal notion of individualism is a central component in both television and film portrayals of people pursuing the American Dream. The purpose of this essay is to examine how the neoliberal notions of hard work and individualism support the construction of the American Dream as a myth through an analysis of the first two seasons of CBS's reality TV series *Undercover Boss* (*UB*). By employing a critical/cultural approach, I account for the ways that class, and also at times gender, race, and citizenship, informs the narratives of both CEOs and their working-class employees in corporations featured on *UB*. Through a narrative analysis, I first argue that CEO narratives emphasize their ability to work rigorously and, thus, heroically to uphold the structures of a financially lucrative capitalist workplace, while simultaneously promoting the importance of the neoliberal notion of individualism to their working-class employees. Second, I argue for the ways that select working-class and immigrant employees are tokened by the CEOs for their heroic efforts of hard work and self-sacrifices. Through the process of tokening, the voices of these working-class employees are silenced in their capitalist workplaces. However, these employees still maintain hope toward obtaining the American Dream. Overall, this analysis finds that working-class employees on *UB* are portrayed as abiding by a neoliberal code of ethics that is largely shaped by the idea of working rigorously for the future. Throughout the series, the American Dream myth is highlighted as an achievable goal for employees who work hard. However, this neoliberal promise of financial success through hard work is a false one. As is evident in the narratives of working-class employees on *UB*, their hard work does not equate with financial prosperity, even for the select, tokened workers in each episode.

KEYWORDS: American Dream myth, neoliberalism, class, reality TV, narrative criticism

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Since its advent, television has functioned to provide narratives of the American Dream. Specifically, critical scholars have found individualism to be a central component in both television and film portrayals of people pursuing the American Dream, with individualism pivotal in shaping the mythical elements of this neoliberal narrative. In this essay, I add to this scholarship by accounting for how the notion of individualism supports the construction of the myth of the American Dream through an analysis of CBS's reality TV series *Undercover Boss* (*UB*; Lambert & Holzman, 2010–2012).

UB documents CEOs of American companies who go undercover to pose as new or temporary working-class employees either at the prime or a franchise location of their business. By going undercover, the company CEO hopes to gain insight into how he or she can improve different aspects of the workplace to both benefit employees and increase profits. As each episode chronicles the CEO's undercover work experience, the program presents narratives that reinforce the ways in which a company's working-class employees work to achieve the American Dream. These narratives also underscore the ways that the undercover CEO has already achieved the American Dream, making it appear tangible for his or her working-class employees.

I employ a critical/cultural approach to account for the ways that class, and also at times gender, race, and citizenship, informs the narratives of both CEOs and their working-class employees featured on *UB*. Through a narrative analysis, I find evidence of two main roles that reinforce the rhetoric of the American Dream myth (ADM): the CEO portrayed as a capitalist hero and working-class employees, especially immigrants, represented as humble, heroic tokens. I argue that CEO narratives emphasize their ability to work tirelessly, and thus heroically, to maintain a financially lucrative capitalist workplace while simultaneously promoting the importance of the neoliberal notion of individualism to their working-class employees. The second section of my analysis will

then account for the ways that select working-class and immigrant employees are tokened by the CEOs for their heroic efforts of hard work and sacrifice. Through the process of tokening, the voices of these working-class employees are silenced in their workplaces. However, these employees still maintain hope of obtaining the American Dream. In addition, I argue that the neoliberal characteristics of the American Dream are especially reinforced in mythical ways for immigrant employees who face additional hardships while working individually to achieve prosperity as new workers in the United States. Overall, this analysis finds that working-class employees on *UB* are portrayed as abiding by a neoliberal work ethic that is largely shaped by the idea of working rigorously for the future. Before providing an analysis of this series's portrayals of the American Dream, I first review relevant concepts concerning this myth and applicable neoliberal concepts.

CRITICAL SCHOLARSHIP ON THE AMERICAN DREAM MYTH AND NEOLIBERALISM

According to Dorsey and Harlow (2003), myths become the "touchstones for human behavior within a community and the criteria for meaning in that community's existence" (p. 62). By creating shared meaning in a community, societal myths often promote ideologies through hegemonic practices. Within capitalism, the myth of the American Dream is linked to an economic system through which hegemonic practices and ideology shape mythical ideas regarding a person's individual ability to be financially successful and achieve a higher class status as an employee. Thus, as Winn (2003) argued, the American Dream perpetuates an egalitarian myth that reinforces the notion of a classless economy in which everyone has equal opportunity to achieve the American Dream.

As represented on *UB*, the ADM functions as an ideological construct of capitalist work structures grounded in neoliberalism.

The ADM actually consists of two related myths: the materialist success myth of individual hard work and the moralistic myth of brotherhood, that is, financially giving to others once having achieved prosperity. This myth centers on the importance of a person's morality, which includes goodwill toward those less fortunate and engaging in philanthropy once (or if) success is achieved (Cloud, 1996; Dorsey & Harlow, 2003; Fisher, 1973; Gray, 1989; Hasinoff, 2008; Hoerl, 2002, 2008; Jhally & Lewis, 1992; Winn, 2000, 2001, 2003). Fisher (1973) emphasized that this duality of the ADM reinforces the values of upward mobility and the notion that all Americans can achieve a higher economic status despite class inequalities. The ADM reiterates the idea that any hardworking employee has the opportunity to rise out of poverty. Applying a Gramscian framework, Hoerl (2008) added that the ADM stresses the neoliberal notion of personal responsibility by establishing "the common sense that social problems are challenges for individuals to overcome" (p. 359). Throughout episodes of *UB*, the notion of employees taking personal responsibility for their workplaces and economic status is reinforced through the narratives of both working-class employees and CEOs.

According to Hasinoff (2008), a neoliberal "self-governing" citizen rhetoric refrains from incorporating an analysis of the ways that race, class, gender, and other aspects of identity structure inequality. Moreover, as Hasinoff (2008) stated, neoliberal discourses that stress "personal responsibility, choice, and flexibility" (p. 325) are invoked as evidence of the success of post-race and postfeminist late capitalism. Hence the ADM of personal responsibility and individual hard work as the keys to success excludes accounting for the ways that an employee's race, gender, class, ability, or citizenship may impact the individual's ability to achieve prosperity. As I discuss throughout my analysis, these structural and institutional barriers are especially evident in narratives of female CEOs and both immigrant and working-class employees.

In addition, the neoliberal notion of individual effort to overcome class-based oppression is similar to the concept of tokenism. Laws (1975) defined tokenism as "the means by which the dominant group advertises a promise of mobility between the dominant and excluded classes" (p. 51). Specifically, Cloud (1996) defined tokens "as the medium of exchange, through which group identity, politics, and resistance are traded for economic and cultural capital within popular cultural spaces" (p. 122). While tokenism has advantages for both the dominant group and the individual, only a few "outsiders" are allowed to succeed within the context of hegemonic structures (Laws, 1975). According to Cloud (1996), the rhetoric of tokenism is constructed around the concept of "individual triumphs over adversity" (p. 122).

The concept of tokenism explains how each CEO on *UB* "tokens" only a few selected working-class employees based on their individual hard work. This tokening on the show further reiterates neoliberal myths of the American Dream by rewarding a few employees with incentives for their efforts, with these rewards rarely leading to other workers achieving the higher class or job statuses needed to reach financial prosperity. This tokening narrative is especially troublesome for selected immigrant employees who receive financial assistance from their CEOs to help with their immigration status. While these episodes present several ways that the CEOs demonstrate the moralistic myth of brotherhood through philanthropy, their financial acts—whether charitable or corporate based—are not enough to provide the immigrant employees with a better life, financial stability (especially for their families), or legal citizenship. In other words, tokening demonstrates a form of limited, often temporary assistance, while emphasizing the importance of relying on individual hard work and personal responsibility to achieve financial success. The concept of tokening and neoliberal notions of the ADM will be applied to the following critical analysis.

CRITICAL/CULTURAL APPROACH TO ANALYZING REPRESENTATIONS OF CLASS AND LABOR

Concepts within the field of critical/cultural studies regarding class, ideology, and hegemony provide a valuable framework for understanding representations of employees on *UB*. First, Marxist theory provides a basis for understanding the disparities between class relations in society. As Marx and Engels (1976) explained, "the class which is the ruling material force in society is at the same time its ruling intellectual force" (p. 58). They add that a ruling class is compelled "to present its interest as the common interest of all the members of society. . . . It has to give its ideas the form of universality, and present them as the only rational, universally valid ones" (p. 59).

In *UB*, the narratives of CEOs convey a universal, commonsense logic regarding neoliberal notions that center on how all employees' hard work will one day lead to obtaining the American Dream. Thus their representations function as the "ruling class" (in their workplace) and further solidify the connection between a capitalist media and the wealthy. As Winn (2003) observed, this commonsense logic supports a hegemonic view that critical theorists have long argued exists between a capitalist media and the wealthy. However, as Winn further explained, "the enormous change in the disparity between the ultra-wealthy in the U.S. and the vast majority of Americans in the late 20th century and early 21st begs that the relationship between the media and social order be further explored" (p. 310).

By reiterating the naturalness of class ideology, representations of *UB* exclusively associate financial success with executive-rank employees who have earned the privilege of wealth. These ideological associations are further reaffirmed by statistics that report an immense wage gap between company employees and their CEOs. According to a *CBS* news report, in 1965, CEOs in the United States

made 20 times more than their average employee; more than 50 years later, the pay gap has expanded to the colossal disproportion of 248 times (Begnaud, 2017). While such statistics are very troublesome regarding income inequality, capitalist workplace structures and practices continue to naturalize and justify acquired wealth for CEO positions. The ADM's neoliberal emphasis on individualism and hard work provides support for a capitalist, hegemonic system of workplace structures and thus class relations in the United States. A capitalist system promotes a neoliberal promise that anyone can achieve a higher class status through hard labor and, by doing so, can achieve the American Dream. However, this neoliberal promise of financial success through hard work is a false one. As is evident in the narratives of working-class employees on *UB*, their hard work does not equate with financial prosperity, even for the select, tokened workers in each episode. Furthermore, this false promise embedded into neoliberal discourse further obscures the reality of how many wealthy CEOs secure financial prosperity and achieve the American Dream. For these CEOs, their wealth is not solely achieved through hard work but, more often than not, is largely attributed to beneficial tax codes and possibly the inheritance of money and/or their families' businesses.

Moreover, it is important to note that *UB* not only reflects hegemonic beliefs and values but also acknowledges the fears and anxieties of the employees as a subordinated group living in a neoliberal society. On *UB*, many of the working-class and immigrant employees express fear and anxiety regarding economic struggles related to their low-paying jobs. However, through this acknowledgment, Triece (1999) observed that these fears "can then be contained through the ideological workings of the text" (p. 52). By CEOs tokening select employees while also emphasizing the neoliberal notions of personal responsibility and hard work to achieve financial prosperity, expressions of workers' fears are contained within the narratives. Moreover, the ADM is sus-

tained through employee narratives that, although conveying fear and anxiety, nevertheless reinforce hope for a more prosperous future.

UNDERCOVER BOSS IN POPULAR CULTURE

UB as a reality television show premiered after the Super Bowl on CBS in 2010 with 38 million viewers. Rerun episodes currently appear on the cable networks CNBC, TLC, and OWN. Each episode focuses on a CEO of a U.S. company who goes undercover to temporarily pose as a struggling, out-of-work employee as a way to better understand both the weaknesses and strengths of his or her company, with the goal of increasing sales and profits. The working-class employees are represented as hardworking individuals whose jobs do not alleviate problems associated with their financial status. A few employees, who usually work in the lowest paid positions, are selected to work with the undercover CEO and, in return, are given some incentives for themselves, their families, or their communities at the end of each episode. This conclusion is portrayed as uplifting and positions the CEO as the hero for giving charity and other incentives, typically to only a few employees. The U.S. version of the show airs worldwide in syndication in more than 30 countries; about a dozen countries have their own version of the show. Thus *UB* narratives emphasizing a neoliberal, capitalist work ethic are widespread.

Since its TV debut, a book has been written by the U.S. show's producers, entitled *Undercover Boss*: *Inside the TV Phenomenon That Is Changing Bosses and Employees Everywhere* (Lambert & Holzman, 2011). The book chronicles the CEOs' and employees' experiences from different episodes and claims that the show has radically changed the world of boss–employee relations. Overall, the book highlights the benefits of this series to provide other CEOs with management techniques and also illustrates U.S. neoliberal,

capitalist values and the economic hardships of both the CEO in prior years and the featured employees currently.

METHODOLOGY

After reviewing 31 episodes from Seasons 1 and 2, I constructed transcripts from select episodes of CEOs' and employees' stories that most adamantly supported a metanarrative of the ADM. These select narratives mirrored mythical themes found in 19th-century novelist Horatio Alger's rags-to-riches fictional stories. Just as Alger's protagonist characters pulled themselves up by their bootstraps from poverty to become socially and financially successful, I also identified, transcribed, and analyzed specific narratives of both CEOs and working-class employees that reiterate this theme and thus highlight the American Dream (Winter, 2004). The narratives used for this analysis represent stories that are particularly centered on working-class employees' severe struggles of poverty involving potential job and/or family loss; illness; and a lack of resources and assistance toward obtaining better health, better pay, higher education, and even citizenship. This specific type of narrative extends beyond the portion of working-class employees' stories on *UB* that convey professional struggles only, including structural and economic disadvantages and a lack of opportunities for growth in the workplace, while trying to find success. I also analyze two CEO narratives involving working mothers who exhibit a complicated notion of hard work due to the pressures of balancing the roles of being an executive and a parent. Lastly, I highlight several CEO narratives to account for the ways in which they provide significant amounts of philanthropy to a few working-class employees. By CEOs giving philanthropy to impoverished employees, the other theme in Alger's rags-to-riches stories is similarly related to wealthy characters helping some of the protagonists in those novels (Winter, 2004). As continually discussed throughout this study, this second

theme found through the transcription of these narratives solidifies evidence of the idea of philanthropy in the brotherhood myth of the American Dream.

For the next step in my methodology, I then applied Fisher's (1984) theory of narrative paradigm. Fisher posited that a narrative can be a rhetor's argument itself, rather than stories only being utilized to support a rhetor's claim. A key term within narrative paradigm is *narrative logic* or *rationality*, which involves evaluating the "good reasons"—the underlying ideologies—presented throughout the stories that reiterate certain morals regarding what are deemed proper sets of beliefs and behaviors (Fisher, 1995). Narrative rationality can be examined through t[illegible]nterrelated concepts of a standard of coherence, how the story(s) fits together, and a standard of fidelity, how the values being discussed reinforce certain morals/truths that will shape future actions.

On *UB*, the working-class employees' stories demonstrate structural coherence as they are revealed in multiple layered scenes to the undercover boss. In doing so, a logical progression of these employees' narratives demonstrates both a hard work ethic and continuous professional/personal struggles. This pattern reinforces that the American Dream is a work in progress for working-class employees. This same standard of structural coherence is also demonstrated by the CEOs' narratives. However, their narratives are reinforced by the conclusion that doing hard work has already "paid off," resulting in financial, professional, and personal prosperities. Thus the coherence of the CEOs' narratives reiterates the success stories of the American Dream. In addition, the narratives' reinforcement that all employees, including CEOs, demonstrate a hard work ethic in the workplace regardless of circumstance—such as financial, health, familial, or legal hardships—suggests a standard of fidelity.

These two concepts of coherence and fidelity are essential to revealing the rationality of *UB*'s narratives—specifically how the

ADM is reaffirmed as the moral of the stories expressed and shaped by both CEOs and working-class employees. Through this application of narrative rationality, I argue that two main roles reinforce the rhetoric of the ADM: the CEO as a capitalist hero and the working-class employees, especially immigrant employees, as humble, heroic tokens. To further distinguish between these two roles, I first briefly explain how the neoliberal notions of hard work and sacrifice appear in the narratives of both working-class employees and CEOs.

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

Situating the Notions of Hard Work and Sacrifice in Employee Narratives

> WORKING-CLASS EMPLOYEE: For now, I guess I just have to work harder for them [his family] because I know they are counting on me. . . . It's a burden but at the same time I feel it's a blessing.
>
> CEO: Despite his difficulties, he has [referring to his employee having been abandoned by his father while they visited the United States, then moving from the Philippines, and now supporting his family who lives in another state], he calls himself a blessing [CEO is crying]. That can't be a blessing. (Season 2, Episode 18)

Generally speaking, at some point, most workers believe that they are making sacrifices at their places of employment. For example, working-class employees, especially in service industry positions, often do not receive a living wage and sometimes complete strenuous or dangerous tasks at their workplaces. These employees often work overtime without extra pay or work unpaid holidays and/or more than one job to make ends meet. As a result, these workers

are likely to spend less time with family or friends. *UB*'s executives also appear to make many sacrifices by working long hours and sometimes traveling on the job, resulting in less time with family and friends. Thus, in different scenarios, hard work is expected and performed by all workers at any level of a company.

However, as is highlighted by the vast contrasts between the lifestyles of the CEOs and their working-class employees, hard work becomes a much larger sacrifice when employees are undercompensated for their efforts and only the top-ranked workers receive abundant financial compensation and security. Unlike the CEOs, the majority of employees featured on *UB* will not attain economic prosperity for their sacrifices of hard work but will continue to struggle to financially support their families and provide them with adequate housing, transportation, education, and medical care. For example, in the first episode of Season 1, Jaclyn, who works in numerous positions at her job—including as an office manager, administrative assistant, scale operator, scale supervisor, accounts payable, and accounts receivable—is ineligible for both salary and bonus pay. She cannot afford her house payments and has to put her "dream" home, as she calls it, up for sale. Jaclyn provides a home not only for her own immediate family but also for her father, her sister, and her sister's family (Season 1, Episode 1). Other employees in the first two seasons discuss working long hours and not having enough money to afford their house payments (Season 1, Episode 3).

In a few episodes, travel on the job and living away from family compose a significant sacrifice for all types of employees. For example, working-class employees discuss moving to the United States to support their families abroad or, in one case, living in another state (Season 2, Episode 18). While several of the CEOs are shown spending extended time away from their families via travel or separate living/housing arrangements, they know their hard work will provide them with wealth and resources for their

families. The working-class employees, on the other hand, hope that their hard work and time away from their families will provide adequate finances for them.

Some of the CEOs acknowledge the sacrifices their employees are making. In one episode, an employee, Chuey, reveals to the CEO that he works three jobs. In response, the CEO later states in an interview, "As a father of eight children, I can certainly relate to Chuey. He represents that character of self-sacrifice and and [sic] really wanting to make sure that he's working hard to lift his kids up to a better life" (Season 2, Episode 4). However, with such vast wage disparities between executive and working-class employees, most of the low-paid workers will not be able to achieve economic prosperity or security, no matter how hard they work or how much they sacrifice.

CEO as Capitalist Hero

The idea of the inherent fairness of capitalism is a prominent theme within narratives featuring the CEO and/or his or her employees. From the start, *UB* reinforces the idea that American workplaces can be improved through adherence to the neoliberal ideal of hard work and individual action. The introduction of each episode supports standards of both structural coherence and fidelity by including statements emphasizing the CEO's role as ethical problem solver. In the first season, structural coherence begins to be evident in the opening line of each episode with the following statement accompanied by suspenseful background music:

> The economy is going through tough times. Many hardworking Americans blame wealthy CEOs out of touch with their companies, out of touch with what is going on with their companies. But some bosses are willing to take extreme action to make their businesses better.

In the second season, the opening dialogue shifts slightly by reframing the last line: "but more and more bosses are looking for radical ways to reconnect with their workforce." In these opening texts, the emphasis is placed on the CEOs as leaders who need to take radical action, and employees are characterized through a standard of fidelity as "hard workers." Yet the "radical action"—as the show states—is not revolutionary. Rather, while *UB*'s opening lines acknowledge employees' distrust of their bosses and a capitalist system, these statements followed by the episodic narratives underscore a rationality of the need for the CEOs to renew faith with their employees. As Hasinoff (2008) argues, this type of ideological faith emphasizes that "neoliberal capitalism is fair" (p. 339).

On *UB*, each CEO is depicted as the ultimate hero who reaffirms neoliberal ideology. Cloud (1996) described the American Dream as being constructed through "the invention of the classical self who is the hero of the story" (p. 119), which is presented as true. Many of the CEOs' narratives emphasize this rationality through the Horatio Alger story of personal struggle leading to triumph by overcoming disadvantaged childhoods and tragedies, including poverty and/or the loss of loved ones. However, some CEOs acknowledged their privileged upbringings of family wealth and opportunity. Each CEO is shown having a lavish lifestyle and a luxurious, mansion-like home. Some are even shown getting into their private jets. As Cloud (1996) noted, heroes within a narrative are in charge of their lives and discourses but are only authorized to speak when their stories encompass the ideals of the American Dream and fit into the larger framework of "liberal individualism in capitalist society" (p. 125). The CEOs' narratives are portrayed in ways that support the larger neoliberal capitalist structures and promote neoliberal ideals, such as individual success.

Some of *UB*'s CEOs' narratives reiterate a standard of structural coherence through the progression from impoverished upbringings to ultimate individual success and, in so doing, convey a standard of

fidelity through hard work that both employees and viewers should desire and want to emulate. For example, some CEOs discussed stories of childhood poverty, including inadequate living conditions and/or education, divorced parents, or having sick family members. Over long periods of time and through hard work and perseverance, these CEOs transformed their lives and material conditions. Through both standards, these CEOs' rags-to-riches stories reinforce a narrative rationality of the neoliberal philosophy of individual responsibility to overcome hardships and thus reaffirm the fairness of capitalism and competition.

Overall, the CEOs' lavish lifestyles are represented as a natural part of the job description of becoming a CEO—of getting to the top of the ladder. They are entitled to luxury because they worked hard. Their neoliberal narratives both demonstrate and perpetuate the myth of the American Dream. Specifically, this myth reinforces that, regardless of childhood hardships or other structural barriers, anyone can grow up to be extremely successful simply by using his or her intellect and finding a fulfilling career that provides prosperity for the individual and his or her family. Although there are 35 White male CEOs in the first two seasons, 2 White women, 2 Latinos, and 1 Asian man also appear as executives on the show. While these demographics affirm that race and gender are not necessarily impediments to success, they nonetheless illustrate that White males are most likely to succeed.

In addition, the narratives of two female CEOs present their struggles over the work–life balance between a professional career and motherhood and convey a more complicated notion of hard work that they attempt to uphold (Season 2, Episode 2; Season 2, Episode 21). Although the male CEOs express experiencing hardships when apart from their families, they view this separation as a necessary part of life for an executive to succeed. As one male CEO says, although the family suffers, "at the same time I like to say I want to be the very best executive that I can be"

(Season 2, Episode 6). Conversely, the female CEOs both express feeling guilt over not being home enough to raise their children and tend to criticize their performance as mothers, while downplaying their success as CEOs. For example, one woman CEO says it is difficult knowing that she has not been there for all of her children's experiences. Similarly, the other woman CEO worries about her dual role: "I think now I'm a great CEO. I'm a little bit on shaky ground knowing I'm a great mom" (Season 2, Episode 2). Even this CEO's husband, who is the joint CEO of their company, comments on her motherhood "dilemma": "Shelly always struggled with the work–life balance. Shelly never stopped working during her pregnancy…because she doesn't have an off switch" (Season 2, Episode 21). Both female CEOs are also shown discussing how they can improve the lives of other mothers, specifically the lives of their female employees and their families. Those two episodes juxtapose both CEOs' conflicts as working mothers with their "maternal" ability to help other struggling mother employees in their workplaces. Here an emphasis is placed on the female CEOs' ability to intervene in the private sphere of the family, while the focus for male CEOs remains on their efforts and rewards gained in the public sphere of the workplace.

More specifically, the two female CEOs' narratives mirror Blair-Loy's (2003) notion of "competing devotions." In particular, Blair-Loy argued that elite working mothers must be both professional *and* mother. They must approach their careers as a calling that deserves their undivided attention and also serves as a life fulfillment, while simultaneously, but unlike working fathers, elite working mothers must individually devote themselves to childcare. These "competing devotions" convey what Wilson (2009) described as the "ideology of intensive mothering" (p. 182). Here the notions of mother "blame" and "guilt" come into account. Feminist critics point out that through many institutional and societal practices, women, especially mothers, are blamed for the failure of the family; similarly,

guilt is a fundamental ideological construction of the "Cult of True Motherhood" (Michaux & Dunlap, 2009). This notion extends from the "Cult of True Womanhood," in which middle- and upper-class women of the 19th century were to uphold strict gender norms of femininity. One of the main values incorporated into these gender norms for affluent women of the time was domesticity. Definitions of proper domesticity of that period included a woman's exclusive role as mother and wife in the household. As Triece (1999) explained, "woman was synonymous with home, and her presence mother and wife was enough to overcome domestic hardships" (p. 47). Although gender norms in the household and workplace are much more diverse in contemporary society, Michaux and Dunlap (2009) pointed out legal scholar Joan Williams's observation that "an entrenched gender system of domesticity remains stubbornly rooted in American culture" (p. 137). This observation is evident through the two women CEOs' narratives on *UB*. On the show, the cult of true motherhood further adds to the dilemma of the "competing devotions" these upper-class working mothers face. Therefore these women's experiences of guilt as working mothers in executive positions further demonstrate the prominence of this type of ideological narrative perpetuated in popular culture (Goldner, 1985; Triece, 1999; Wilson, 2009).

In addition to experiencing "competing devotions," one woman CEO mentions her concern over a "gender divide" in her workplace due to the dominance of male CEOs in the industry. She generally expresses that this "gender divide" creates a challenging work environment, especially in regard to receiving criticism for how she manages her executive role. As Cloud (1996) found in her analysis regarding biographies, "the issues of race and gender briefly acknowledge the reality of oppression, only to elide and naturalize the structural origins of racism, sexism, and poverty" (p. 127). Hence, as Cloud (1998) explained, the ADM not only promotes neoliberal citizen ideals of personal responsibility and individualism within

a capitalist system; it also promotes the ideals of American values, more specifically "family values," including traditional gender roles and structures of "social responsibility for ending poverty and racism" (p. 387). Overall, these female CEOs' experiences affirm the conflict that women, in particular, face by not upholding the traditional American Dream nuclear roles of wife and mother.

Beyond the pressure experienced by female CEOs as both mothers and professionals, many of the executives' narratives also include the conflict they feel by not being able to provide philanthropy to benefit all employees or, even in one case, students. Through structural coherence, these narratives reinforce the theme of yearning to provide philanthropy while also acknowledging a standard of fidelity through hard work. For example, a CEO laments in referring to one of his employees, "Why does it have to be like this? And, you know, you want to help, but you can't always help everybody. . . . It's just, man, what an amazing person" (Season 1, Episode 3). Another CEO, a chancellor of a university, states,

> I wish I could give a scholarship to everybody. It's just not in the cards . . . so how do we manage this place differently to keep the cost as low as possible? Truth is, we have to find ways to innovate. . . . It's time to take a deep breath and then go back in the office to find a better way for our students, our faculty, our staff, for our society. (Season 2, Episode 22)

Here a standard of fidelity is also emphasized through the notion of hard work for all employees and students at the university. Instead of calling for systemic change or community collaboration, however, these CEOs' comments emphasize a rationality of individual responsibility in the workplace to lessen widespread economic problems. Cloud (1996) and other scholars have argued that these concepts of tokenism and the American Dream highlight success and failure as functions of individual responsibility, "regardless of

one's structural location in systems of power and privilege" (p. 133; see also Fisher, 1973; Hasinoff, 2008; Hoerl, 2008; Winn, 2003). Because the American Dream claims that there are no structural barriers to individual advancement, Cloud (1996) stated, society perpetuates the idea that working-class employees must blame themselves for failure to succeed.

This materialist success myth of individual hard work coupled with the moralistic myth of brotherhood via philanthropy is especially prominent in narratives featuring CEOs who were former U.S. immigrants. For example, one Latino CEO described how he overcame childhood struggles and how he wants to help others succeed as he has:

> It makes me appreciate more of what I have. You know my dream was to become a U.S. citizen, and I've achieved that now. And yet, I see many of these Hispanics around me that also want to do the same thing. But at the same time, it also makes me feel a bigger responsibility over so many people. This is a land of opportunity, and many times we forget about that. And I'm going to do whatever it takes to give those opportunities to others. (Season 2, Episode 6)

His narrative and the series as a whole draw upon what Hoerl (2008) observed as "the American Dream myth's valorization of individual determination" (p. 365). Hoerl explained that individualism is central to the notion of common sense in liberal ideology and is used to promote collectivity and community with the goal of achieving a "just democracy" (p. 365). Hence the rationality of the philanthropic narratives of CEOs eager to help immigrant employees obtain citizenship or further their education establishes a moral collectivity of doing what is considered to be appropriate as a financially prosperous American employee. Even though this philanthropy is limited in its aim to help others achieve the

American Dream, and the tokenism involved in helping only a few select employees, the CEO is still constructed as a capitalist hero.

Working-Class and Immigrant Employees as Self-Sacrificing Tokens

Throughout the narratives, neoliberal norms are reinforced when a few employees become tokened by the CEO. In these examples, structural coherence is evident when a few working-class employees express extreme surprise and sincere gratitude for receiving individual recognition for their hard work. Also, a standard of fidelity is demonstrated through their portrayals as praised rugged, self-sacrificing heroes, but not as capitalist heroes, like the CEOs. Through these acts of tokening, working-class employees' opinions and frustrations about the workplace become silenced by their CEOs. In narratives featuring immigrant working-class employees, financial and legal status hardships add to the mythical aspects of being tokened, as well as their pursuit of the American Dream.

While structural coherence is evident through each CEO portrayed as hero and leader in making the workplace more productive, the employees are presented as heroic because of their willingness to work jobs with the lowest pay and which often do not include benefits. Their jobs are usually physically rigorous and sometimes involve work in unsanitary and/or unsafe environments. This type of rugged, heroic narrative is expressed at the beginning of each episode when the announcer states, "He'll discover the unsung heroes that make his company run." The narrative of employee as hero appears in each episode through statements made by both the CEO and the employees. For example, one CEO posing as a working-class employee stated, "I hadn't kind of worked this kind of work since I was 21.... It's our call center agents, and our technicians, and our warehouse people—they're the heroes" (Season 2, Episode 3). This CEO also characterizes the employees as heroes who are working on the dangerous "front lines." He states,

"I have a much better appreciation for what the front line has to do" (Season 2, Episode 3). Similarly, in other episodes, a worker describes his job as working "in the trenches," and another CEO describes the employees as working on the front lines and explains that the company cannot succeed or "win the battle without great soldiers" (Season 1, Episode 1; Season 1, Episode 3). This idea of a "frontline" work ethic signifies that workers, like soldiers on the front line in a battle, are taking the most risks—are most vulnerable to physical injury or even death—while their boss (a better paid, higher rank leader) is viewing the battle from afar. Working-class employees are represented as the "soldiers," at the bottom of the capitalist system, who are characterized by their bosses as heroic for enduring the most strenuous or dangerous working conditions for the least amount of pay in the hope of one day achieving the American Dream.

Additionally, through a standard of fidelity these narratives of self-sacrificing, heroic workers function to stabilize the American Dream by presenting a code of neoliberal work ethics and values that all employees should abide by, regardless of rank and pay. Instead of discussing equality and fair wages in the workplace, both CEOs and employees emphasize the vital importance of hard work. For example, one CEO remarks, "They get up every day and work as hard as they know how because that's what they're supposed to do because it's their job. That's just what you do" (Season 1, Episode 8). In another episode, a woman employee states, "I think the more you know, the better. The pay comes later, you know?" (Season 1, Episode 7). A standard of fidelity is especially evident in the foregoing narratives as working-class employees value their hard work for the possibility of future rewards.

Although the employees express their opinions, frustrations, and sometimes anger about their workplace experiences and the corporate hierarchy, by the end of each episode, structural coherence is evident through the norm of the tokened employees

becoming silenced by the incentives they receive from the CEO. For example, at the end of one episode, an employee, Mike, asks the undercover CEO, "Who's looking out for us?" (Season 2, Episode 15). Mike continues to explain that employee morale is terrible and believes the company is going to become completely outsourced. After the CEO reveals his real identity and is about to offer him incentives, Mike states, "It's bad enough that management wants me to retire, and I don't want to retire," and then he continues to express concerns on behalf of the other employees (Season 2, Episode 15). Interrupting Mike, the CEO states that the company is like a family, with all employees working together on the same team. Then, he tells Mike he is giving him a $5,000 donation to a charity of his choice and an all-expenses-paid family getaway, and he assures Mike that the corporation will hold employee town meetings for workers to voice their concerns. Changing his tone, Mike then proclaims, "I'll never forget this as long as I live. . . . This is the last thing in the world I was expecting, and this is the biggest step in communicating with us workers that he could possibly do. That's going to pick the morale up right there" (Season 2, Episode 15). Interrupting Mike again, the CEO emphasizes, "You got a few more years to give us" (Season 2, Episode 15). Overall, Mike's attitude changes once he hears about these personal and financial incentives and the town hall meetings for employees' voices to be heard. Throughout the episode, Mike challenges the hegemonic systems of power when unknowingly speaking to his undercover boss and continues to do so until the CEO offers him incentives that could also be considered bribes. Thus, by the end of the episode, Mike's opinions and frustrations become suppressed by the CEO's incentives; his political resistance is silenced, and most importantly, he abides by a neoliberal work ethic when returning to work in a positive and productive manner.

While employees like Mike are portrayed as unhappy and unfulfilled in their low-ranked, low-paid jobs, the narratives fixate

on the CEO's ability to honor and thus token select employees for their demonstrated hard work and devotion as submissive workers. By each CEO placing the focus on and typically rewarding only a few employees, these workers are portrayed as appreciated by their corporate boss and satisfied with the capitalist system in which they labor. Their individual achievements are praised and cast in a heroic light by each CEO, and the workers appear to have their faith renewed, making them more committed to the company they serve. Thus these narratives of tokening convey a standard of fidelity that emphasizes how all other employees should also value and emulate strength and unconditional hard work no matter the circumstance.

Impoverished lifestyles and an unobtainable American Dream are more likely to be the realities for struggling working-class immigrant employees. Previous scholarship on media representations of U.S. immigrants, especially Latinos, has also pointed to neoliberal narratives that focus on individual responsibility involving being ambitious, demonstrating hard work, and believing in the American Dream (Sowards & Pineda, 2013). As Molina-Guzman (2010) summarized, the trope of the American Dream is "a familiar story grounded in the ideological belief that free choice, individualism, equality, and hard work under limited government intervention will allow all to succeed according to their abilities" (p. 86). Sowards and Pineda (2013) pointed out that on first glance, positive constructions of immigrants working for success and finding rewarding employment support the capitalist economy and society. However, this neoliberal myth that hard work leads to achievement and prosperity does not account for the reality that immigrant employees often face, especially on the path to obtaining work visas, residency, and/or legal citizenship. These few immigrant narratives signify the extreme hardships and poverty these employees face, more so because they are not citizens, often lack education, and struggle with learning English—and most are cut off from the support of family and friends abroad, whom they left in the hope of providing

a better life for them. Furthermore, these immigrant employees are paid very low wages and do not receive any government assistance, causing them significant anxiety concerning their employment and viable options for citizenship in the United States. For these immigrant employees, the neoliberal notion of hard work leading to success keeps the ADM alive but is, in essence, a lie.

A few immigrant narratives in *UB* further highlight this myth through the monetary generosity of the CEO to help the employee achieve his or her goal of citizenship. These immigrant narratives convey structural coherence through the prevalent theme of philanthropy given by CEOs to tokened employees. In one episode, an immigrant employee from Kazakhstan states his belief that he is living the American Dream. After the CEO reveals himself and rewards the employee, the worker exclaims,

> Big Boss comes to the plain worker. I could not believe that was happen. Only in movie, only in the book. Only in America might happen. . . . I'm living the American Dream now. America is the best country in the world. You guys just do not really know how blessed you are . . . because you take it for granted. . . . That's the story about America. That's not story about me. I'm blessed. I'm really blessed. (Season 1, Episode 3)

The CEO then replies, "I've heard that many times" (Season 1, Episode 3). In another example, a male immigrant employee is given $15,000 by the CEO of the company, who is also a former Latino immigrant. In response, the employee states,

> I have come from a Mexican family, and our goal is to have a better life. In the United States, you can have whatever you want. You just have to work hard and be at 100% at whatever you're given. . . . I had a good experience. I'm so happy . . . it's just shock. (Season 2, Episode 6)

Here the employee attributes his success to his individual hard work, which led to his boss recognizing his contributions and giving him money so that he is able to file for citizenship. However, beyond this television series, it is unlikely that employees will experience becoming tokened or receive lucrative incentives to help with their personal or financial hardships. Instead, most immigrants would likely continue to struggle in legal, economic, and social matters as noncitizen workers in the United States. Furthermore, the juxtaposing of a few former immigrant CEOs with their immigrant employees perpetuates the myth of a seamless path and transition to citizenship. While these depictions align with the legal systematic approach to citizenship, these examples of the CEOs' philanthropy to only a few tokened immigrant employees present the attainment of citizenship in rather arbitrary ways.

Overall, working-class employees are portrayed in *UB* as self-sacrificing heroes—often working rigorous hours in sometimes unsafe or unsanitary working conditions for inadequate pay. Immigrant workers in particular often endure financial, legal, and cultural struggles as they try to assimilate in the United States as noncitizen workers trying to provide for their families, many of them still abroad. In all of these narratives, *UB* relies on the neoliberal heroic myth of workers as tough, rugged individuals, both mentally and physically. Dorsey and Harlow (2003) identified this notion as the *frontier myth*, which characterizes a few tokened immigrants as the non-native-born heroes—what they called "the American paragon" (p. 64). They further asserted that martial ability—powerful strength, both physical and mental—may be the most important trait in immigrant hero narratives. The perpetual self-sacrificing story of individual martial ability supports a narrative rationality of the program by presenting the American Dream as achievable for all employees regardless of any structural barriers, provided they have persistence and stamina. This narrative does not take into account class, racial, institutional, or any other structural barriers

that prohibit persons, especially immigrant workers, from achieving the American Dream.

DREAMING IN FUTURE TENSE

Each season of *UB* concludes by restating and reemphasizing many of the acts of philanthropy or policy changes to improve workplace conditions that are the result of the boss's intervention. While these improvements are presented as motivating and beneficial for all employees—both personally and professionally—they account for only a fraction of the improvements needed to provide workers with a safe working environment and adequate income. The neoliberal narratives of employees on *UB*—both CEOs and working-class employees—perpetuate a capitalist, "classless" ideology that is presented in both rational and universal ways. Even when working-class employees are skeptical that their workplace will ever be financially beneficial to them, they still advocate for the need to work hard for inadequate pay in the hope of a brighter future.

In perpetuating the American Dream, *UB* reaffirms and legitimizes the existing structures of hegemonic capitalism. To maintain these structures in the workplace, *UB*'s narratives reaffirm the need for employees to make sacrifices in the hope of achieving the American Dream. In addition, the CEOs' acts of philanthropy are characterized as heroic because they provide additional, albeit limited, resources to somewhat alleviate the impoverished conditions experienced by tokened employees.

Throughout this narrative analysis, I have argued that the ADM represents the moral code for labor. In particular, *UB* showcases a moral code requiring individual responsibility as the key to success. Campbell (1949/1973) has observed that myths, in this case, narratives of the American Dream, require that heroes be morally strong to "meet their imagined destiny" (p. 11). On *UB*, employees continue to make sacrifices and work, often multiple, low-paying

positions, in the hope of providing their children and grandchildren with financial security in the future, even if that prosperity is not available in their own lifetimes. Perseverance toward an imagined destiny is especially evident in the heroic narratives of immigrant workers who, as struggling noncitizen employees in the United States, demonstrate a commitment to strong ethics for the sake of their families' futures. Neoliberal notions of individualism and hard work, coupled with a moral code, keep the dream alive for these struggling immigrant workers and their families.

The narratives reaffirm the ideological underpinnings of capitalist norms and values in American workplaces. Although the show's theme rests on the CEO's willingness to listen to employees' struggles and opinions, the executive's main objective is to further stabilize a capitalist system in the workplace. To help achieve this goal, the series highlights how each CEO utilizes a neoliberal discourse centered on achieving the American Dream, with working-class employees also reaffirming this goal. By providing viewers with an orchestrated look into corporate workplaces in a variety of settings in America, *UB* highlights how employees of all ranks utilize a neoliberal discourse that results in upholding a capitalist system of hierarchal work structures.

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War and Conflict Journalism in an Era of Polarization and Mistrust: An Analysis of Perceptions and Content

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War and conflict reporting has an important function in society and is critical in informing the public about events of national and international significance. However, this type of reporting has long been criticized for being alternatively too pro-war or pro-government and also for being too antiwar or unpatriotic. In light of such critiques, this study considers both the state of contemporary war, conflict, and military reporting and how such news coverage is regarded by military service members and veterans, whose firsthand experience gives them a unique perspective. Results of a content analysis and survey show that, while perspectives are not monolithic, a general mistrust of U.S. news media exists, that opinions differ based on news consumption habits, and that content varies significantly between different news organizations.

KEYWORDS: Journalism, reporting, news, military, war, conflict

War reporting is nothing new; if defined broadly, it dates back at least 2,500 years to Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, if not to Paleolithic cave paintings (Risso, 2017). Admittedly, such ancient or even prehistoric accounts of war bear little resemblance to contemporary war reporting and typically functioned as one-sided historical documentation that was compiled long after events had transpired. Yet, as written language developed and print media improved with new technologies that facilitated faster production and distribution, the idea of contemporary war journalism evolved.

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By the mid-1800s, the stage was set for the emergence of the first war journalism of the modern era.

Right from the start, a variety of challenges, contradictory goals, and competing audiences made war reporting difficult. On one hand, war reporting could serve readers by presenting eyewitness accounts of battlefield successes, setbacks, defeats, and casualties with minimal delay. In this regard, war journalism could help both to satisfy the public's "right to know what is being done in their name" (Tumber, 2006, p. 446) and to "guarantee transparency and accountability of the military and political leaders" (Risso, 2017, p. 62).

Yet, given the effect that direct, current, and minimally filtered accounts could have on public opinion, it was not long before national governments and military hierarchies began to see the war correspondent as both valuable and troublesome and the enterprise of war reporting as permissible only if controlled. Thus, early in the history of war reporting, countries began placing restrictions on the operation of war journalists (Knightley, 2003; Risso, 2017).

Such challenges continue today; efforts by governments and military leaders to shape the nature and tone of war reporting persist (Norton-Taylor, 2017), and journalists struggle between remaining independent and becoming unwitting partners in the creation of state propaganda (Cockburn, 2013). Such issues have been further exacerbated by an unrelenting news cycle, tight competition among news media organizations, social media platforms that value immediacy above all else, and a changing media landscape in which the model of objective journalism is increasingly challenged.

Yet, before such issues can be considered, it is first useful to consider the development of modern war reporting through the 19th, 20th, and early 21st centuries. Because this study focuses on journalism in the United States, this history similarly emphasizes developments that occurred in American wars and conflicts.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WAR REPORTING IN THE UNITED STATES

While published accounts of battles from earlier wars were plentiful, the development of modern war reporting in America started with the U.S. Civil War (1861–1865). As many as 300 reporters covered Union armies, and the uncontrolled operation of so many correspondents soon led to a variety of restrictions being imposed. Before long, the U.S. government implemented a system of military censorship in which all dispatches required prior authorization, and newspapers were closed and prosecuted for printing articles critical of the Union army, leadership, or cause (Roth, 2010).

By the Spanish–American War (1889), war reporting had become a widely recognized specialization in the field, though the idea of journalistic independence or autonomy was lacking. Newspapers—especially the hawkish New York *Journal*—played a pivotal role in starting the war and swaying public opinion in favor of the war effort, and many journalists saw themselves as adjuncts to, if not part of, the military units about which they wrote. Some journalists went so far as to participate in combat alongside American troops, and most coverage took the form of pro-war boosterism (Brown, 1967).

When the First World War (1914–1918) began, most European powers at first attempted to prevent press coverage. Yet, as the war dragged on, it became impossible to continue preventing all news coverage, and formalized systems for reporter sanctioning were established (Popple, 2012). When the United States entered the war in 1917, the American Expeditionary Force established a system similar to that which had been developed in Allied nations; accredited journalists were assigned to bases in Paris and Neufchateau, held officer rank, wore military uniforms, and were assigned to specific divisions. Accordingly, war reporting in the World War I era was closely controlled and, as a result, highly partisan and patriotic.

During World War II (1939–1945), new technologies offered a greater level of immediacy to the reporting, and war coverage in

the form of written reports, photographs, and radio broadcasts was abundant. Nevertheless, the war was heavily censored. In the United States, the Office of War Information and each branch of the armed forces established its own system for managing reporters oversees and in combat regions. Furthermore, starting in 1942, the aptly named Office of Censorship began overseeing domestic war media, with the goal of ensuring that reporting was favorable to the Allied forces (see Roth, 2010).

While some World War II–era journalists returned to the combat zone to cover the Korean War (1950–1953), this war received much less attention by the press corps (Fialka, 1991). Furthermore, critical voices were stifled by a formal policy of self-censorship, in which—instead of prior restraint by military officials—journalists were subject to prosecution if they published anything that was later deemed to have given "aid and comfort" to the enemy (Roth, 2010, p. 201).

Coverage of the Vietnam War (1955–1975) was significantly different, due to both changing technologies and a more relaxed government relationship with the press. Military accreditation was relatively easy to obtain, and journalists were given unprecedented access; the result was high-quality reports that provided "a reasonably accurate picture of what was happening" (Hammond, 1998, p. 44). Yet, many in the military were critical of the reporting—some of which exposed the dark side of war and military operations—and many officials came to view news media as being responsible for losing the war for the United States (Fialka, 1991; U.S. Assistant, 1969). In the years that followed, the "hangover from Vietnam" led to a rollback of many Vietnam-era press freedoms (Braestrup, 1991, p. xi), and by the next major U.S. war, "the Pentagon bluntly decreed the media would work with the military, or not work at all" (Maniaty, 2008, p. 92).

This new stance became apparent with the First Gulf War (1990–1991). More than 1,400 journalists covered this brief war,

making its 100 hours of combat operations the most extensively covered war on record (Fialka, 1991). Yet, despite the quantity of coverage, the quality was frequently lacking, and reporters were limited by wide-ranging military restrictions. Censorship of stories was extensive; reports considered unflattering were prevented from being released, and journalists perceived to be filing critical reports faced retaliation in the form of revoked press credentials.

After receiving much scrutiny for such policies, a new system that involved embedding journalists was developed with the onset of the country's next major military operations in Afghanistan (2001 to present) and Iraq (2003–2011). While the program offered otherwise impossible levels of access, it also led to challenges (Carpenter, 2007; Villarreal, 2005). The very close relationship that developed between reporters and troops sometimes led the news reports to be sympathetic, told "from the soldier's point of the view" (Roth, 2010, p. 112), and even self-censored by journalists who felt uncomfortable writing unflattering reports about the people with whom they were living and on whom they were depending for safety (Jensen, 2003; Kulish, 2003).

Clearly the history of war reporting has been filled with challenges and obstacles associated with independent, accurate, and factual reporting (Pingley, 1993). Today, the difficulty of war reporting is further compounded by widespread criticism from all political perspectives regarding journalistic objectivity.

FREQUENTLY MADE CRITIQUES OF WAR, CONFLICT, AND MILITARY REPORTING

The relationship between patriotism, accuracy, and access has always made war reporting difficult, and today this complex dynamic is exacerbated by a changing media landscape in which the model of objective journalism is increasingly challenged. With objectivism in the traditional sense called into question, the result

is a confusing field of journalism in which varying levels of quality and standards exist, and many operate without a coherent sense of professional ethics. Not surprisingly, many in the public have come to increasingly distrust media and be skeptical of what they see in the news (Rusciano, 2010; Schudson, 1978). In the context of war journalism, this criticism comes from a variety of perspectives, and journalists are often accused of being both too supportive and too critical of war efforts or for more broadly misrepresenting issues facing military service members and veterans.

On one hand, while some research suggests that U.S. media are completely neutral (Aday et al., 2005), many other studies have shown that news media content frequently takes a pro-war tone and reinforces or supports government military operations (Thussu & Freedman, 2003; Tumber & Palmer, 2004). A variety of reasons for this have been identified. First, and perhaps most notably, much research has pointed to the way in which governments make efforts to shape the way that wars are depicted in news media reports (Campbell, 2003; Zelizer, 2004). Research has also suggested that these efforts are often quite successful (McGoldrick, 2006). For instance, studies have found that embedded journalists report more positively than reporters not embedded with units (Haigh et al., 2006; Pfau, Haigh et al., 2005; Pfau, Wittenberg et al., 2005); that bad news is seldom reported; and that when rare and "episodic" instances of bad news are reported, it is often within a pro-government frame (Entman, 2013).

Yet, while media scholars are often critical of news media organizations for being in too cozy a relationship with the military, many in the general public have a very different perspective. By and large, the American public generally expresses support for the First Amendment rights to a free press and the idea of nonpartisan reporting. However, when reporting involves national security or the military, many support situational limits on free reporting (Andsager et al., 2004) and perceive any critical reports to be

unpatriotic and inappropriate (Goddard et al., 2008). The situation is exacerbated by public media preferences that are increasingly shaped by prevalent and popular pseudo-news or tabloid news organizations that focus on a partisan agenda instead of traditional standards of objectivity (Rusciano, 2010).

Even more broadly, much criticism has been levied on news media outlets—by academics, journalists, and veterans alike (Kleykamp & Hipes, 2015; Ward, 2008)—for coverage involving the individual experiences of military service members during and after their time in uniform. While research has suggested that such coverage is generally nonpartisan and positive (Ward, 2008), even when published within the context of widely unpopular wars (Hallin, 1986; Patterson, 1982), such coverage is often criticized for creating or perpetuating stereotypes that are not representative of individual experiences.

For instance, at times, military service members are presented as stoic, heroic, patriotic, dedicated, and victorious (Webber & Long, 2014) or even hypermasculinized as "masculinist protectors" (Young, 2003, p. 1; see also Pitchford-Hyde, 2017). Alternately, supportive media coverage sometimes focuses on presenting members of the military and veterans as being damaged, victimized, suffering physically or psychologically, or worthy of help (Kleykamp & Hipes, 2015; McClancy, 2013; Scott, 1993). In some respects, such coverage can be well intentioned or helpful and can lead to the development of useful government and civic programs (Feinstein, 2015). Yet, just because coverage is positive or well meaning does not necessarily mean it is accurate, representative, or fair; indeed, sometimes positive coverage means that legitimate individual experiences and nuanced perspectives are glossed over or ignored in favor of a simpler narrative that "homogenizes the military experience" (Kleykamp & Hipes, 2015, p. 352). For instance, research has shown that instead of feeling victimized, many war veterans feel that they have generally benefited from their military experiences (Maguen

et al., 2006; Sledge et al., 1980; Tedeschi & McNally, 2011) and do not fit into commonly presented service member frames. Or, when the veterans-as-victims narrative is emphasized in media coverage, this can also unintentionally create a negative stigma that hurts future employment or social opportunities for service members and veterans (Kleykamp & Hipes, 2015).

Clearly the nature of war, conflict, and military-related reporting is fraught with challenges and is frequently the topic of criticism. The relevance of such critiques is heightened by a consideration of the effect that such coverage can have on the public.

FRAMING AND THE EFFECT OF MEDIA COVERAGE

While a variety of definitions for, and applications of, framing have been developed since the concept was first presented by Goffman (1974), a helpful way to understand the concept is to think of frames as "organizing principles that . . . work symbolically to meaningfully structure the world" (Reese, 2001, p. 11) by promoting a definition to a problem, a causal interpretation, a moral evaluation, or a recommendation (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2008; see also Cacciatore, Scheufele, & Iyengar, 2016; Druckman, 2001).

When applied to news coverage, frames might be seen as the way in which news content is organized, presented, or produced (Cacciatore et al., 2016; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997). Frames can be episodic or thematic. Episodic frames involve the depiction of particular events or occurrences that highlight or exemplify broader issues and often include engaging human interest or narrative elements. Thematic frames involve focusing less on the depiction of particular events and more on explaining the larger historical, geographic, or other context in which those events are situated (Iyengar, 1996; Springer & Harwood, 2015).

Significant research has investigated frames and widely found that frames can affect public opinion (Iyengar, 1991; Zaller, 1992) and

individual judgment and choice (Iyengar, 1996) by impacting both cognitive and affective processing (Gross, 2008). Over time, and after repeated exposure, such media frames become so "embedded in . . . everyday culture" (Lewis & Reese, 2009, p. 87) that they can be internalized and lead to the development of individual-level frames that affect media selection decisions (Carpenter, 2007; Domke et al., 1998; Edy & Meirick, 2007; Price et al., 1997; Shen, 2004); the way that nonmediated life experiences are perceived (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005; Druckman, 2004; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Scheufele, 1999); and the way individuals structure reality, organize experiences (Goffman, 1974), think about, interpret (Scheufele, 2000), define, evaluate (Entman, 1993), or generally make sense of events (Edy & Meirick, 2007).

The impact of media frames on individual frames is especially pronounced regarding war reporting, given the high stakes involved with military conflict and the fact that most in society have little or no firsthand military knowledge or experience (Kolmer & Semetko, 2009; see also Bell, 2003; Carruthers, 2000; Gartner & Segura, 1998; Graber, 2001; Hess & Kalb, 2003; MacArthur, 2004; Sadkovich, 1998; Seib, 2004; Soderlund, 2003; Thompson, 2003; Thussu & Freedman, 2003; Tumber & Palmer, 2004; Wolfsfeld et al., 2002). Indeed, most individuals in American society are civilians with little or no firsthand knowledge of military strategy or a frontline environment. Even veterans and active-duty members of the military, who are more likely to have such direct experience, are not all deployed within combat zones, and those who are would typically have only limited direct knowledge about an overall conflict on a macrolevel. As such, most people in society rely on news media to construct a narrative of contemporary wars and develop an understanding of what wars and conflicts involve.

Not surprisingly, then, much research has considered frames in war reports. In recent years, such research has looked into topics such as framing and photography during the Iraq War

(Fahmy & Kim, 2008), embedded journalists in the Iraq War (Johnson & Fahmy, 2009; Pfau et al., 2005a; Pfau et al., 2005b), elite and nonelite newspaper coverage of the Iraq War (Carpenter, 2007), bloggers (Wall, 2006), the war on terror (Lewis & Reese, 2009), the war in Afghanistan (Edy & Meirick, 2007), weapons of mass destruction (Entman, 2003), differences between news coverage in Europe and the United States (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005), differences between coverage of the Iraq War globally (Kolmer & Semetko, 2009), and regional war coverage internationally (Lee & Maslog, 2005).

The process by which such frames come to have an immediate personal impact is further supported by cultivation theory, which similarly suggests that—in addition to various individual and internal variables—media can play an important role in shaping personal opinion about wars and international conflicts. As originally suggested by Gerbner (1969), as individuals are exposed to media content, they come to adopt views that reflect the cultural mainstream presented in media. This process has been found to occur across media, topic, and geographic location and among people with different prior beliefs, viewpoints, and social status (Eschholz et al., 2003; Intravia et al., 2017; Lim & Baba, 2016; Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004) and has also been shown to be specifically related to wars and conflicts (Ridout et al., 2008) and terrorism (Huddy et al., 2003; Kushner, 2005; Nellis & Savage, 2012; Nisbet & Shanahan, 2004; Rubin et al., 2003; Slone, 2000).

Overall, research has consistently confirmed that exposure to media generally makes one "more likely to accept the representation of reality as presented" (Dahlstrom & Scheufele, 2010, p. 54) and "hold specific and distinct conceptions of reality, conceptions that are congruent with the most consistent and pervasive images and values of the medium" (Shanahan & Morgan, 1999, p. 3; see also Ridout et al., 2008). When media coverage is lacking altogether, it can create the impression that wars or conflicts are unimportant,

minor, inconsequential, or, perhaps, even unreal (Besley & Shanahan, 2004; Cox & Pezzullo, 2015; Shanahan, 1993). Or, when any one perspective of a war or conflict is emphasized or presented as being the just, right, or good side, it can cause individuals to develop a perspective that lacks nuance or detail (Guiboa, 2003).

Accordingly, existing research has clearly shown that news reports—including reports about wars and conflicts—do not exist in isolation but instead have a real and meaningful impact on individuals and, by extension, society in general. Accordingly, given that media do make a difference and do have an effect, the continued exploration of how media are perceived is important, especially among the population most immediately affected by such coverage, namely, the individuals who serve in the military. Such issues are especially important today, given that the United States has been engaged in continuous military operations for nearly two decades and given the impact that this warfare—and its coverage in the news—has on society, members of the military, and the relationship between the civilian and military populations.

FOCUS OF RESEARCH

Clearly much criticism has been levied on journalists regarding the coverage of war by those in society who have access to a public platform. Yet, less is known regarding how current and former military service members view the quality and scope of war reporting. Understanding more about these important perspectives can help lead to improvements in both journalistic practice and education. This study aims to investigate this topic and is framed around several research questions:

RQ1: How do current and former military service members perceive the thematic content, accuracy, balance, and bias of news reports about wars, conflicts, and military-related topics?

RQ2: How do current and former military service members perceive the quality of different news organizations?

RQ3: To what extent are perceptions of war, conflict, and military-related journalism associated with the news source preferences of current and former military service members?

RQ4: What types of content and bias are present in war, conflict, and military-related reporting?

RQ5: What similarities and differences exist between real and perceived news content regarding war, conflict, and military-related topics?

METHOD

This study involved a survey of current and former members of the U.S. military and a content analysis, and it received institutional review board approval.

Survey

The use of surveys has a long history in social science and media research, and surveys have also been used to study war journalism specifically (Johnson & Fahmy, 2009). While the method is well established, this particular design is unique because most existing survey-based studies of this topic focus on the perspective of journalists, not service members, toward the enterprise of war reporting (Johnson & Fahmy, 2009; Shin et al., 2005; Wyatt et al., 1994; Wyatt et al., 1996).

Sample. To construct a sample of current and former military service members, email invitations to participate were sent to the directors of student veterans groups located at colleges, universities, and technical schools across the United States. A list of groups and corresponding email addresses were sampled from the publicly available directory of Student Veterans of America. A total of 2,672 invitations to participate were sent out, and completed responses were received from 326 participants, marking a 12.2% response rate.

Measure. A 31-item Web-based questionnaire was used to measure perceptions regarding contemporary war, conflict, and military-related reporting. The Web-based questionnaire allowed participants from a national sample to participate conveniently and anonymously. Demographic items were included, and various types of news media quality were rated using either 7- or 15-point Likert-type scales. Individual media organizations were rated for quality on a 15-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*lowest*) to 15 (*highest*). Other items were rated on more traditional 7-point Likert-type scales. For example, participants were asked to respond on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*) to the question, "To what extent do you agree that war reporting is accurate?" Or, participants were asked to respond on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*very biased*) to 7 (*very unbiased*) to the question, "How biased or unbiased are news reports about wars and conflicts?"

The questionnaire also addressed the perceived thematic framing of news content (Fahmy & Kim, 2008), and items asked about the perceived existence of several frames previously identified and studied in existing research (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005; see also Carpenter, 2007; Dimitrova et al., 2005; Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2008; Hossain, 2015). The specific frames included (a) military conflict, (b) human interest, (c) the violence of war, (d) antiwar messages, (e) self-referential news media, (f) responsibility, (g) diagnostic analysis, (h) prognostic analysis, and (i) pro-war messages. For example, to address the violence of war frame, participants were asked to respond on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (*very infrequently*) to 7 (*very frequently*) to the question, "To what extent do you perceive that news reports about wars and conflicts address war casualties and destruction?"

A trial survey ($N = 57$) was conducted late in 2017 for the purpose of identifying problematic or confusing questions and establishing the reliability of the measure. The Cronbach's alpha test indicated

that the measure had good internal consistency overall ($\alpha > .80$), with an overall alpha coefficient of .947 (George & Mallery, 2003).

The survey was adjusted in the final version, and a Cronbach's alpha test was again conducted. Again, results showed a good internal consistency overall, with an alpha coefficient of .940. Items related to accuracy and quality had an alpha coefficient of .953, items related to themes in coverage had an alpha coefficient of .802, and items related to balance and bias had an alpha coefficient of .823.

Content Analysis

Sample. Content analyzed in this study was sampled from a variety of newspapers, network television news programs, cable news programs, and radio networks that were identified as being popular news sources in the survey. The decision to analyze content from the sources identified in the survey as being most popular among military service members and veterans was made to facilitate comparisons between the data sets. This decision was further supported because these same sources also have large readerships or audiences (Table 1). Specifically, content was sampled from ABC's *World News Tonight*, *CBS Evening News*, *NBC Nightly News*, CNN, Fox News, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the Associated Press (AP), the BBC, and NPR. MSNBC, though popular among study participants, was not included in the sample because transcripts were inconsistently available.

Content from these sources was sampled from one constructed month in 2018. In all, 954 articles, radio reports or segments, or television show transcripts related to wars, conflicts, or the military were included in the sample (Table 2). Of these, 8.6% ($n = 82$) were from network TV news, 22.6% ($n = 216$) were from cable TV news, 51.5% ($n = 491$) were from newspapers and the AP, and 17.3% ($n = 165$) were from radio or multiplatform reports (NPR and the BBC).

Table 1. *Audience and Readership of News Sources*

News source	Audience/readership
ABC's *World News Tonight* (viewers)	8,560,000
CBS *Evening News* (viewers)	7,900,000
NBC *Nightly News* (viewers)	5,820,000
Fox News (prime-time viewers)	2,400,000
CNN (prime-time viewers)	1,000,000
New York Times (digital subscribers)	2,700,000
Washington Post (digital subscribers)	1,700,000
AP (news app users)	1,470,000
BBC (weekly audience in United States)	38,000,000
NPR (weekly audience)	37,000,000

Note. Data retrieved from Associated Press (2018), BBC (2019), Benton (2019), Johnson (2019a, 2019b), NPR (2018).

Table 2. *Military-Themed Content Included in Sample*

	n	%
CNN Newsroom	62	6.5
Fox News	154	16.1
NBC *Nightly News*	24	2.5
ABC's *World News Tonight*	26	2.7
CBS *Evening News*	32	3.4
New York Times	284	29.8
Washington Post	162	17.0
AP	45	4.7
BBC	112	11.7
NPR	53	5.6
Total	954	100.0

Measure. The coding process involved rating the extent to which a variety of episodic and thematic themes, also addressed by the questionnaire, were present in each article (Entman, 1993; Fahmy & Kim, 2008; Wall, 2006). Because articles could contain more than one theme, the frames were not coded as mutually exclusive. Articles were also coded for the general topic, the country or countries addressed, and the types of sources that were cited. Coding was conducted by two individuals, including the lead researcher and an assistant who was trained by the lead researcher. To facilitate data analysis, variables were dummy coded. The full article or report was the unit of analysis.

To ensure consistency, operational definitions of the variables were established. For instance, articles coded as "human interest" focused on individual people or topics with an emotional appeal, while articles coded as "violence of war" focused on destruction, death, or injury associated with military operations. Similarly, sources identified as "official" held positions of authority or were official spokespeople, while sources coded as "unofficial" did not hold formal positions in which they were authorized to make official statements.

Articles coded as "antiwar" included more statements expressing opposition to a war than statements expressing support for a war, articles coded as "neutral" included a balance of statements expressing opposition to and support for a war, and articles coded as "pro-war" included more statements expressing support for a war than opposition to a war.

Articles coded as "very biased" included articles or reports in which the reporter, host, or anchor expressed personal opinion in favor of only one side of a multisided issue or in which only one side of a multisided issue was supported by quoted or paraphrased sources. Articles coded as "very unbiased" included articles or reports in which the reporter, host, or anchor never expressed personal opinion and in which equal time or space was devoted to

quoted or paraphrased sources who advocated for different sides of multisided issues.

To ensure intercoder reliability, and that the coding process was consistent with published guidelines and standards, both coders analyzed 96 overlapping articles and reports, constituting 10.1% of the overall sample. Analysis indicated an acceptable 92.6% agreement (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2010; Riffe, Lacy, & Fico, 1998), and a Cohen's Kappa test further showed substantial intercoder agreement overall, K = .89, $p < .001$, and also for individual categories of items. Specifically, Cohen's Kappa tests were conducted for categories including publication or show, K = 1.00; year, K = 1.00; type of article, K = .96; topic or theme, K = .95; source quoted or cited, K = .96; bias level, K = .68; pro- or antiwar content, K = .70; national focus, K = .96; countries addressed, K = 1.0; frames involving U.S., foreign/allied, and foreign/hostile military members, K = .71; extent of political focus, K = .82; and consequences of military action, K = .95. Such Kappa values were considered appropriate, based on Cohen's score interpretation guidelines (Cohen, 1960; McHugh, 2012). Duplicate data were not included in the full study analysis.

RESULTS

Perceptions Regarding War, Conflict, and Military Reporting

Data were analyzed to determine the most commonly perceived thematic trends as well as the extent to which content was seen as accurate, balanced, and biased.

Perceived thematic trends. Regarding thematic coverage of wars and conflicts, results revealed subtle yet significant differences in the frequency to which certain themes were perceived as existing. Summary independent samples *t*-tests showed that participants perceived that the themes of war violence ($M = 5.58$, $SD = 2.23$), $p < .001$, and antiwar messages ($M = 5.51$, $SD = 1.99$), $p < .001$,

were present significantly more frequently than the average (M = 4.72, SD = 2.06), while military conflict (M = 4.10, SD = 1.66), $p <$ .001, pro-war messages (M = 4.05, SD = 2.08), p = .004, diagnostic analysis (M = 4.26, SD = 1.82), $p <$ .001, and prognostic analysis (M = 4.42, SD = 2.25), p = .032, were addressed significantly less frequently than the average. These results suggest that participants perceived that news media coverage focuses heavily on antiwar messages and destruction caused by war, while focusing less on the specifics of military operations, the individuals involved in wars, or detailed analysis.

Regarding thematic coverage of the U.S. military and military service members, results of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) showed that some portrayals of service members were perceived as being significantly more common than others at the $p <$ .05 level, $F(10, 3453) = 18.427$, $p <$ .001. Specifically, a Tukey honestly significant difference test showed that participants perceived that news media portray U.S. service members as flawed (M = 4.72, SD = 1.53) most often, and significantly more than heroic, strong, worthy of assistance, needy, good, bad, evil, glorified, or vilified (Table 3).

Similarly, ANOVA identified other differences in perceived thematic portrayals of the U.S. government and military at the $p <$ .05 level, $F(6, 2193) = 16.790$, $p <$ .001, and showed that participants perceived that the U.S. government and military were perceived as both bad (M = 4.51, SD = 1.51) and strong (M = 4.41, SD = 1.47) more often than a variety of other themes (Table 4).

Perceived accuracy, balance, and bias. Regarding perceived accuracy, respondents reported perceiving that war reporting was generally inaccurate (M = 3.15, SD = 1.55) and specifically was not accurate when presenting U.S. military strategy (M = 3.14, SD = 1.51), U.S. military operations (M = 3.15, SD = 1.54), U.S. military culture (M = 2.48, SD = 1.46), and issues facing U.S. service members and veterans (M = 2.71, SD = 1.50). Furthermore, chi-square tests demonstrated the significance of these perceptions and showed that

Table 3. *Perceived Thematic Portrayal of U.S. Military Service Members*

Thematic portrayal	*M*	*SD*	*p* (difference with "flawed" theme)
Heroic	4.01	1.66	‹0.001
Strong	4.09	1.59	‹0.001
Flawed	4.72	1.53	1.00
Worthy of respect	4.34	1.59	0.073
Worthy of assistance	4.16	1.66	‹0.001
Needy	4.24	1.63	0.006
Good	4.22	1.46	0.003
Bad	4.07	1.43	‹0.001
Evil	3.27	1.71	‹0.001
Glorified	4.16	1.53	‹0.001
Vilified	3.58	1.51	‹0.001

Table 4. *Perceived Thematic Portrayal of the U.S. Government and Military*

	M	*SD*	*p* (difference with "bad" theme)	*p* (difference with "strong" theme)
Good	3.51	1.58	‹0.001	‹0.001
Bad	4.51	1.51	1.00	0.986
Strong	4.41	1.47	0.986	1.00
Weak	3.74	1.55	‹0.001	‹0.001
Evil	3.85	1.70	‹0.001	‹0.001
Glorified	3.85	1.54	‹0.001	‹0.001
Vilified	3.90	1.56	‹0.001	0.001

significantly more participants felt that war reporting was at least somewhat inaccurate in general, $\chi^2(1, n = 290) = 61.917$, $p < .001$, and at least somewhat inaccurate when portraying U.S. military strategy, $\chi^2(1, n = 290) = 54.745$, $p < .001$; U.S. military operations, $\chi^2(1, n = 280) = 51.429$, $p < .001$; U.S. military culture, $\chi^2(1, n = 300) = 149.813$, $p < .001$; and issues facing U.S. service members and veterans, $\chi^2(1, n = 306) = 108.248$, $p < .001$.

Participants also reported perceiving that war and conflict reporting was very unbalanced (M = 2.62, SD = 1.49) and very biased (M = 2.42, SD = 1.36) overall and also, though to a lesser extent, specifically biased against the U.S. government and military (M = 3.18, SD = 1.60) and U.S. military members (M = 3.51, SD = 1.68). Again, chi-square tests indicated the significance of these perceptions and showed that significantly more participants felt that war reporting was generally at least somewhat unbalanced overall, $\chi^2(1, n = 278) = 124.446$, $p < .001$, and at least somewhat biased overall, $\chi^2(1, n = 244) = 170.557$, $p < .001$, as well as at least somewhat biased regarding the U.S. government and military, $\chi^2(1, n = 270) = 48.133$, $p < .001$, and U.S. military members, $\chi^2(1, n = 268) = 10.090$, $p = .001$.

Perceived Differences in Quality of News Sources

While ratings of news media were not especially strong overall, significant differences in perceived quality did exist between different news organizations (Table 5), and summary independent samples t-tests (two-tailed) confirmed that four news organizations were rated as being of significantly higher quality than the average. Specifically, the BBC received the highest ratings of quality (M = 9.11, SD = 3.35), $t(298) = -12.377$, $p < .001$, and was followed by NPR (M = 8.57, SD = 4.08), $t(296) = -8.005$, $p < .001$; the *Washington Post* (M = 7.33, SD = 3.29), $t(298) = -3.553$, $p < .001$; and the *New York Times* (M = 7.29, SD = 3.81), $t(298) = -2.526$, $p = .012$.

Perceived quality of primary news sources. Most participants reported perceiving that their primary or preferred news source was of high quality, even if they also rated news media in general to be of low quality. Specifically, independent samples t-tests showed that individuals who primarily got their news from Fox News, $p < .001$; the BBC, $p < .001$; NPR, $p < .001$; ABC, $p = .043$; the *New York Times*, $p = .006$; and the *Washington Post*, $p = .029$, reported significantly higher scores of perceived quality for their primary

Table 5. *Perceived Quality of News Sources*

			Difference from the average score		
	M	***SD***	**Mean difference**	***t***	***p***
BBC	9.11	3.35	−2.480	−12.377	‹0.001
NPR	8.57	4.08	−1.940	−8.005	‹0.001
Washington Post	7.33	3.29	−0.700	−3.553	‹0.001
New York Times	7.29	3.81	−0.660	−2.526	0.012
USA Today	6.89	3.49	−0.260	−1.195	0.232
CBS	6.89	3.36	−0.260	−1.224	0.221
ABC	6.62	3.30	0.010	0.047	0.960
NBC	6.61	3.46	0.020	0.094	0.925
Google News	6.38	3.44	0.250	1.150	0.250
CNN	6.26	3.98	0.370	1.583	0.114
Fox	6.22	3.59	0.410	1.942	0.052
Univision	6.14	2.94	0.490	2.601	0.010
Yahoo News	6.04	3.02	0.590	3.140	0.002
Los Angeles Times	5.99	3.24	0.640	3.179	0.002
Telemundo	5.98	3.12	0.650	3.229	0.001
AOL News	5.65	3.07	0.980	5.032	‹0.001
MSNBC	5.62	3.65	1.010	4.678	‹0.001
Huffington Post	5.40	3.51	1.230	5.614	‹0.001
Average	6.63	3.60	0.000	0.000	1.000

Table 6. *Differences in Perceived Quality of All News Sources and Primary News Sources*

	Quality of primary news source		Quality of news in general		Difference between news in general and primary news source		
Primary news source	***M***	***SD***	***M***	***SD***	**Mean difference**	***t***	***p***
CNN	8.41	4.42	8.08	3.46	−0.330	−0.427	0.670
Fox News	9.44	2.31	5.88	3.03	−3.560	−6.615	‹0.001
BBC	12.57	2.41	6.43	2.65	−6.143	−6.413	‹0.001
NPR	12.86	2.11	7.43	3.37	−5.429	−5.113	‹0.001
CBS	10.75	3.09	9.00	2.07	−1.750	−1.884	0.069
MSNBC	7.50	2.53	6.75	2.77	−0.750	−0.800	0.430
NBC	9.00	2.31	8.00	3.46	−1.00	−0.480	0.648
ABC	6.00	3.67	3.43	2.41	−2.571	−2.142	0.043
New York Times	9.57	1.65	7.14	2.51	−2.429	−3.027	0.006
Washington Post	11.44	1.81	8.25	3.50	−3.194	−2.409	0.029

Table 7. *Differences in Perceived Accuracy of News Sources*

Primary news source	*M*	*SD*	*p*
Accuracy of reporting in general			
NPR	4.71	1.90	0.014[a]
Fox News	2.88	1.52	0.014[b]
Accuracy of reporting on U.S. military strategy			
NPR	4.43	1.45	0.045[a]
Fox News	2.76	1.38	0.045[b]
Accuracy of reporting on U.S. military culture			
CNN	2.74	1.75	0.025[a]
Fox News	1.64	.80	0.025,[c] 0.025,[d] 0.022,[e] 0.030[f]
MSNBC	3.25	1.69	0.025[a]
Washington Post	3.60	1.96	0.022[a]
Wall Street Journal	4.75	1.66	0.030[a]
Accuracy of reporting on issues facing service members and veterans			
New York Times	3.71	1.64	0.025,[g] 0.040[a]
ABC	1.71	.73	0.025[h]
Fox News	2.17	1.56	0.040[c]

Note. Indicates difference with [a]Fox News, [b] NPR, [c]CNN, [d]MSNBC, [e]*Washington Post*, [f]*Wall Street Journal*, [g]ABC, [h]*New York Times*.

Table 8. *Differences in Perceived Balance, Bias, and Positivity/Negativity and News Sources*

Theme	*M*	*SD*	*p*
Balance of war/conflict/military reporting			
CNN	3.15	1.82	0.020[a]
Fox News	2.08	1.18	0.020[b]
BBC	1.71	0.73	0.039[c]
Wall Street Journal	4.00	1.69	0.039[d]
Bias of war/conflict/military reporting			
Fox News	1.83	0.77	0.035,[e] <0.001,[b] 0.019[f]
CBS	3.29	1.20	0.035[a]
CNN	3.13	1.78	<0.001[a]
NBC	4.00	0.89	0.019[a]
Positive/negative bias regarding U.S. government/military			
New York Times	4.71	1.33	<0.001,[a] <0.001[g]
Fox News	2.16	1.13	<0.001,[h] 0.002,[i] <0.001,[e] <0.001,[b] 0.031,[j] <0.001[k]
ABC	1.71	0.73	<0.001,[h] 0.002,[i] <0.001,[e] 0.001,[b] 0.023,[j] <0.001,[k] 0.027[c]
NPR	4.00	2.08	0.002,[1] 0.002[g]
CBS	4.38	1.56	<0.001,[1] <0.001[g]

CNN	3.67	1.69	<0.001,[1] 0.001[g]
BBC	3.00	1.11	0.035[k]
Washington Post	5.00	1.33	<0.001,[g] <0.001,[a] 0.035[d]
Wall Street Journal	4.00	1.31	0.027[g]
MSNBC	3.63	0.89	0.031,[1] 0.023[g]
Positive/negative bias regarding U.S. military members			
NPR	4.00	1.66	0.032[g]
ABC	2.00	1.11	0.032,[i] <0.001,[e] 0.004,[j] <0.001,[b] <0.001,[k] 0.003[c]
CBS	4.50	2.00	<0.001,[a] <0.001[g]
Fox News	2.48	1.28	<0.001,[e] <0.001,[b] 0.003,[j] <0.001,[k] 0.006[c]
CNN	4.19	1.72	<0.001,[g] <0.001[a]
MSNBC	4.25	1.61	0.003,[a] 0.004[g]
Washington Post	5.60	1.08	<0.001,[a] <0.001,[g] 0.035,[d] 0.012[l]
Wall Street Journal	4.75	1.17	0.006,[a] 0.003[g]
BBC	3.43	1.34	0.035[k]
Facebook	2.67	0.52	0.012[k]

Note. Indicates difference with [a]Fox News, [b]CNN, [c]*Wall Street Journal*, [d]BBC, [e]CBS, [f]NPR, [g]ABC, [h]*New York Times*, [i]MSNBC, [k]*Washington Post*, [l]Facebook.

news source than for news media overall (Table 6). Individuals who primarily got their news from other commonly mentioned news sources also consistently rated their main news source as being better than news media in general, but *t*-tests demonstrated that those differences were not statistically significant.

Differences in Perception Based on News Source Preferences

Data analysis showed that news source preference was a significant factor related to perceived accuracy, balance, bias, and thematic content.

Accuracy. Differences in perceived accuracy were shown to exist between participants who received their news from different primary news sources. ANOVA revealed significant differences regarding the perceived accuracy of news reporting in general, $F(36, 261) = 2.064$, $p = .001$, as well as the perceived accuracy of reporting about U.S. military strategy, $F(36, 261) = 2.063$, $p = .001$; U.S. military culture, $F(36, 261) = 2.391$, $p < .001$; and issues facing service members and veterans, $F(36, 259) = 3.059$, $p < .001$. Post hoc tests showed that most of the differences in perception involved participants who listed Fox News as their primary news source (Table 7). Participants who received most of their news from Fox News reported perceiving that news reports were significantly less accurate on a variety of factors than did participants who primarily received their news from NPR, CNN, MSNBC, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *New York Times*.

Balance and bias. Differences in perceived balance and bias also existed between participants who received their news from different specific news sources (Table 8). Significant differences existed regarding balance overall, $F(19, 230) = 3.108$, $p < .001$; bias overall, $F(19, 204) = 3.515$, $p < .001$, $p < .001$; and regarding the positivity or negativity of bias regarding the U.S. government and military, $F(19, 230) = 6.364$, $p < .001$, and U.S. military members, $F(19, 230) = 5.795$, $p < .001$.

Table 9. *Differences in Perceived Thematic Content and News Sources*

Theme	*M*	*SD*	*p*
Human interest			
NPR	6.00	1.57	0.037[a]
AP	2.00	1.16	0.037[b]
Antiwar			
CNN	5.75	1.68	0.013[c]
Washington Post	3.00	2.14	0.013,[d] <0.001[e]
Fox News	6.61	1.54	0.015,[f] <0.001,[c] 0.030[g]
ABC	4.43	2.21	0.015[e]
NBC	3.67	2.73	0.030[e]
Responsibility			
CNN	5.61	1.60	0.022,[c] 0.005[h]
Washington Post	3.00	2.27	0.022[d]
Facebook	2.33	1.03	0.005[h]
Prognostic analysis			
ABC	2.86	2.11	0.025[i]
BBC	5.86	2.03	0.025[f]
Pro-war			
Washington Post	6.75	1.17	0.002[e]
Fox News	3.48	1.95	0.021,[j] 0.002[c]
MSNBC	5.63	7.19	0.021[e]

Note. Indicates difference with [a]the AP, [b]NPR, [c]*Washington Post*, [d]CNN, [e]Fox News, [f]ABC, [g]NBC, [h]Facebook, [i]the BBC, [j]MSNBC.

Again, some of the most consistent differences involved viewers of Fox News and, to a lesser extent, ABC. Notably, individuals who got most of their news from Fox News perceived significantly less balance and more bias overall, and more bias against the U.S. government, military, and military members, than did the audiences of several other news outlets. Contrastingly, readers of the *Washington Post* perceived reporting to be significantly more biased in favor of the U.S. government, military, and military service members.

Themes (wars and conflicts). Differences in perceived thematic content about wars and conflicts also existed between participants

Table 10. *Differences in Perceived Positivity/Negativity and News Sources*

Theme	*M*	*SD*	*p*
U.S. government and military			
Fox News	2.24	1.12	<0.001,[a] <0.001,[b] <0.001,[c] <0.001,[d] <0.001,[e] <0.001,[f] <0.001,[g] <0.001[h]
NPR	4.14	1.79	0.001,[j] <0.001[j]
CNN	3.74	1.77	<0.001,[j] <0.001[i]
Washington Post	4.60	1.43	<0.001,[j] <0.001[i]
ABC	1.71	0.73	0.001,[b] <0.001,[d] 0.001,[e] <0.001,[a] <0.001,[c] 0.047,[k] <0.001,[f] 0.005,[h] 0.006[g]
BBC	3.57	1.83	0.047[i]
MSNBC	4.00	0.89	<0.001,[j] 0.001[i]
New York Times	4.43	1.34	<0.001,[j] <0.001[i]
CBS	4.13	1.41	<0.001,[j] <0.001[i]
Wall Street Journal	4.25	1.17	<0.001,[j] 0.006[i]
PBS	5.00	0.41	<0.001,[j] 0.005[i]

U.S. military members			
Fox News	2.96	1.29	0.001,[d] 0.011,[e] 0.001[f]
NPR	4.00	1.92	0.015[i]
AP	3.25	1.39	‹0.001[f]
CNN	4.26	1.66	0.001,[j] ‹0.001[i]
Washington Post	6.00	0.67	0.001,[j] ‹0.001,[i] 0.011,[m] ‹0.001[n]
ABC	1.86	1.03	0.037,[a] 0.015,[b] ‹0.001,[d] ‹0.001,[c] ‹0.001,[e] 0.002,[n] 0.015,[k] ‹0.001,[f] ‹0.001[g]
NBC	5.00	0.89	0.002[i]
BBC	4.00	1.60	0.015[i]
MSNBC	4.63	1.36	0.011,[j] ‹0.001[i]
Facebook	3.00	0.26	0.011[f]
New York Times	3.86	1.51	0.037[i]
CBS	4.57	1.91	‹0.001[i]
Wall Street Journal	4.25	1.58	‹0.001[i]

Note. Indicates difference with [a]*New York Times*, [b]NPR, [c]CBS, [d]CNN, [e]MSNBC, [f]*Washington Post*, [g]*Wall Street Journal*, [h]PBS, [i]ABC, [j]Fox News, [k]the BBC, [l]Facebook, [m]the AP, [n]NBC.

who received their news from different specific news sources (Table 9). Significant differences existed regarding perceptions of the human interest theme, $F(19, 206) = 2.787$, $p < .001$; antiwar theme, $F(19, 204) = 2.881$, $p < .001$; responsibility theme, $F(19, 204) = 3.581$, $p < .001$; prognostic analysis theme, $F(19, 204) = 2.601$, $p < .001$; and pro-war theme, $F(19, 206) = 2.763$, $p < .001$.

Perhaps most notable was the finding that individuals who considered Fox News to be their primary news source perceived that news media overall included especially high levels of antiwar content ($M = 6.61$, $SD = 1.54$) and especially low levels of pro-war content ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.95$), and post hoc tests showed these perceptions to be significantly different than the views reported by participants who mostly got news from several other news sources (Table 9). In contrast, readers of the *Washington Post* reported especially low levels of overall antiwar media coverage ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 2.14$) and high levels of perceived pro-war coverage ($M = 6.75$, $SD = 1.17$).

Themes (government, military, and military service members). Analysis showed that differences in perception existed between individuals who obtained news from different specific sources (Table 10) regarding coverage of the U.S. government and military, $F(19, 230) = 6.277$, $p < 001$, and U.S. military members, $F(19, 228) = 5.451$, $p < 001$. Specifically, data indicated that viewers of Fox News and ABC perceived coverage to be especially negative, and post hoc analysis showed that the audiences of Fox News and ABC perceived significantly more negative coverage of the U.S. government, military, and service members than did the readers or audiences of many other news outlets.

Observed News Content

Content analysis data were analyzed to determine the most common themes, topics, and sources, as well as the extent of bias.

Regarding thematic coverage of wars and conflicts, the most common primary theme was military conflict or strategy (38.5%,

$n = 367$), followed by the human interest theme (17.5%, $n = 167$) and the violence of war theme (10.7%, $n = 102$). Other themes were addressed much less frequently. Consequences associated with military action were only mentioned in 25.1% ($n = 239$) of articles. When consequences of military action were addressed, death was the most frequently mentioned consequence (12.7%, $n = 121$).

Analysis also considered thematic coverage of military service members. In the 315 articles or reports (33.0%) that included thematic portrayals of U.S. service members, positive themes were significantly more common than negative themes, $\chi^2(1, n = 288) = 183.681$, $p < .001$. Specifically, the most common positive themes were "worthy of respect" (21.9% of articles with a service member theme, $n = 69$), "patriotic" (17.1%, $n = 54$), and "strong" (13.0%, $n = 41$). The most common negative theme was "flawed" (6.0%, $n = 19$), and the most common neutral theme was "victimized" (8.3%, $n = 26$).

However, within these articles, service members were frequently not the primary topic; just 11.4% ($n = 109$) of articles or reports were mostly focused on service members. Of the articles that were focused on service members, and aside from articles focused on recent operational casualties, 15.6% ($n = 17$) were about service members who had died.

Topics and sources. While the majority of articles about military-related topics were not primarily about the United States (56.2%, $n = 536$), some reference to the United States was made in 63.3% ($n = 604$) of all articles, and 26.8% ($n = 256$) of articles included significant content related to politics. Furthermore, civilian government sources were cited much more often than official military sources and were the primary source in 24.7% ($n = 236$) of articles, while official military sources were the primary source in 6.2% ($n = 59$) of articles.

Bias. Analysis showed that significantly more articles were coded as being unbiased (68.9%, $n = 657$) than biased, $\chi^2(1, n = 954) =$

633.624, $p < .001$. Of articles that were biased, one specific topic of bias—pro-war and antiwar bias—was also assessed. While 45.8% of articles with a bias ($n = 136$) had some pro- or antiwar slant, the extent of this slant was limited, and articles on average had only mid-range levels of either pro-war ($M = 5.57$, $SD = .74$) or antiwar ($M = 2.19$, $SD = .75$) bias.

Yet, differences did exist between different news sources. ANOVA showed significant differences between sources regarding general bias at the $p < .05$ level, $F(9, 945) = 41.433$, $p < .001$, and post hoc tests showed that the BBC ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 1.77$) was significantly less biased than all other sources, while Fox News ($M = 2.37$, $SD = .97$) was significantly more biased than all other sources (Table 11). Similarly, ANOVA showed significant differences between sources regarding pro- and antiwar bias at the $p < .05$ level, $F(9, 945) = 41.433$, $p < .001$, and post hoc tests showed that Fox News ($M = 4.42$, $SD = .67$) included significantly stronger pro-war coverage than most other news sources (Table 12).

Differences Between Observed and Perceived News Content

Several key differences were identified between the real and perceived bias of news reports about military-related topics. Regarding overall bias, independent samples *t*-tests showed that, overall, news reports were perceived ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.36$) as being significantly more biased than content analysis demonstrated ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.36$), $t(1,236) = 14.186$, $p < .001$.

Regarding pro- and antiwar bias in particular, independent samples *t*-tests also showed that news reports were perceived ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.51$) as having significantly more of an antiwar slant than content analysis demonstrated ($M = 4.00$, $SD = .55$), $t(1,230) = 13.887$, $p < .001$.

Regarding coverage of service members, it is notable that respondents generally reported feeling that news media reports were not

Table 11. *Bias in News Reports (ANOVA)*

	M	***SD***	***p* (difference with Fox News)**	***p* (difference with the BBC)**
ABC	3.35	0.94	0.003	‹0.001
CBS	3.59	0.67	‹0.001	‹0.001
NBC	3.71	0.75	‹0.001	‹0.001
CNN	3.65	1.10	‹0.001	‹0.001
New York Times	3.72	0.99	‹0.001	‹0.001
Washington Post	3.91	1.26	‹0.001	‹0.001
AP	4.07	0.45	‹0.001	‹0.001
BBC	5.02	1.77	‹0.001	1.00
NPR	4.30	1.46	‹0.001	0.008
Fox News	2.37	0.97	1.00	‹0.001

Table 12. *Pro- and Antiwar Content in News Reports (ANOVA)*

	M	***SD***	***p* (difference with Fox News)**
ABC	3.88	0.33	‹0.001
CBS	3.91	0.78	‹0.001
NBC	4.13	0.54	0.209
CNN	3.95	0.59	‹0.001
New York Times	3.87	0.52	‹0.001
Washington Post	3.94	0.44	‹0.001
AP	3.91	0.29	‹0.001
BBC	3.95	0.38	‹0.001
NPR	3.94	0.31	‹0.001
Fox News	4.42	0.67	1.00

accurate regarding coverage of issues facing service members (M = 2.71, SD = 1.50) and were very biased against U.S. service members (M = 3.51, SD = 1.68), despite the fact that content analysis showed that 82.2% (n = 259) of articles that addressed service members thematically portrayed them in a positive theme.

SUMMARY

Regarding the first research question, findings demonstrate that current and former military service members considered in this study perceived that news media coverage focuses heavily on antiwar messages and destruction caused by war, includes little analysis, most often presents U.S. service members as flawed, and lacks accuracy or balance.

Regarding the second research question, U.S.-based news media were considered to be of greater overall quality than some other global media but of significantly less quality than Western European–based news media, with the BBC receiving the highest marks for overall quality of all media organizations. Furthermore, many participants reported perceiving that their preferred or primary news source was of significantly better quality than news media overall.

Regarding the third research question, this study shows that younger and less experienced participants were more skeptical of news media and that perceptions varied significantly based on where individuals primarily got their news.

Regarding the fourth research question, content analysis data show that military-themed reporting is very heavily focused on topics related to the United States and that while coverage is generally unbiased and neither pro- nor antiwar, significant differences do exist between news sources.

Finally, regarding the fifth research question, analysis shows that military service members and veterans perceived significantly higher levels of bias and antiwar content than actually existed and also perceived news reports to be more negative regarding service members than was actually observed.

DISCUSSION

There can be little doubt that the practice of journalism is the subject of much scrutiny today, and journalists now often find themselves criticized by individuals across the political spectrum for lacking nuance or understanding or being sensationalistic, inaccurate, or politically biased. This study shows that, while individual viewpoints vary dramatically, current and former military service members also had a critical view of news media overall and specifically regarding news reports involving wars, conflicts, and military-related topics. Furthermore, results show that many current and former military service members felt that news media portrayed the U.S. military in an especially negative light, suggesting the perceived existence of a hostile "us versus them" relationship between news organizations and the military.

Another key finding identified in this research relates to the perception that news reports focused extensively on the violence of war and what were seen as antiwar perspectives, at the exclusion of detailed analysis, and stories that might be described as containing thematic frames that focus on context and broader explanations. Related to this were content analysis data that showed that few reports addressed the consequences, costs, or causes of military operations but that political debates and the political implications of military action were often addressed. Such findings from this study are consistent with other framing research that has similarly found that episodic frames are predominant in news content and that, as a result, coverage often ends up "reducing complex issues to the level of anecdotal cases" (Iyengar, 1996, p. 70).

Such observations by service members, combined with content analysis data, may suggest an opportunity for improvement in the practice of war journalism. Admittedly, creating content that both engages the audience and contains detailed diagnostic or prognostic

analysis is complicated. Yet, focusing more on nuance and detail, and less on political debate, might lead to coverage that is both more insightful and less likely to appear connected to a partisan agenda.

There was also a common perception—supported by content analysis—that media reports did not frequently focus on human participants in wars and military operations and that, when service members were the focus, reports often portrayed them as "flawed" or even, more than one-sixth of the time, dead. Somewhat related to this was the finding that members of the military, including high-ranking officers, were quoted or used as sources to a very limited extent, indicating that military operations were often presented without including perspectives from those who would be involved in the fighting. Because existing research has shown that the inclusion of specific, personal stories that serve as exemplars have a powerful effect on memorability, heuristic processing, and public opinion (Brosius & Bathelt, 1994; Perry & Gonzenbach, 1997; Springer & Harwood, 2015), this limited inclusion of everyday military service members serves to remove the human face from war and downplays the individuality of experience, instead implicitly encouraging the audience to see the military as a tool and service members as statistics.

This finding is especially surprising considering the apparent ease of access to military members provided by the contemporary practice of embedding reporters with military units. Findings here suggest, then, that despite this fact—and despite claims made by researchers and journalists alike that such practices lead to sympathetic coverage—military service members still do not see themselves or their experiences reflected in coverage that exists.

Accordingly, such data suggest than an opportunity exists for more reporting that profiles the complex and individual narratives of the different and unique people who are involved in combat and military operations. Such an increased focus on human-level reporting—instead of reports that present service members as part of a

monolith of uniform action and opinion—might also help to serve society by closing the divide between the minority of the population with a military background and the majority of civilians without such experience. Indeed, doing so is especially critical today, given the fact that, despite nearly two decades of constant war, less than 1% of the adult U.S. population has served in the military since the turn of the 21st century (Kleykamp & Hipes, 2015), and 70% of Americans report having little or no understanding of issues facing military members (Pew Research Center, 2011).

Also notable were the strong individual preferences that participants held for particular media outlets. Specifically, this study found that veterans and service members often reported feeling that their primary and preferred news source was of higher quality and covered military-related topics better than news media in general. While such preferences were true of individuals who obtained their news from a variety of sources, certain sources appeared to have an especially dramatic connection to individual viewpoints. Notably, viewers of Fox News and, to a lesser extent, readers of the *Washington Post* had especially distinct views of media content. Similarly, content analysis data confirmed that bias levels varied significantly between different news sources, with Fox News content standing out as especially biased and pro-war.

Such findings suggest that not only do military service members gravitate to news sources that confirm existing perspectives but also military members may be influenced by popular news organizations' reporting on wars and conflicts in much the same way as the general population. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the perspectives of military service members regarding how news media cover wars, conflicts, and the military may be shaped less by military experience than by personal ideologies, political beliefs, and individual viewership or readership habits.

While this does not directly confirm the existence of a cultivation effect among this population, it does emphasize the powerful

impact that military-related reporting can have, not just on the general population, who have little firsthand knowledge, but also on shaping the way in which service members frame their own experiences and understand their relationship with the broader citizenry and national culture.

Such findings, alongside existing research, demonstrate the difficult job that exists for journalists. War reporters must contend with the inherent challenges associated with their assignments—such as obtaining access and ensuring personal safety—and find a way to make reports palatable to a diverse range of people throughout society. While these results do not present a clear or easy solution to this complex challenge, the central finding that perceptions are strongly associated with individual media source preferences and consumption habits suggests the tremendous importance of maintaining journalistic integrity and preserving a focus on accuracy and objectivity above all (Risso, 2017).

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

There were some limitations associated with this study. Most notably, data gathered as part of this research do not address the reasons behind participants' expressed perceptions; to understand more about these perspectives, further qualitative research, including interviews or focus groups, might be useful. Additionally, while the sample included military service members from across various demographic categories, it did not include any participants without some level of completed, or in-progress, college education. Future research would benefit from a sample that also included current and former service members without college experience. Also, this research would be stronger if military perspectives could be compared directly with civilian perspectives; additional studies might also seek to analyze the views of civilians regarding war and conflict reporting as well.

Future content analysis research might also be conducted into

historical war reports, to provide data for the comparison of frames that existed in news coverage of previous and contemporary wars and conflicts. Such additional content analysis data could also be analyzed to identify potential connections between news content and the different military policies governing press access over time. Finally, while the combination of survey and content analysis data does suggest associations between media exposure and attitudes, this study does not prove a causal link; accordingly, future research might build on the initial findings from this study with experimental designs that can measure the effect of exposure to particular frames in media coverage of wars, conflicts, and military-related topics.

CONCLUSION

War has been a sad reality for much, if not most, of recorded history, and its continuation today means that the need for and interest in war journalism remain as strong as ever. The value of this reportage is especially keen in a democracy in which an informed citizenry is key, and individuals need quality information to make electoral choices. Yet, meeting this societal need is not easy. Journalists are criticized from all angles, and war journalists face especially adamant critique because of the high stakes involved with the topics about which they report.

Moving into the future will, undoubtedly, be difficult for those journalists who cover wars and conflicts. Indeed, the future of news media is uncertain for all journalists, and many open-ended questions remain. These uncertainties underscore the importance of continuing to conduct research that investigates the issues, challenges, and opportunities associated with the contemporary media environment. In so doing, and as further insights continue to be gathered, it is hoped that it will be possible for professional journalists—as well as educators who are training the next generation of journalists—to address these concerns and create a vibrant and sustainable model for the future.

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Teacher Confirmation: The Influences of Emotional Contagion, Satisfaction, Teaching Efficacy, and Perceptions of Student Nonverbal Responsiveness

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Students often influence teachers' experiences in the college classroom. Through an emotional contagion lens, this study explores how instructor levels of emotional contagion, perceptions of teacher and student behaviors, and teacher outcomes are related. Previous research has explored the relationships between instructor behaviors, perceptions of students, and beliefs about their ability to teach. This study extends past research by exploring how teacher levels of emotional contagion are related to instructors' experiences. Findings reveal that teacher levels of emotional contagion are linked with teacher confirmation, instructor perceptions of student nonverbal responsiveness (NVR), self-efficacy, and satisfaction. Furthermore, this piece found that emotional contagion, instructor satisfaction with teaching, self-efficacy, and perceptions of NVR all predicted instructor perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors. Thus this study explains how teacher levels of emotional contagion impact the classroom.

KEYWORDS: Emotional contagion, teacher confirmation, teacher self-efficacy, student nonverbal responsiveness

Teachers often experience good and bad days in the college classroom. Sometimes teachers react well to students and are proud of their students' work. At other times, teachers become frustrated with students and then worry they have left students feeling confused or even upset. How teachers react to students, praise students, or fail to recognize students' accomplishments is referred to as *teacher confirmation* (Ellis, 2000). Based on previous research, we know that teacher confirmation can lead to students feeling more affirmed and can even result in teachers seeing students as more nonverbally responsive (Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017; Plax, Kearney, & Downs, 1986). However, we know less about why teachers are confirming in the first place within the college classroom. To explore what makes a teacher more confirming, we examine how teacher satisfaction, teacher levels of emotion contagion, teacher perceptions of student nonverbal responsiveness (NVR), teacher self-efficacy, and teacher satisfaction predict teacher confirmation in the classroom. One framework to explain the influences of teacher perceptions of their own and student behavior in the classroom is emotional contagion, which explains how feelings are transferred from one person to another (Hatfield, Cacioppo, & Rapson, 1994). From an emotional contagion lens, how teachers perceive their own teaching and the actions of students can influence how confirming teachers are with their students. Therefore, through this study, we explore what teacher experiences influence their perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors in college classes.

Since we know teaching leads to higher levels of emotional exhaustion, stress, and burnout (Watts & Robertson, 2011), continuing

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to recognize instructor experiences in the classroom is essential. Furthermore, given that teacher behaviors directly impact the experiences of students in the classroom, we need to continue to understand what influences teacher behaviors in the classroom (Plax et al., 1986). Therefore understanding the factors that influence teacher confirmation is paramount. To further explore the relationships between instructor levels of emotional contagion, perceptions of self-confirmation behaviors, perceptions of student nonverbal responsiveness, self-efficacy, and satisfaction, the current study first looks at previous research relating to these variables. Next, results of a quantitative analysis that researches instructor experiences in the classroom are explained, and future directions are discussed.

LITERATURE ON INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCES IN THE CLASSROOM

Emotional Contagion

For the current study, emotional contagion is used as a lens to understand how instructor self-perceptions and perceptions of students influence instructors' confirmation behaviors in the classroom. Emotional contagion explains that people often mimic or "catch" the emotions of other people (Hatfield et al., 1994). In other words, when a person displays an emotion, people around the person can be influenced to display a similar or complementary emotion. A similar emotion happens when others mimic the same emotion as the original sender (e.g., becoming sad when someone else is crying), while complementary could be reacting the opposite to an emotion (when someone yells in anger, a shy person backs away from the person). Thus emotional contagion explains how emotions are transferred from one person to another (Hatfield et al., 1994).

Emotional contagion is a vital theory within the classroom because it explains how people impact the emotions of others

(Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017; LeCrom, Pelco, & Lassiter, 2016; Wang & Schrodt, 2010). Teachers often transmit emotions to students in the classroom (Becker, Goetz, Morger, & Ranellucci, 2014; Frenzel, Goetz, Lüdtke, Pekrun, & Sutton, 2009). Specifically, previous studies have reported that when instructors display certain emotions (e.g., enjoyment, anger, anxiety), students are likely to experience identical emotions (Becker et al., 2014; Frenzel, Goetz, Lüdtke et al., 2009).

Recently, studies have begun to explore how teachers are influenced by emotional contagion in the classroom (Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017; LeCrom et al., 2016; Wang & Schrodt, 2010). For instance, Houser and Waldbuesser (2017) utilized an emotional contagion lens to examine how teacher behaviors influenced their students' behaviors. The researchers concluded that teacher perceptions of student behaviors impact teachers' own behaviors in the classroom, creating a contagion effect. Additionally, LeCrom and colleagues (2016) qualitatively discovered that teachers also experienced emotional contagion in the service learning context. Specifically, if students in service learning classes had positive experiences, it uplifted the instructors. In contrast, if students had negative experiences or did not put effort into the service learning, the instructors discussed feeling negative emotions, such as stress and anxiety (LeCrom et al., 2016). Surprisingly, Wang and Schrodt (2010) reported that emotional contagion was not related to student perceptions of instructor immediacy or their affect for the instructor. The study examined whether emotional contagion moderated the relationship between student affect for the teacher and perceptions of the teacher's immediacy behavior. Results indicated no significant interaction from emotional contagion.

For the current study, instructors are obviously in a different position than students, meaning they could experience emotional contagion differently. Given these conflicting findings, the current study expands previous research by exploring how emotional con-

tagion is related to confirmation behaviors, teacher satisfaction, self-efficacy, and perceptions of student nonverbal responsiveness. Specifically, based on previous research, how susceptible teachers are to emotional contagion (also referred to as a teacher's level of emotional contagion) is measured (Hatfield et al., 1994; Wang & Schrodt, 2010). Overall, we explain how instructors' levels of emotional contagion in the college classroom impact both their perceptions of their own teaching and their perceptions of student behaviors in the classroom.

Student Nonverbal Responsiveness

One way emotional contagion can influence instructors is through perceptions of student nonverbal responsiveness (NVR; Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017). Student NVR describes how students use nonverbal cues to indicate listening and involvement in the classroom (Mottet, 2000). Here student NVR can be used to explore how student communication behaviors influence both instructor communication behaviors and student classroom engagement (Malachowski & Martin, 2011; Mottet & Beebe, 2006; Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Paulsel, 2004).

For teachers, student NVR is related to teacher satisfaction, communication with students, and self-perceptions (Jenkins & Deno, 1969; Mottet & Beebe, 2006; Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Paulsel, 2004). In general, student NVR has been shown to influence instructors' perceptions of their own teaching (Jenkins & Deno, 1969) as well as their feelings toward students (Mottet & Beebe, 2006; Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Paulsel, 2004). For instance, Jenkins and Deno (1969) concluded that if students use positive nonverbal feedback more frequently, instructors feel their lessons are more effective for students. Furthermore, previous scholars discovered that teachers experienced higher levels of affect for students when their students displayed more positive NVR in the classroom (Mottet & Beebe, 2006; Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Paulsel, 2004).

Along with influencing instructor perceptions of the classroom, NVR has also been linked with teacher communication behaviors (Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Paulsel, 2004). For instance, previous scholars found that when students practiced more NVR behaviors, teachers complied more with student requests (Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Paulsel, 2004). As previous scholars concluded, student NVR is related to teacher behaviors in the classroom. The current study investigates how emotional contagion influences instructor perceptions of NVR. Although emotional contagion and student NVR have not been directly linked in research, one investigation did explore how teacher confirmation behaviors and student NVR were understood through an emotional contagion lens (Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017). Researchers reported that instructor perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors predicted their perceptions of student NVR. To further understand these relationships, the following research question is examined:

RQ1: How are instructor levels of emotional contagion and perceptions of student nonverbal responsiveness related?

Teacher Self-Efficacy

One important aspect of a teacher's job is how well teachers believe they can teach students or have a high degree of self-efficacy toward teaching. Bandura (1977) defined self-efficacy as people believing that they can successfully complete an activity. It plays a vital role in determining if people will complete activities, as well as how much effort and motivation they put into activities (Bandura, 1982). Individuals may choose to work in certain environments based on their perceived self-efficacy, and for teachers, self-efficacy might specifically influence how well they perceive they can instruct students and manage the classroom (Bandura, 1993).

With regard to emotions, teacher self-efficacy has been largely associated with teacher burnout (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008;

Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Additionally, Schwarzer and Hallum (2008) concluded that job stress is a mediator between teacher self-efficacy and burnout and that self-efficacy is related to positive affect. Although the sample did not include teachers specifically, it nonetheless dealt with job self-efficacy, and the researchers concluded that positive affect increases job self-efficacy (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008). Furthermore, researchers tested the relationship between emotional contagion and perceptions of ability to perform a job and discovered a positive relationship between participants' positive emotional contagion and ratings of their own performance. Thus previous research appears to indicate a viable relationship between positive emotions and self-efficacy. Therefore we posit that teacher self-efficacy will be related to teacher levels of emotional contagion. To further understand the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and emotional contagion, our study explores the following research question:

RQ2: How are teacher self-efficacy and instructor levels of emotional contagion related?

Additionally, Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, and Paulsel (2004) explored how teacher self-efficacy is related to student verbal and nonverbal responsiveness. They reported that both student verbal and nonverbal behaviors influence teachers' self-efficacy, with NVR being a stronger predictor. The current study furthers Mottet and coauthors' findings by examining the connections between teacher self-reports of perceived self-efficacy and reports of student responsive behaviors. As self-efficacy and student NVR have been previously linked, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Instructor perceptions of teacher self-efficacy and student nonverbal responsiveness will be positively related.

Teacher Satisfaction

Another important variable to consider, along with teacher self-efficacy, is a teacher's level of satisfaction. Plax et al. (1986) defined two forms of teacher satisfaction in the classroom: satisfaction with teaching/instruction and satisfaction with students. Most studies have consistently reported that student–teacher communication best explains how satisfied instructors are with their teaching (DiClemente, Ditrinco, Gibbons, & Myers, 2013). Knapp (2010), for example, reported that teacher job satisfaction was higher when they perceived their students communicating with them for relational and participatory motives. Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, and Medlock (2004) linked teacher satisfaction to levels of students' nonverbal responsiveness. Ultimately, this research reinforces the importance of student–teacher classroom communication transactions, which can lead to overall job satisfaction (Jenkins & Deno, 1969; Mottet, 2000; Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Medlock, 2004). If students are nonverbally responsive to their instructors' teaching, it might be that they are mirroring instructor behaviors (Homburg & Stock, 2004). The importance of feedback in the form of student NVR cannot be understated, and it is possible that teachers who confirm their students in the classroom create an emotional contagion effect with them. Thus students react back to the teachers with similar confirming, nonverbal responses—likely an emotional contagion effect (Homburg & Stock, 2004). As Houser and Waldbuesser (2017) reported, teachers' perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors most strongly predicted their perceptions of how nonverbally responsive students were in class. This provides further evidence that teachers rely on their students' behaviors to confirm their teaching identities. To further explore the relationships between instructor satisfaction, student NVR, and emotional contagion, the following hypothesis and research question are proposed:

H2: Student nonverbal responsiveness and instructor satisfaction with teaching and students will be positively related.

RQ3: How are instructor satisfaction with teaching and students related to instructor levels of emotion contagion?

Teacher Confirmation

Finally, one important outcome of teacher levels of emotional contagion, satisfaction, perceptions of student NVR, and self-efficacy is teachers' perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors. Ellis (2000) first conceptualized teacher confirmation as "the transactional process by which teachers communicate to students that they are endorsed, recognized, and acknowledged as valuable, significant individuals" (p. 266). Most important in this definition is the implication that multiple benefits can be received from relatively simple nonverbal and verbal behaviors. The three primary communicative components of teacher confirmation (demonstrating interest in students' education, responding appropriately to student questions, and using a variety of teaching styles to help students learn) have frequently been related to positive student outcomes (Burns, Houser, & Farris, 2017).

For example, when teachers confirm students, they witness increased levels of student NVR. According to Malachowski and Martin (2011), teacher personal confirmation behaviors are significantly correlated with students' NVR behaviors. Expanding these findings, Houser and Waldbuesser (2017) presented a model whereby teachers' perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors strongly predicted their perceptions of how nonverbally responsive students were in class. Essentially, utilizing an emotional contagion lens where people catch the emotions of those around them (Hatfield et al., 1994), the authors suggested that instructors who confirmed students and were more expressive were likely to perceive students as more nonverbally responsive in class.

Past research also informs us that when instructors provide positive confirmation to students, their students' responsiveness creates a greater likelihood that teachers will feel a strong sense of self-confirmation in their own classroom teaching. In fact, Plax

and colleagues (1986) argued that teacher perceptions of their own behaviors "are more likely to affect their own perceptions of how they feel towards students and teaching" (p. 381). This is important to acknowledge because instructors who have strong perceptions of their own self-confirmation behaviors are also more likely to have enhanced feelings of self-efficacy—perceptions of their ability to take control of their teaching. As evidence of this, education research by Ashton and Webb (1986) reported that highly efficacious teachers were more organized and displayed greater skills of instruction, questioning, explaining, and providing feedback to students; in other words, they exhibited superior confirming behaviors. Research in instructional communication has reported similar findings and informed us that teachers who confirm their students not only enhance their levels of NVR but also engender greater feelings of teacher self-efficacy (Mottet, 2000; Mottet & Beebe 2006; Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Medlock, 2004). Specifically, previous researchers have concluded that if students display increased levels of NVR, it enhances instructor self-efficacy within the classroom (Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Medlock, 2004). To explore these relationships, the following research questions and hypotheses are examined:

H3: Instructor perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors and perceptions of student nonverbal responsiveness will be positively related.

H4: Instructor perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors and teacher self-efficacy will be positively related.

H5: Instructor perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors and instructor satisfaction toward teaching and students will be positively related.

RQ4: How are instructor perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors and levels of emotion contagion related?

Although past research has explored teacher confirmation as a predictor variable (Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017), this study examines teacher perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors as an outcome variable. Previous research suggested that teacher behaviors and student behaviors are often reciprocal in nature, meaning both variables often influence each other (Frenzel, Goetz, Stephens, & Jacob, 2009). By exploring teacher confirmation as an outcome variable, this study begins to explore this reciprocal relationship. From previous research, we know that student nonverbal behaviors influence and predict teacher behaviors (e.g., willingness to comply). From an emotional contagion lens, it would make sense that if teachers perceive students as more responsive, they would mimic the same behaviors through confirmation actions. Furthermore, self-efficacy is explored as a predictor because self-efficacy often motivates behaviors (Bandura, 1977). Thus teacher self-efficacy may influence self-perceptions of confirmation. Furthermore, satisfaction often leads to behaviors that are more positive (Zenker & Rütter, 2014), meaning satisfaction can also impact confirmation behaviors. Thus this study examines teacher confirmation as an outcome of these variables. To understand these relationships, the following research question is examined:

RQ5: How much variance in instructor perceptions of their own confirmation is predicted by instructor self-efficacy, instructor satisfaction, instructor perceptions of student nonverbal responsiveness, and instructor levels of emotional contagion?

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

To examine the hypotheses and research questions in the preceding sections, researchers used volunteer and snowball sampling to recruit 338 participants for this study from institutions across the

country. Participants were instructors at the college level in various positions with 39 graduate teaching assistants, 205 full-time professors/instructors, 69 adjunct professors, 14 lecturers, 2 part-time professors/professor emeritus, and 5 other; 4 declined to answer. In total, 104 participants identified as male, 223 identified as female, 1 identified as gender fluid, 1 identified as gender queer, and 9 declined to answer. Participant age ranged from 22 to 80 years ($M = 43.67$, $SD = 13.21$). Ethnicities were White/Caucasian (294 respondents), Asian (10 respondents), Native American (3 respondents), Black/African American (5 respondents), Hispanic Latino (8 respondents), Asian Ameri[illegible] respondent), mixed ethnicities (10 respondents), and Eurasion (1 respondent), declined to answer. Participants reported 0–50 ($M = 14.57$, $SD = 10.88$) years of teaching experience, with the most commonly reported areas of instruction including communication, education, English, biology, and social work in all levels of college work.

After the study was granted institutional review board approval, participants followed a link made available to them through email Listservs and social media to complete an anonymous online survey through Qualtrics. The survey included questions about teacher levels of emotional contagion, student NVR, teacher confirmation, teacher self-efficacy, and teacher satisfaction. The demographic questions included age, gender, ethnicity, instructor position, course taught, and years teaching. Participants agreed to participate via an online consent form, and no compensation was offered. To avoid survey fatigue or bias, we set Qualtrics to randomly show the questions, meaning the order of measures were different for each participant. Based on estimates from Qualtrics, the average response time was approximately 20 minutes.

Instruments

Teacher satisfaction. Participants were asked to complete the two subscales of the Teacher Satisfaction Scale (Plax et al., 1986):

teacher satisfaction with their own teaching and teacher satisfaction with their specific students. Using three 5-point Likert-type scales, the first scale contained two items with responses ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*); the second scale measured one item with responses ranging from 1 (*very dissatisfying*) to 5 (*very satisfying*); and the final scale measured one item with responses ranging from 1 (*definitely not*) to 5 (*definitely*). Means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha scores for each scale are reported in Table 1.

Student nonverbal responsiveness. Originally developed from the Student Nonverbal Visual and Audio Responsive measure (Mottet, 2000), the Student Nonverbal Responsiveness Scale developed by Malachowski and Martin (2011) was adapted for the current investigation. The adapted questions asked participants to think about the NVR of the specific students on which they were reporting (e.g., "My students smiled at me while I was teaching"). Participants responded to eight items on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with the response range from 1 (*strongly disagree*) and 5 (*strongly agree*).

Teacher confirmation behavior. To measure participants' perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors, an adapted version of Ellis's (2000) teacher confirmation behaviors scale was utilized. As in the Houser and Waldbuesser (2017) study, questions from the original scale were altered to reflect the participants' perceptions of their own behaviors toward students (e.g., "I showed appreciation for student comments in class").

Emotional contagion. Respondents reported on 15 items using a 4-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*always*) for the Emotional Contagion Scale (Doherty, 1997). Sample items included "It irritates me to be around angry people" and "I sense my body responding when the one I love touches me."

Self-efficacy. Participants were asked to report perceptions of their self-efficacy using the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk, 2001). The TSES examines 24 items

on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*no influence*) to 5 (*a great deal of influence*). Sample questions included "How much can you do to get through to the most difficult students?" and "How much can you do to help your students think critically?"

RESULTS

Research Questions (RQs) 1–4 explored the relationships between instructor levels of emotional contagion, instructor perceptions of student NVR, instructor self-efficacy, overall instructor satisfaction, instructor satisfaction with students, instructor satisfaction with teaching their classes, and instructor perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors. To explore these relationships, Pearson correlations were run to examine these relationships (see Table 1). For RQ1, which explored the relationship between teacher perceptions of student NVR and their levels of emotional contagion, a correlation revealed that teacher levels of emotional contagion and perceptions of student NVR were positively related, $r = .19$, $p < .001$. Therefore, as teacher levels of emotional contagion increased, so did their perceptions of student NVR. RQ2 explored the relationship between teacher levels of emotional contagion and perceptions of their self-efficacy for teacher. Results showed that there was a significant positive relationship between the two variables, $r = .23$, $p < .001$, such that as a teacher's level of emotional contagion increased, so did teachers' perceptions of their own teaching self-efficacy. Furthermore, RQ3 examined the relationship between teacher levels of emotional contagion and teacher satisfaction. Results showed a positive relationship between emotional contagion and teacher overall satisfaction, $r = .13$, $p < .019$, and satisfaction with students, $r = .17$, $p < .002$, but not their satisfaction with teaching, $r = .05$, $p < .053$. Therefore, as an instructor's level of emotional contagion increased, so did the instructor's overall satisfaction and satisfaction with students. Last, RQ4 explored how teachers' levels

Table 1. *Correlations Between Perceived Closeness, Total Teacher Satisfaction, Teacher Satisfaction With Students, Teacher Satisfaction With Teaching, Student Nonverbal Responsiveness, Teacher Confirmation, Emotional Contagion, Empathy, and Self-Efficacy*

	M	*SD*	α	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. TTS	4.39	0.64	0.79	1						
2. TSS	3.81	0.67	0.78	0.89**	1					
3. TST	4.09	0.58	0.85	0.88**	0.56**	1				
4. NVR	3.91	0.60	0.89	0.42**	0.46**	0.28**	1			
5. TC	4.32	0.44	0.85	0.41**	0.39**	0.33**	0.62**	1		
6. EC	3.82	0.56	0.84	0.13*	0.17**	0.05	0.19**	0.33**	1	
7. SE	3.94	0.41	0.91	0.38**	0.36**	0.30**	0.43**	0.58**	0.23**	1

Note. EC = emotional contagion. Emp[illegible]mpathy. NVR = student nonverbal responsiveness. PC = perceive[illegible]seness. SE = se[illegible]ffica[illegible] = teacher confirmation. TSS = teacher satisfact[illegible]with students. TST = teacher satisfaction with teaching. TTS = tota[illegible]cher satisfaction
*p < .05. **p < .01.

of emotional contagion were related to teachers' perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors in the classroom. A correlation revealed that emotional contagion was positively related to teacher confirmation behaviors, $r = .33$, $p < .001$, such that as teachers' levels of emotion contagion increased, so did teachers' perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors. Overall, the research questions revealed that emotional contagion is generally related to teachers' perceptions of student NVR, their own confirmation behaviors, their teaching self-efficacy, their overall satisfaction, and their satisfaction with students.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) predicted that instructor perceptions of student NVR and perceptions of their own efficacy levels would be significantly related. A Pearson correlation was used to test the relationships between the variables. Results showed that teacher perceptions of student NVR and self-efficacy are positively related, $r = .43$, $p < .001$, such that as perceptions of student NVR increased, so did teacher perceptions of their own efficacy. Therefore H1 was supported.

The second hypothesis posited that teacher perceptions of student NVR as well as their satisfaction with both their teaching and students would be related. A Pearson correlation was used to examine how the two variables were related. The correlations demonstrated that teacher perceptions of student NVR are positively related to overall instructor satisfaction, $r = .42$, $p < .001$, satisfaction with students, $r = .46$, $p < .001$, and satisfaction with teaching, $r = .28$, $p < .001$. Therefore, if instructors saw students as more nonverbally responsive, they also tended to be more satisfied with both students and teaching. Overall, H2 was supported.

H3 predicted that teacher perceptions of student NVR and perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors would be related. A Pearson correlation was conducted to understand the relationship between the two variables. Results from the correlations reveal that teacher perceptions of student NVR and teacher confirmation

behaviors are positively related, $r = .62$, $p < .001$, such that as teachers' perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors increased, so did their perceptions of student NVR. Thus H3 was also supported.

H4 predicted a positive relationship between instructors' perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors and their self-efficacy toward teaching. A Pearson correlation revealed a strong positive relationship between instructor confirmation behaviors and instructor self-efficacy, $r = .58$, $p < .001$. Meaning that as teachers' perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors increased, so did their perceptions of the self-efficacy behaviors. Thus H4 was also supported.

The fifth hypothesis predicted a positive relationship between instructors' perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors and their satisfaction. Instructor satisfaction was measured in three ways: overall satisfaction, satisfaction with students, and satisfaction with teaching. Showing support for H5, teacher confirmation was positively related to overall teacher satisfaction, $r = .41$, $p < .001$, satisfaction with students, $r = .39$, $p < .001$, and satisfaction with teaching, $r = .33$, $p < .001$.

The fifth research question explored the variance in teacher confirmation as predicted by instructor self-efficacy, instructor satisfaction, instructor perceptions of student NVR, and instructor levels of emotional contagion. First, two linear regressions were conducted to control for age and years teaching. Neither age, $F(1, 332) = 2.41$, $R^2 = .007$, $p < .122$, nor years in teaching, $F(1, 332) = .392$, $R^2 = .001$, $p < .531$, were significant predictors of teacher confirmation. Next, a hierarchal regression was conducted to test instructor self-efficacy, instructor satisfaction, instructor perceptions of student NVR, and emotional contagion as predictor variables of teacher confirmation. Four outliers were removed from the data based on regression fit. Results from the regression can be seen in Table 2. Instructor satisfaction overall and instructor satisfaction with students were removed from the model because they did not

Table 2. *Multiple Regression Analysis for Instructor Perceptions of Student Nonverbal Responsiveness, Teaching Satisfaction, Emotional Contagion, and Instructor Self-Efficacy Predicting Instructor Confirmation*

Variable	*B*	*SE B*	β	*t*	*R*	R^2	R^2_{adj}
Constants	1.000	0.185		5.400	0.733	0.537	0.532
Variables							
Student nonverbal responsiveness	0.306	0.031	0.416**	9.869			
Teaching satisfaction	0.066	0.031	0.094*	2.362			
Emotional contagion	0.131	0.028	0.166**	4.290			
Instructor self-efficacy	0.358	0.045	0.337**	7.868			

*$p < .01$. **$p < .001$.

significantly add to the variance predicted. With instructor self-efficacy, instructor satisfaction with teaching, student NVR, and emotional contagion as predictors, the model explained 53.7% of the variance in teacher confirmation behaviors, $F(4, 332) = 96.36$, $p < .001$. Student NVR had the highest predictive power, $\beta = .42$, $t = 9.87$, $p < .001$, followed by teacher self-efficacy, $\beta = .34$, $t = 7.86$, $p < .001$, emotional contagion, $\beta = .17$, $t = 4.29$, $p < .001$, and satisfaction, $\beta = .09$, $t = 2.36$, $p < .02$. Thus RQ4 revealed that instructor perceptions of student NVR, self-efficacy, levels of emotional contagion, and satisfaction with teaching all significantly predicted teachers' perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors.

DISCUSSION

Instructors are often influenced by the behavior of students in the classroom as well as by their own behaviors, which can affect their emotions in the classroom. Previous research has explored emotional contagion as a framework (Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017; LeCrom et al., 2016), which the current study extended by examining how emotional contagion is related to and predicts teacher behaviors in the classroom.

The first four research questions explored the relationships between emotional contagion, instructor satisfaction, instructor perceptions of student NVR, instructor self-efficacy, and instructor perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors. In general, the findings from these research questions reveal that if instructors reported having higher levels of emotional contagion, they also were more satisfied in the classroom. Additionally, if teachers saw students as more responsive, they then saw themselves as better instructors and confirmed their students more in the classroom. These findings extend previous research by demonstrating that instructor emotional contagion levels are related to their perceptions of their own behaviors, perceptions of students, and classroom

outcomes. The findings for emotional contagion in the current study support previous research reporting student behaviors related to instructor behaviors and satisfaction (Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017; Jenkins & Deno, 1969; Mottet, 2000) and extend previous research that connected emotional contagion with teacher communication behaviors. Overall, based on these results, it is evident that emotional contagion is related to instructor behaviors, perceptions of student behavior, satisfaction, and perceptions of their own teaching abilities.

Understanding how instructor levels of emotional contagion influence their perceptions of student behaviors, their self-efficacy, their satisfaction, and their perceptions of their confirmation behaviors is paramount. From previous research, we know that teacher efficacy, job satisfaction, and student behaviors can impact teacher burnout (Chang, 2013; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Yu, Wang, Zhai, Dai, & Yang, 2015). Furthermore, teacher perceptions of students, efficacy, and confirmation also predict student outcomes in the classroom (Burns et al., 2017; Homburg & Stock, 2004; Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Paulsel, 2004). In addition, if teachers are more positive in the classroom, they can influence students' emotions (Frenzel, Goetz, Stephens et al., 2009). Therefore understanding how a teacher's level of emotional contagion influences these variables is imperative because these behaviors have the potential to impact both teacher and student experiences in the classroom. Based on the results from the current study, it is clear that if teachers are more susceptible to other people's emotions, they are also more likely to be satisfied in their teaching, see students as more responsive, believe that they are more confirming, and see themselves as better teachers. One explanation for this is that the teachers may care more about their jobs, therefore they are more likely to be emotionally invested in teaching and helping students. Overall, our results demonstrate the importance of understanding teacher levels of emotional contagion in the classroom.

The first three hypotheses explored the relationships between

instructors' perceptions of student NVR, satisfaction, self-efficacy, and perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors. All three hypotheses were confirmed, which supports previous literature that has shown that student NVR is related to teacher confirmation behaviors (Malachowski & Martin, 2011), satisfaction, and self-efficacy (Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Medlock, 2004). Thus, from these findings, it was evident that if teachers feel students were more nonverbally response, they also were more satisfied with teaching, felt that they were better teachers, and confirmed students more in the classroom. Furthermore, H4 and H5 found support for the relation between teacher confirmation behaviors, self-efficacy, and satisfaction. These findings also coincided with previous research that teacher confirmation is related to self-efficacy (Mottet, 2000; Mottet & Beebe, 2006; Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Medlock, 2004) as well as satisfaction (Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017; Mottet, 2000). Therefore, if teachers felt more efficacious about their teaching, they also confirmed students more in the class.

Based on our results, it is clear that student behaviors influence teacher experiences in the classroom. Although teachers cannot control how a student acts in the classroom, from this research, we can consider the importance of training students on how to interact with teachers in the classroom. We know from previous research that the classroom climate is influenced by both students and teachers (Thomas, Bierman, Powers, & Conduct Problems Prevention Research Group, 2011). If students realize how much their behaviors impact teachers and are taught the importance of nonverbal communication in the classroom, it may impact not only their own experiences but also the experiences of teachers. As we can see from the results of the current study, if students are more nonverbally responsive in the classroom, it is related to teacher satisfaction, confirmation, and efficacy. Thus student nonverbal communication could potentially alleviate both teacher and student negative experiences in the college classroom, which has the

potential to lead to better learning and more positive outcomes in the classroom.

Finally, RQ5 explored how much variance in teacher confirmation behavior was predicted by instructor satisfaction, instructor self-efficacy, instructor perceptions of student NVR, and instructor emotional contagion. The study found support for a model that predicted 54% of the variance in teacher confirmation behaviors. The predictors included perceptions of student NVR, teacher self-efficacy, emotional contagion, and satisfaction with teaching. These findings, as well as the findings from H1–H5, can best be explained through an emotional contagion lens. The strongest predictor of teacher confirmation was actually student NVR, meaning that if a teacher perceived a student to be more nonverbally responsive, the teacher was more likely to then confirm the student. Since emotional contagion explains that we tend to mimic others' behaviors (Hatfield et al., 1994), we can expect that teachers and students mirror each other's behaviors. Thus, if a student is more responsive, the teacher is more likely to catch the student's behavior and respond by being more confirming. Furthermore, a teacher's level of emotional contagion was also a significant predictor in this model, providing further evidence for this explanation. Emotional contagion theory also explains that some people catch emotions more easily (Hatfield et al., 1994). In the case of this study, it seems that instructors tended to catch the behaviors of students. Additionally, because satisfaction and self-efficacy often also induce more positive feelings (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008), these two could add in the emotional contagion affect, meaning that if an instructor feels more positive, he or she is more likely to behave more positively in the classroom. Overall, this study adds to our understanding of emotional contagion in the classroom.

To further explain this model, past research has concluded that student responsiveness predicted teacher behaviors, such as complying with student wants (Mottet, Beebe, Raffeld, & Medlock,

2004). The current study found that student NVR also predicted how often teachers confirmed students in the classroom, therefore supporting past studies. Previous research, however, has also found that teacher confirmation behavior predicts student NVR (Houser & Waldbuesser, 2017). This suggests a reciprocal relationship between student nonverbal behavior and teacher confirmation behavior. Previous research has identified teacher behaviors and student perceptions as reciprocal, meaning they influence each other (Frenzel, Goetz, Lüdtke et al., 2009). Thus it makes sense that in some instances, teacher confirmation behaviors will predict instructor perceptions of student NVR, and in other situations, student NVR will predict teacher confirmation behaviors. More research needs to explore the reciprocal nature of these two variables specifically to understand how students influence instructors. This study adds to current knowledge by demonstrating evidence of this reciprocal relationship.

Practical Implications

Based on the results of the current study, there are several implications for instructors. The results of this study reveal that teachers' experiences are linked with how they interact in the classroom with students. One suggestion is for departments to focus more on increasing teacher self-efficacy and enforce the role of teaching through training programs and faculty learning communities that focus on teaching. Ultimately, these efforts would build efficacy, which also relates to their satisfaction, perception of students, and confirmation in the classroom. For example, departments or universities could offer training programs for different areas of teaching, such as teaching instructors the importance of confirmation in the classroom or ways to understand and interpret student nonverbal behaviors. Overall, the implications from this study highlight the need to focus on teacher efficacy and confirmation in the college classroom.

Furthermore, based on our results, we know that teacher perceptions of student NVR can influence how teachers interact with students in the classroom. Although teachers cannot control how students react nonverbally, they can manage their own confirmation behaviors in the classroom. Recognizing that the student NVR and teacher confirmation behavior relationship is influenced by emotional contagion and can be reciprocal, teachers can increase their own confirmation behaviors to influence students' NVR. Alternatively, teachers could discuss the importance of nonverbal communication with students and explain to students that teaching is a two-way street, pointing out that if students are more responsive, then the teacher will be interactive also. Therefore teachers could aim to educate students on how to act nonverbally in the classroom, which would help them to be better audience members in all areas of life. If teachers are successful in increasing student nonverbal engagement, whether by using more confirming behaviors or discussing the importance of nonverbal communication with students, it could help to also increase instructor satisfaction and self-efficacy, making increasing student nonverbal interactions an important implication.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

One limitation of this study was the nature of the questionnaire. The survey focused on teachers' self-reports of their own behaviors and other reports of student behaviors. This limits the findings of the study because it does not report on student perceptions. Future research should compare teacher and student perceptions to understand the dynamics of the classroom more fully. Additionally, other methods, such as classroom observations and qualitative interviews of both instructors and students, would expand knowledge in these areas also. For instance, an interview would allow researchers to delve further into what instructors are feeling in the classroom and why they engage in more behaviors, such as

confirming students. More method triangulation can help to form stronger claims about teacher communication behaviors. Another limitation was the length of the survey. Some participants may have become fatigued while taking the survey. However, to account for survey fatigue, we displayed survey questions in random order and checked for outliers with the regression analysis.

One last limitation was the diversity of the sample. The sample included mostly White/Caucasian instructors. Instructors of different races may have different experiences with students, which should be explored in future research. Furthermore, international teachers may also have different experiences based on their culture that could influence their teaching. Future research should examine how international instructors experience emotional contagion differently in the classroom.

Furthermore, more research needs to be done to understand teacher levels of emotional contagion, satisfaction, self-efficacy, confirmation, and perceptions of student NVR. For instance, future researchers could consider if the level or topic of the class influences teacher perceptions. Students in basic course classes may be less satisfied than students in upper-level major courses, therefore affecting teachers' perceptions of both their own behaviors and the behaviors of students.

CONCLUSION

This study sought to explore emotional contagion in the classroom. Overall, we found that levels of emotional contagion are related to instructor satisfaction, perceptions of student nonverbal behaviors, perceptions of their own confirmation behaviors, and self-efficacy. Through an emotional contagion lens, this study also found that student behaviors, level of emotional contagion, instructor self-efficacy, and satisfaction with teaching all significantly predict teacher confirmation behaviors. These findings demonstrate the importance of emotions in the classroom.

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