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Introduction

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program prepares low-income, first-generation college students and students from underrepresented groups to pursue graduate study that culminates in PhD degrees. At the encouragement of the McNair Foundation, Congress named the program to honor the legacy of Ronald McNair, an African American NASA astronaut and physicist who died aboard the space shuttle Challenger in 1986. Each year, the UO supports approximately twenty-eight qualifying undergraduate McNair Scholars who show potential and commitment to complete doctoral-level work.

Christabelle Dragoo, PhD | TRIO McNair Director

This year, the TRIO McNair Scholars Program partnered with the Oregon Undergraduate Research Journal (OURJ) for a second year in a row to publish a collection of McNair Scholars' capstone research projects. This publication is the inaugural issue of the *TRIO McNair Scholars Research Journal*. The following works were reviewed and approved by McNair Faculty Mentors and copy-edited by the OURJ Editorial Board.

Jay Taylor and Kyla Schmitt | OURJ Editors-in-Chief

Somos de Muchas Voces: Science and Environmental and Climate Justice Radio Reporting in the Willamette Valley

Maya Rios is completing a Data Science degree with minors in Spanish and English. Maya's research project titled "Somos de Muchas Voces: Science and Environmental Radio Reporting in the Willamette Valley" was mentored by Professor Catalina de Onís, Environmental Justice and Latinx scholar in the Clark Honors College. Maya hopes to expand on this research in the future for her senior thesis.

Dr. Catalina de Onís is an interdisciplinary teacher-scholar with interests in communication and rhetorical studies, Latina/e/x feminisms, Latine communication studies, environmental, climate, and energy justice studies, and (auto)ethnographic methods. Catalina is the author of Energy Islands: Metaphors of Power, Extractivism, and Justice in Puerto Rico (University of California Press, 2021).

Abstract

Effective communication is vital for communities that are typically disregarded and devalued in the dominant scientific discourse; for these communities to convey quality research, culture-centered scientific communication is crucial. This paper explores the significance of environmental and climate justice communication in the Pacific Northwest and emphasizes the need to recognize and address the disproportionate burden faced by communities of color and low-wealth communities. Despite a plethora of English-language publications in the United States, a significant portion of the population, including Spanish speakers, lacks access to culturally resonant scientific information. This lack of access hinders these communities' ability to contribute to environmental policies and other concerns that affect them. This paper presents a project conducted in collaboration with Radio Poder—a Spanish and Indigenous-language radio station in Oregon that aims to create Spanish-language science programming focusing on environmental and climate justice. By centering the voices of Spanish-speaking communities and featuring Latine scientists, practitioners, and activists, among others, the project seeks to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge

and public understanding to foster inclusive environmental and climate justice communication.

1. Introduction

Culture-centered communication is essential for producing quality research in health and other scientific domains (Dutta). This is especially true in climate research, as research on climate change and potential climate action can be most effective when it is properly communicated to the communities that climate change will affect the most. As the climate crisis worsens, combining with existing and emergent concerns about pollution and toxins, environmental justice is essential for ensuring an equitable future for all inhabitants of the Pacific Northwest. Environmental justice advocates call for the recognition and refutation of the disproportionate burden imposed on poor and racially minoritized communities by environmentally harmful conditions, practices, and systems (Pezzullo and Cox 42). Most environmental and climate science literature produced in the United States is written for English-speaking audiences familiar with the technical jargon of the field. This approach results in many non-English speaking audiences being unable to accurately interpret or contribute to environmental policies and other concerns that could have large ramifications in their communities.

In the summer of 2023, we examined opportunities for generating Spanish-language science radio programming, primarily about environmental and climate justice, that centers on Spanish-speaking listeners and interviewees in the Pacific Northwest. I created a catalog of science-focused radio stories for a primary audience of Spanish-speaking Latine people and communities in the Willamette Valley. This project was in collaboration with Radio Poder, a Spanish and Indigenous-language radio station in Woodburn, Oregon (Onís).

2. Guiding Objectives and Responding to Communication Needs

Struggles for environmental and climate justice for Latine communities in the Pacific Northwest have a long and complex history. Although community activists, in addition to state and federal legislation, have helped to enact policies that combat these injustices, there are still many systemic issues that the Latine community faces today. In Oregon, 15 percent of the total population identifies as Hispanic or Latine, and members of this demographic community continue to grow. In Woodburn, the Hispanic and Latine community is more than 60 percent of the total population (Onís, Cubelos, and Rocio Ortiz Chavarria).

Acknowledging the exclusivity that permeates the field of scientific communication is crucial. Our reporting team sought to intervene against the dearth of Spanish-language scientific communication that centered Latine communities. This effort also sought to

make scientific areas of study and topics more accessible to non-academic audiences—specifically for, and in, conversation with Latine people in the Willamette Valley. Historically, and still too often in the present day, Latine communities have not been centered in research on the significant impacts of climate change, nor the potential equitable solutions in response to its effects, especially in the scientific community (Donaghy). By focusing on this historically ignored group and centering the Latine community when producing our Spanish radio programs, we contributed to cultivating key content and conversations within the Latine community in the Willamette Valley.

In the United States, scholarly and popular science sources are produced in English and are only sometimes translated into non-English languages. During this translation process, many key ideas can be lost, leaving communities with lower English fluency at a disadvantage in science comprehension (Ramírez-Castañeda). The Willamette Valley, and Oregon more broadly, are often regarded as "environmental utopia[s]" (Sifuentez 26), whose white and financially privileged residents pride themselves on their culture's sustainability and environmental action and recreation. However, efforts in Oregon to address factors threatening the environment and climate change, at best, disregard Latine communities and, at worst, do them active harm (Sifuentez).

One solution to make environmental and climate communication more accessible to Latine communities is to create science content with Spanish-speaking and Latine scientists, practitioners, and activists, among others. This effort must also recognize that many individuals and groups in these communities are leading environmental and climate justice organization. By centering Latine voices for a Latine audience, our team strove to communicate science topics more accessibly, and in a more culture-centered way for Spanish speakers in the Willamette Valley.

3. Literature Review

Environmental justice is the belief that "all people and communities are entitled to equal protection of environmental and public health laws and regulations" (Pellow 42). David N. Pellow, a leading environmental justice scholar, describes four principles, or "pillars," for understanding a critical approach to this movement:

1. Social inequalities exist and persist in society, requiring intersectional analyses.
2. Environmental injustice exists at both local and global scales and across time.
3. Social inequities are deeply engrained in society and enforced by state powers, pointing to the need for direct democracy.
4. No community or living creature should be "sacrificed" or be considered "expendable" when finding environmental and climate solutions (Pellow 42).

Addressing environmental injustice requires a comprehensive understanding of intersecting power struggles related to racism, gender oppression, and economic

injustices. An intersectional approach to environmental justice with broader societal issues will assist the need to foster meaningful change.

Pillars one and two state that social inequality is something persistent and deeply ingrained in society. Environmental justice scholars and practitioners believe that environmental inequalities persist wherever social and class inequalities reside. Environmental justice actors have historically focused on how racism and economic injustices impact environmental inequity, but critical environmental justice looks deeper into how intersections of race, gender, class, dis/ability, sexuality, and more will impact a person's experiences with power and environmental in/justice.

Pillars three and four describe the deeply ingrained societal injustices that cause marginalized populations to be treated as expendable. The health and well-being of communities of color, and other marginalized groups, have been systemically threatened in favor of corporate profits, governmental regulations, and keeping affluent neighborhoods protected from pollution. Environmental justice scholars refute the "minority move-in hypothesis," which suggests that people of color move into already polluted neighborhoods. Scholars instead state that the federal government and corporations intentionally target communities of color to house polluting industries and dispose of their pollutants (Bullard).

A prime example of unjust environmental policies at the federal level is the existence of "sacrifice zones." These are land areas allotted for chemical refinement or industrial debris overlapping with poor neighborhoods and neighborhoods of color. The toxins in these sacrifice zones cause chronic health issues for those who live in or near them. As a result, Black, Indigenous, and other people of color have a higher chance of dying from environmental factors than White people (Patnaik). When discussing environmental justice critically, these philosophical pillars remind us that environmental discrimination is only one part of a larger system of systemic inequality.

Scholar Julie Sze states that thinking globally of environmental justice, while acting locally, demands people to consider the relationship between the local and global scale; scale, in this context, communicates not only size and space but temporal considerations as well. This understanding means that we must acknowledge how far-reaching environmental toxins can be, as well as the temporal effects of environmental impacts. To strive for environmental justice ethically, we must consider how corporate polluters, political allies, and our own actions impact not only communities past and present, but also communities in the future.

Conversations of environmentalism, especially in the United States, often disregard the systemic and structural environmental issues affecting Black, Latine, and Indigenous areas that are far more likely to experience disproportionate environmental harm. These communities often face environmental discrimination from government actors who make decisions regarding public health and the application of scientific knowledge (Pulido). An example of this is in Brooks, Oregon, where a trash incinerator plant burned

more medical waste than legally allowed in an area with a high population of Black and Latine individuals (Beyond Toxics). This case resulted in the passing of Oregon Senate Bill 488 in June 2023, in which new emissions caps were enacted to reduce the release of toxins into low-wealth areas and communities of color—home to many people who communicate in non-English languages.

The English language is often regarded as the "universal language of science," and being able to understand the language and its associated jargon is an unspoken advantage in the world of science and academia. In the 1960s, about 40 percent of scientific literature was published in Russian, German, or French; however, in the modern day most scientific research is published in English (Deng). Even though people whose first language is English only make up five percent of the global population, more than three-quarters of all scientific publishing is produced in English and 98 percent of science publications are produced with an English-language option (Kaufman). In some science fields, such as physics, engineering, and mathematics, over 90 percent of all scientific publishing is done solely in English. This emphasis can create a "double disconnection" between academics and communities where English is not the primary spoken language (Montgomery and Crystal 2).

According to a Pew Research Center analysis of US Census Bureau data in 2013, 33.2 million Hispanics speak English proficiently in the United States. Additionally, 89 percent of US-born Latines speak English proficiently as opposed to only 34 percent of non-US-born Latines in the United States (Krogstad). This disparity between the number of Latine individuals in the United States who can speak English proficiently and the number of scientific publications published in an accessible language to them, leads to many Latine individuals having inequitable access to scientific research. This is compounded by the way Latine communities' environmental knowledge and observations are underheard and erased.

Most scientific publications are written using advanced vocabulary and industry terminology because the primary audience typically consists of field experts and academics. This means that the average person is unable to properly understand the nuances of scientific publications. This discrepancy is even worse with non-heritage speakers of English. In STEM fields, scientists and researchers are thoroughly trained in research methodologies, analytical skills, and the ability to communicate with other scientists and peers; however, there is often a significant gap between how scientists and academics communicate their subject and a layperson's capacity for comprehension (Brownell). This knowledge gap is often reinforced because most scientists are not trained in how to make their work accessible. This larger disconnect can manifest in layperson audiences viewing the sciences as nebulous fields outside of their breadth of knowledge, and academics finding their research increasingly difficult to communicate to public-facing audiences.

One of the greater issues in bridging the knowledge gap between scientists and the general public is the financial barrier to even begin closing the gap. A major function of scientific communication should be to make research digestible and approachable to diverse audiences without inaccurately conveying information. Many articles are published in scientific journals or in scientific databases which require money to access the information. Additionally, one of the larger invisible barriers includes the ability to comprehend the English language at a post-secondary level to an advanced degree.

The overall disconnect between academic and layperson audiences acts as a language barrier in scientific communication (Simis). As an intervention, this research project produced scientific radio pieces for Radio Poder in Woodburn, Oregon, and surrounding areas with interviews from Spanish-speaking scientists, community organizers, and other individuals promoting multilingual scientific communication and literacy. Woodburn and the surrounding areas have a high percentage of individuals who speak Spanish as their primary language, with many in the community speaking little or no English, and many speaking Indigenous languages (Radio Poder).

4. Context and Methods

Radio Poder is a radio station that creates programs for the migrant community in the Willamette Valley, with a focus on local and national issues affecting Latines. The station's primary audience includes Spanish and Indigenous language speakers in the Willamette Valley, and people interested in how environmental justice, worker's rights, immigration, Latin American news, and access to education and health affect the Latine community. Radio Poder typically creates radio capsules, short programs that share stories about science, culture, or life experiences for their audience. Based on their location and the station's broadcast range, Radio Poder has a potential reach of over 300,000 listeners (Radio Poder).

The preliminary process of this project involved in-depth research of potential stories in the Willamette Valley about scientific studies conducted by Hispanic and Latine, Spanish-speaking scientists, and bilingual community practitioners and activists specializing in projects about environmental and climate justice and Latine community concerns. In some stories, we expanded our topics to include scientists from other areas in the Pacific Northwest, whose work we thought would interest listeners. One such interviewee was Dr. Ernesto Alvarado from the University of Washington, whose research focuses on wildland fire management and fire ecology. He described how communities of color and migrant communities are affected by forest fires. After interviewees, like Dr. Alvarado, agreed to be featured on our program, we set up a preliminary interview with them to better understand their activities and interests. This preliminary interview was conducted in English and consisted of asking their title, their research or other focus, and other open-ended questions about their work. We focused on what was interesting to the interviewee, as we believed this material might be interesting to the Radio Poder listeners as well. We used a similar approach with

community activists by highlighting programming and advocacy efforts that could benefit the Latine community. After the preliminary interviews, we drafted six to seven questions per interviewee about their research or advocacy efforts and how this work can inform the Latine, Spanish-speaking public.

Using equipment and podcast recording studios at the University of Oregon's School of Journalism and Communication, each interviewee arrived for a casual, podcast-style conversation to talk about their research or activism. If an in-person interview was not possible, a Zoom interview was conducted. This casual atmosphere was intended to make the interview comfortable and to make the format of the interview more approachable. After the interview, we recorded a voiceover, including a conclusion, to give context. Other program creators and I used Adobe Audition during post-production to offer clarifying terms mid-interview to make complex topics more digestible. This process involved developing a variety of skills essential for journalistic radio reporting, such as interviewing and video editing.

5. Results

After more than three months of work (June to September 2023) our team created 12, 10-minute, science stories for Radio Poder (https://turadiopoder.org/category/radio-poder/). The topics of our stories fell into three general categories: climate change-related scientific radio reporting; general scientific radio reporting; and programs meant to promote scientific engagement for Willamette Valley Latine individuals who are not in the sciences. This latter category involved justice-oriented and recreation-focused programming.

Our first interview featured Dr. Alvarado of the University of Washington, who discussed how wildfires in the Pacific Northwest harm migrant communities. In his interview, he explained how forest fires can impact people's financial situation and health. Those who have office jobs can often work from home to avoid the smoke produced by forest fires, but many Latine migrant individuals in the Pacific Northwest work outside as farm laborers or as pineros—tree planters. As a result, migrant communities are at an increased risk of negative health effects caused by forest fires and climate change. Because the interview was conducted in Spanish, Dr. Alvarado was able to discuss the impact of his climate research in his native language to a Spanish-speaking audience without any key issues being lost in the translating process.

Featuring scientific research that was not necessarily climate change-specific proved to be useful in this program because it provided a broader range of what scientific research can look like in practice. This was the case for our third interviewee, Nicole Martinez-Llaurador, a doctoral candidate at the Institute of Ecology and Evolution at the University of Oregon. Martinez-Llaurador explained the importance of native bees to local ecosystems in the Pacific Northwest. She also detailed the process of her data collection, which included sitting in a field of flowers and counting the number of bees that landed

on a patch of flowers in a given time frame. Martinez-Llaurador's interview sought to benefit listeners by giving an example of how ecological data collection can be performed in the real world, and providing a more nuanced view of how scientific research can be conducted for a non-scientific audience.

Some of our other interviews highlighted community events to showcase Latine advancements in the STEM fields at all education levels and to make science more accessible for listeners. In an episode that featured two shorter stories, the first section highlighted an event for a youth science summer program at the University of Oregon's Museum of Natural and Cultural History in Eugene. This program was meant to promote scientific engagement among bilingual children and had the goal of inspiring students to become more engaged with scientific exploration. For the second part of this story, we interviewed undergraduate student Ruby Canchola, president of Oregon State University's chapter for the Society of Professional Engineers. Her interview highlighted the importance of having a community of other Latines in STEM on campus, and how this presence can help retention rates in engineering for historically underrepresented individuals. In this project, we wanted to showcase existing and continuing work being conducted by Latine and Spanish-speaking scientists in the Pacific Northwest, and to provide resources on how audience members and their families can learn about scientific research and/or become involved in public science in their community.

Many of the episodes featured multiple voices and multidisciplinary interviewees. Individuals not featured in episodes were still able to play a large part in supporting content generation and Latine community building among and beyond members of the production team. Our project also resulted in an online archive of shows that Dr. Catalina de Onís organized and edited (https://radiocienciayjusticia.com/). Both this online contribution and the larger project have been featured in communications by the University of Oregon's Center for Science Communication, in addition to reaching many other audiences.

6. Conclusion

The guiding goal of this project involved highlighting the necessity of culture-centered scientific communication, especially in the context of environmental and climate justice. We sought to inform Spanish-speaking individuals in the Willamette Valley about scientific research, how it is conducted, and suggestions for how to find meaning in this material. This project approached Latine and Spanish-speaking interviewees and audiences as science communicators, often emphasizing community members as key actors in calling attention to problems and making crucial changes. We recognize the essential role that communication plays in ensuring that scientific research is accessible to all communities in the Willamette Valley. By centering the voices and experiences of Spanish-speaking communities in the Pacific Northwest, and by featuring the work and research being done by Latine scientists, community organizers, and others, we have

taken a step toward bridging the gap between scientific knowledge and public understanding.

Through our collaboration with Radio Poder, we have worked to make complex scientific concepts more approachable and relevant to the daily lives of our audience. This study also creates space for future radio programming to include and extend beyond science communication that centers on Indigenous speakers, who are disproportionately impacted by compounded crises (Herrera; Onís; Stephen). Moving forward, it is imperative that we prioritize inclusive and culturally relevant communication in scientific research and advocacy, thereby creating space for communities to empower themselves by engaging meaningfully in the pursuit of environmental and climate justice. Scientific communication marks a crucial component of this process and must be tailored to and made by the communities most affected.

Acknowledgments

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Breaking the Mold: A Content Analysis of ESPN's Written and Broadcast Coverage of the 2023 Women's College World Series

Nina-Grace Montes is graduating with a Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism and Latinx Studies. Nina's research project titled "Breaking the Mold: A Content Analysis of ESPN's Written and Broadcast Coverage of the 2023 Women's College World Series" was mentored by Professor of Practice of the School of Journalism and Communication, Lori Shontz. She plans to attend Arizona State University for a Masters degree in Film and Media Studies in the Fall of 2024.

Lori Shontz specializes in the teaching of core writing and reporting skills. She is a leader nationally in the teaching of community-centered journalism and trauma-informed journalism, and she is an affiliated faculty member of the Agora Journalism Center.

Abstract

This project investigates whether the 2023 Women's College World Series media coverage exhibits gender biases in its softball coverage similar to those researchers have found in coverage of other women's sports: sexualization, stereotyping, and downplaying importance, among many others. Specifically, it compares ESPN's coverage of the Women's College World Series to its male counterpart: the College World Series baseball championship. Through a comparative content analysis of live game broadcasts and written articles during the championship series, the research found that some elements of softball broadcasts had higher production values than baseball broadcasts, with more creative elements such as graphics, music, player segments, and replays. Comparatively, baseball broadcasters used more action-packed language and had more excitement in their delivery and utilized more creative elements. The results suggest that women's sports coverage is improving, although there is still room for improvement.

1. Introduction

Scholarly research has found that traditional sports media have framed women in a way that made femininity more important than being an athlete. The content has rarely provided depth or analysis for female athletes- the way it has done for men. Daily sports and highlight shows, like ESPN's SportsCenter, have not increased the amount of women's sports coverage in three decades, but the content has improved. (Cooky, Council, Mears, Messner, 2021). ESPNW, the women's sports brand, was launched in July 2010 and now, there are women-sports-specific broadcasters and content creators that discuss games and players, something that the men have had for a long time. ESPN has also not fully addressed the power dynamics and socio-political context that shapes women's sports. In 2013, ESPN launched a series of short documentaries to celebrate the 40th anniversary of Title IX. Each documentary told a story of successful women in sports who have tackled gender and sex-related issues, but the films overwhelmingly relied on individualized and depoliticized narratives that avoided the issues of power and socio-political conditions plaguing women's sports (Antunovic and Linden, 2020).

This project analyzes coverage of the 2023 Women's College World Series by ESPN to determine whether it fits into the pattern of gender stereotypes in sports media, such as less important, less relevant, sexualized, and comical amongst others. It also compares coverage to the Men's College World Series, the male counterpart. The content analysis compared live game broadcasts and written articles from the two World Series to see if they reinforced the gender stereotypes identified by previous research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. History of Softball

Softball came to be accepted in the early 1900s as the female equivalent of baseball because the image nicely coincided with the image of women being the weaker sex as the sport featured a smaller diamond (Bealle, 1957). As softball continued to grow, the American Softball Association, the major governing body for the sport, with writers portraying female players as masculine (Fischer, 1939). In a Saturday Evening Post article called Miss Casey at the Bay written on August 22, 1942, author Robert Yoder wrote "The frailest creature on the diamond is frequently the male umpire. Miss Olympia, although built like a football halfback, looks frail compared to Miss Freda. Olympia runs the bases, slides like a man and catches like a man." To counteract that, the American Softball Association sponsored its first beauty contest in conjunction with the world championships (Littlewood, 1998).

By the late 1950s, softball reigned supreme as the female equivalent of baseball. The promotion of women's softball emphasized players' beauty and sexuality. Feminine

ballplayers fit in nicely with cultural and advertising norms of women as sex objects. The image of the frail, weaker sex was so great that sports promoters were able to use the double sex standard to their advantage (Berlage, 2000). Professional female athletes were seen as a form of novelty entertainment. The sensationalism of seeing the weaker sex play a masculine game became a big enough draw that the women didn't have to play well. Cultural conditioning meant that women accepted baseball as exclusively a male endeavor (Berlage, 2000). Girls aspired to be softball players, and the women who played professional baseball were forgotten.

Once softball was seen as a women's game, universities decided it was the female equivalent to baseball and opened programs on campuses to uphold the requirements of Title IX (Withrow, 2023). The World Series is held at the USA Softball Hall of Fame Stadium in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, every year. Eight teams will compete in a double-elimination bracket with the final two teams competing in a series of three (NCAA, 2023).

2.2. Participation/Title IX

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving financial assistance." The amendment applies to all public and private educational institutions that receive federal funding and is widely known for its influence on sports (Schultz, 2018). In 1971, 300,000 American girls played high school sports and fewer than 30,000 played varsity college sports. Now, 3 million high school girls play sports and women make up 44% of NCAA athletes due to Title IX(Women's Sports Foundation, 2022).

There are three general aspects of Title IX as it applies to sports: participation, scholarships, and operations. Federally funded programs are required to give male and female sports equal scholarship budgets (Schultz, 2018). Operationally, Title IX provides equitable treatment in the provision of equipment and supplies, scheduling, practice times, tutoring, medical and training facilities, recruitment, etc. (Schultz, 2018).

2.3. Sports Media Environment Changes

Since Title IX was passed, there has been an increase in girls' high school sports participation rates of more than 1000% (NCAA, 2022), but it does not necessarily mean that social acceptance of female athletes in sports media will have improved.

Televised sports news and highlight shows are part of a mega-billion-dollar institutionalized sports-media complex (Jhally, 1984) which has a pattern of historically excluding women (Kane, 1995; Messner, 1998). The mass media has become one of the most powerful institutional forces for shaping values and attitudes in modern culture:

they portray dominant images or symbolic representations of American society and then tell audiences who and what should be valued and esteemed (Boutilier and SanGiovanni, 1983). A 2002 study on the visual and textual constructions of femininity in Sports Illustrated found that 10% of articles and photos coded covered female athletes. In the rare instance that female athletes were shown, the photos were posed, and the stories were often non-sport related (Fink and Kensicki, 2002).

Often women's sports stories show up on the news as "one-and-done" situations— meaning after it happens once, they won't show it again—something that suggests that ESPN does not allow viewers to build and sustain interest, knowledge, or emotional connections with women's sports (Cooky, Council, Mears, Messner, 2021). In 2015, researchers found that ESPN's flagship program SportsCenter dedicated only 2% of its hour-long program to women's sports. "Broadcasts build audiences for men's sports while positioning women's sports as unimportant and less interesting" (Cooky, Council, Mears, Messner, 2018).

Softball does not have a specific broadcast contract; it is part of a package deal with ESPN to show the championships of 28 NCAA sports – nearly everything except football, men's basketball and women's basketball– through 2032. ESPN does not place college softball or the Women's College World Series on its broadest network, ABC — which has access to more than 121 million US TV homes, 57% more than ESPN (Nielsen, 2021). ESPN does not do "megacasts" (multiple specialized game feeds airing on several networks simultaneously) for softball, but they do them regularly for other top properties. The channel also does not use innovative broadcast technologies for softball, something common for most major events (Hecker and Fink, 2021). Media executives continue to impose corporate restrictions and place limitations on their coverage (Coche, 2022) despite the proof of profitability of women's sports. Deloitte — the largest financial company in the world — forecasts that in 2024, women's sports will generate a revenue that surpasses $1 billion, a 300% increase from the industry's evaluation in 2021 (Deloitte, 2024). A record-breaking 92,003 fans watched a University of Nebraska volleyball game to set the record for the largest crowd to watch a women's sports game ever (Nebraska Huskers, 2023). The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup had two million in-person fans over the course of 64 matches. The 2024 NCAA Women's Basketball Championship game between the University of Iowa and the University of South Carolina drew 18.9 million viewers, making it the most-viewed college basketball game ever on ESPN- when networks invest in women's sports, the return is high.

2.4. Narratives/Tropes in Women's Sports Coverage

Many scholars contend that media outlets actively shape news through contextualization in a process known as framing, influencing public perception before events occur, particularly in sports coverage (Fisk, 1989; Duncan and Brummet, 1987; Messner and Solomon, 1993; Tannen, 1993; Wenner, 1989). For example, the framing of sports events

often begins weeks in advance, creating a buildup of hype. This has not typically happened with women's sports. However, the framing of women's sports is frequently attributed to a "supply and demand" rationale, (Duncan and Messner, 2002) which itself is a product of media framing. Executives, producers, and editors have claimed that there is no market for women's sports, even though they haven't done the work to create one. This often leads to male athletes being portrayed as, whereas female athletes are diminished by coverage that emphasizes their femininity over their athletic ability.

Eventually, the bigger sports media outlets switched from being overtly critical to being ostensibly "respectful" (Musto, Cooky, Messner, 2017). In 2017, researchers discovered a contemporary gender framework called "gender-bland sexism" that disguises sexism against female athletes as reactions to individual athletes' performance, making women's sports appear lackluster to men's sports. (Musto, Cooky, Messner, 2017). However, gender-bland sexism reinforces gender hierarchies and codifies the individual assessments of merit during moments when men and women are perceived as equal (Musto, Cooky, Messner, 2017).

During a SportsCenter "Top Ten Plays" segment, the ninth play went to Missy Franklin, an Olympic swimmer with multiple world records. The commentator said, "Missy Franklin... Way ahead of the pack in the 200-yard freestyle. Wins easily." Number six is from a spring training MLB game between the Cubs and the White Sox. The second baseman catches the ball and tags a player out, and a commentator gushes, "I think he's ready for the regular season! Let's get it going!" Number four is from the Heat vs. Grizzlies basketball game, showing Ray Allen scoring. The voice-over from the in-studio commentator exclaims, "From fizzle to sizzle!" (Musto, Cooky, Messner, 2017). These examples show the great effect of gender-bland sexism on men's and women's sports commentary.

2.5. Changes/Progression in Women's Sports Coverage

Women's sports have the fastest-growing audience on TV (Nielsen, 2022). At a time when viewership for live TV is shrinking, women's sports is the only exception to this (Nielsen, 2022). Women's sports are drawing in younger, more affluent viewers from every corner of the nation with 39% of Generation Z sports fans watching more women's sports than a year ago (NRG, 2022). The softball 2023 Women's College World Series championship series averaged 1.6 million viewers, and the title game brought in 1.9 million viewers, peaking at 2.3 million, a 7% increase from the previous year (ESPN, 2023).

The Women's College World Series was not broadcast on TV until ESPN received the rights from the NCAA in 2000 (Caron, 2020). Sixteen years later, ESPN started to expand its coverage to all 16 regional sites (Caron, 2020). In 2019, ESPN boasted its most-watched WCWS production with a 40% increase in viewership (Caron, 2020). The two-game championship series against UCLA and Oklahoma averaged 1.57 million viewers and 1.1

million viewers throughout the entire tournament (Nielsen, 2020). That year was a significant outlier for televised sports, where growth was at its highest (Stainer, 2020). After the explosion of viewership in 2019, the sports media conglomerate began to increase coverage on both linear and digital networks, such as ESPN+, prompting the company to offer a record-high 200+ games (Margulis, 2020). The 2022 Women's College World Series championship against Oklahoma and Texas reached peak viewership at 2.1 million, making it the most-watched college baseball or softball game that year (ESPN, 2022).

3. Research Questions

1. How many baseball and softball stories were provided by ESPN on their website? What kind of stories were they?
2. What are the common adjectives and descriptors used in the broadcast and written coverage to describe the athletes in each sport?
3. What are the differences and similarities between live in-game coverage compared to outside coverage such as written stories for each sport?]
4. Does the coverage of baseball and softball in 2023 reinforce the same gender stereotypes that existing women's sports media research has found?

4. Methodology

This research was conducted by using a qualitative content analysis of all of ESPN's written and live TV broadcast coverage from the 2023 Women's College World Series championships and the 2023 Men's College World Series. We compared articles and broadcasts from June 6, 2023 to June 10, 2023 for softball, and June 23, 2023 to June 27, 2023 for baseball, ranging from one day before and one day after the championship series.

While visiting ESPN's website to pull articles and ESPN+ to get broadcast coverage, we noted differences in how softball and baseball coverage were treated after the fact. For softball, there were no full games available to rewatch on ESPN+, and the only thing available was a three-part series about Oklahoma's champions mindset. To collect softball data, we pulled all three games from the NCAA's YouTube channel. For the baseball championship series, we rewatched all of the games on ESPN+.

All baseball articles were available to read on ESPN.com. When searching "college softball" or "softball world series" after the tournament ended, no softball results would appear. To find the articles, we had to type into Google "ESPN women's college world series."

4.1. How many baseball and softball stories were provided by ESPN on their website? What type of articles were they?

This question seeks to understand how accessible ESPN made the game for fans during the championship. To answer RQ1, we determined how many stories were provided by ESPN outside of live game coverage by doing a website and Google search and seeing how many written softball and baseball stories are available. We downloaded each article that qualified for this project and organized them into different files. Each file and article was organized by sport, then by day, and was later placed into a category for the type of coverage: game recaps, feature stories, and previews/analyst articles.

4.2. What are the common adjectives, descriptors, and tones used to describe the athletes in each sport?

To answer RQ2, we determined the common adjectives and descriptors used in each article and live coverage. We placed each word into themed categories: descriptions of body and/or face, roles off the field, relations and/or similarities to male athletes, and "matter-of-the-fact" manners (Cooky, Council, Mears, Messner, 2021). Since we were comparing the softball coverage to baseball, we also took note of exciting verbs used in men's sports (Cooky, Council, Mears, Messner, 2021). The multiple-choice Qualtrics form allowed us to see the frequency and locations of the framing.

4.3. What are the differences and similarities between live in-game coverage compared to outside coverage such as written stories for each sport?

To answer RQ3, we created a category differentiating whether phrases came from broadcast or written coverage. We compared occurrences of respectful coverage, sexualized stories, scandals, and women described as mothers, girlfriends, or wives between the two types of sources.

4.4. Does the coverage of baseball and softball in 2023 reinforce the same gender stereotypes that existing women's sports media research has found?

We compared our data from the Women's College World Series to the patterns uncovered in previous scholarly research about women's sports media coverage: common themes, descriptive words, production skills, and narratives. Then, we compared our data from the men's College World Series to the existing scholarly work about men's sports media coverage. Once we compared the two tournaments to past research, we were able to find trends, commonalities, and differences in softball coverage.

5. Results

While each softball game included music, graphics, interviews, and highlights from previous games, the broadcasters had a segment about an athlete's characteristics in one game. In both games, something about off-the-field activities was included. During the baseball live coverage, each game included music, graphics, interviews, and highlights from old games. The baseball broadcasts included competitive aspects of the sport, an athlete's performance, and achievements across all three games. Conversations about athletes' lives off the field only happened once during the series.

5.1. How many baseball and softball stories were provided by ESPN on their website? What type of stories were they?

During the time range of the championship series, ESPN provided eight softball articles and 10 baseball articles on its website outside of the live broadcast coverage. This chart breaks down the stories by type: feature stories, which featured player profiles and off-the-field happenings; game recaps, which focused on the results and key plays; and other news.

	Number of articles	Feature stories	Game recaps	News
Softball	8	5	2	1
Baseball	10	3	7	0

5.2. What are the common adjectives, descriptors, and tones used to describe the athletes in each sport?

Typically, a television broadcast of an athletic event adds to the experience of watching a game. The average commentator entertains fans while they watch the athletes compete. Its purpose is to keep fans engaged during the game, so they continue watching.

Baseball ESPN broadcasters used action-packed language across all three games. They also often used nicknames or told jokes when referring to male players, teams, or events. Commentators regularly employed dominant descriptors when discussing male athletes, such as using hyperbole. At one point, they called a Florida player – who was only a college-level player – the next Shohei Ohtani; Ohtani is one of the most talented baseball players in history (Game 3). Whenever a play was well executed, they would have extensive conversations about how "brilliantly designed" it was (Game 3). The baseball broadcasters engaged in player nicknames such as "Bele Bombs" or "Tommy Tanks" (Game 1).

Research has found that historically, fast-paced, action-packed language is largely absent from women's games, which tend to be presented in a monotone, uninspired, "matter-of-fact" tone that is similar to one you would hear on a non-sports news program (Cooky, Council, Mears, Messner, 2021). In comparison to the softball broadcasters, the baseball broadcasters had more excitement and energy in their delivery. No nicknames or jokes were told during either softball game. Despite being generally less energetic, the softball broadcasters did have a pattern of giving lavish compliments after a play, a pitch, a swing, etc. They would use dominant phrases to describe players being "dialed in," "in complete control," or "unstoppable." However, they remained more analytical and were typically given right after a play or a pitch was broken down.

The baseball coverage focused on what happened on the field. A baseball athlete's off-the-field activities were only discussed in one of the three games. In Game 2, the broadcasters told anecdotes about players' fathers, grad school plans, or life after baseball, and they occasionally mentioned their playing careers (Game 2). There were not any player segments about it.

The lives of softball athletes off the field were far more prominent in both of the game broadcasts.. Typically, the anecdotes were about recruiting visits or relationships with parents, such as how a Florida State pitcher's dad built her a pitching facility in their backyard (Game 1) or how the Oklahoma team held bonding activities (Game 2).

Stereotypically feminine interests such as makeup, weddings, and proms were also mentioned frequently. For example, Michaela Edenfield, a catcher for Florida State, is famous on social media for her makeup tutorials. In Game 1 of the series, her eye look was inspired by breast cancer awareness, which was the theme of the game. In the second game, she did a camo look inspired by Military Appreciation Night (Rorabaugh, 2023). After sideline reporter Holly Rowe explained the looks, she mentioned Edenfield's favorite looks and themes throughout the year that tied in with how her season was going.

It was more difficult to analyze the written coverage because there was a small sample size of articles from the ESPN website. Here is the breakdown of the key kinds of themes and language used in the stories:

	Descriptions of body/Face	Roles off the field	Relations/similarities to male athletes	Specifically focused on sport
Softball	0	0	4	8
Baseball	0	1	9	2

	Matter–of–fact	Dominant language	Lavish compliments
Softball	3	4	1
Baseball	1	9	5

5.3. What are the differences and similarities between live in-game coverage compared to outside coverage such as written stories for each sport?

Softball had more creative productions with advanced stats, heat charts, and pitch simulations. There would either be an advanced pitching or offensive stat in the top left corner underneath the box where the score, count, and pitch count were displayed. Men's College World Series saw less use of creative productions. The creative graphics and heat charts only appeared during pitching changes for both teams in baseball. The graphics and statistics for softball were typically used only during at-bats, pitching changes, and natural pauses in the game.

In previous research about online written sports articles, it has been shown that articles are far more likely to include positive descriptors on athleticism, skill, and accomplishments than negative descriptors (Kian, Mondello, Vincent, 2009). While this was true in both the softball and baseball articles that were analyzed, baseball articles used more dominant descriptors in comparison to softball articles. The baseball written coverage contained a feature-style aspect compared to softball, which was results-focused. The difference in the style of writing is clear in the two examples shown below.

The game story from the men's final game began by employing storytelling techniques meant to draw in readers and make them feel as if they were at the game, including historical perspective and treating sources as characters in a scene:

> The Men's College World Series old-timers have been digging through the memory banks for nearly two weeks, all with the same question. 'Has this been the greatest College World Series I've ever seen? Hmmm,' Jack Dotson paused and thought. It was Monday, about five hours before the national title-deciding Game 3 of the 2023 Men's College World Series finals between LSU and Florida… (McGee, 2023)

The comparable game story from the women's final stuck to the result and statistics – essentially, it provided only the essentials with no attempt to tell a story:

> The Oklahoma Sooners softball made history Thursday night, defeating Florida State 3-1 in the Women's College World Series finale. The win clinched the Sooners'

seventh national title, concluding a dominant 61-1 regular season and extending an NCAA Division 1 softball-record 53-game winning streak. (Post, 2023)

The language, themes, and style of writing remained consistent throughout the written coverage. The softball articles emphasized strict facts rather than excitement. The baseball writers published more in-depth, vivid, and creative pieces about the teams, players, and the games in general and used more lavish and descriptive words such as "GOAT" -sports slang for the Greatest of All Time-, "astonished," "making history," "thriller" and "wildest." (McGee, 2023).

Another big difference in the written coverage was that baseball articles did not compare the players to other athletes, implying that readers had knowledge of the players being described. The softball articles compared female athletes to male athletes and/or athletes from other sports, implying the athletes could not stand on their own. For example, Oklahoma pitcher Alex Storako, who transferred from Michigan to start the season, was compared to Kevin Durant, an NBA forward who was criticized when he went to the Golden State Warriors in search of his first championship (Scarborough, 2023). Oklahoma softball was compared to the Alabama football team and its coach, Nick Saban, and the 2016 University of Connecticut women's basketball team (Scarborough, 2023). Baseball articles had no comparisons of other successful teams across sports.

5.4. Does the coverage of baseball and softball in 2023 reinforce the same gender stereotypes that existing women's sports media research has found?

While there is still room for large improvement in all analyzed categories, there are signs of growth toward media coverage equality in the Men's and Women's College World Series. The in-game production for softball was more creative and engaging, making the game easier and more fun to watch. The softball written coverage did not carry that same excitement, but it did not reinforce gender-specific stereotypes that were found in previous research.

6. Discussion

In this study, the 2023 Men's and Women's College World Series live and written coverage was coded for the quantity of content, types of content, creative efforts, and tone, adjectives, and descriptors used. The results showed that the softball live-game coverage used more graphics, music, and player segments than baseball while baseball's broadcasters and writers used more energetic language.

This study was not consistent with existing research about women's basketball and Olympic sports. In many ways, it is an improvement in coverage equality. Common

stereotypes identified in research about coverage of other women's sports, including focusing on athletes as women, mothers, and or wives, were absent. While the softball written coverage did not carry the same excitement as the men's, with less attention to character; scene; and historical perspective, it did not reinforce gender stereotypes.

In addition, the in-game production for softball was more creative and engaging than baseball's, making the game easier and more fun to watch. Since the 1980s, broadcast coverage of women's sports has consistently had lower production value than men's (Bruce, 2015). By using fewer camera angles, statistics, and graphics, and lower sound quality, sports media depict women's sports in less dramatic and spectacular ways than men's (Messner, Duncan, and Wachs, 1990). The 2023 Women's College World Series did not have these issues, and in some ways, it had a higher production value than the men's.

In other ways, our findings mirror the existing research, particularly in the depth of coverage. Previous research has noted the "one-and-done" situations common with women's sports coverage: when women's sports do appear on a website, sports newsletter, or social media, they are often obscured by a cluster of men's stories that precede it, follow it, and are longer than it.

After the softball tournament ended, it was difficult to find recorded coverage. In order to find the articles on ESPN, we had to google "women's college world series ESPN." One day after the tournament ended, the in-depth game recap and an "Oklahoma softball WCWS takeaways, early 2024 season preview" were published, but they were removed from the front page of the website and were difficult to find. Audiences of online written sports media — which is dominated by the 18–34-year-old age demographic — are more open to reading different types of content than what they typically read such as extreme sports, women's sports, youth sports, etc. (Real, 2006). So, while the audience is there and has shown interest in the coverage, it's not accessible.

There is a path forward for equality and equity based on these results. The growth of viewership for college softball coverage in recent years reflects the success of the strategies for live-game coverage, which have given softball more prominent exposure. This shift in viewership patterns suggests that when given the attention and presentation that men's sports receive, women's sports can captivate a large and dedicated audience.

7. Conclusion

ESPN is improving its coverage through camera angles, statistics, music, graphics, and player segments when compared to past years. However, the differing language and tones in the broadcast and the articles suggest a deeper issue within sports media coverage: one that affects how women's and men's sports are perceived and valued. By shining a light on these discrepancies, this study adds to the conversation about gender

in sports media, but also challenges us to consider the implication of ESPN's coverage strategies.

While strides have been made in the media coverage and viewership of softball and women's sports in general, there remains an opportunity for ESPN and other sports media organizations to build on this momentum. By ensuring consistent visibility and accessibility, we can help cement softball's place in mainstream sports conversations.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my McNair mentor Lori Shontz for always believing in me and my crazy, ambitious ideas and helping me achieve my goals. You have been such a big part of my college and McNair experience, and I wouldn't be where I am today without you. I would also like to thank Dr. Dragoo for accepting me into the McNair program and being one of my biggest supporters every step of the way while helping me figure out every step of this crazy academic world. I would like to thank my McNair cohort. Thank you for always being so kind and open about your experiences. Everyone has taught me so much and made me realize that I'm not alone in this. I feel so lucky to be with an amazing group of people. I would like to thank my grandparents for introducing me to one of the biggest loves of my life: baseball and softball. It's hard to imagine who I would be if I never played, thought about, watched, or interacted with the sport. Thank you for always helping me find my way back to the sport and reminding me that this is where I belong. I would also like to thank my friends and siblings for letting me nerd out and being my biggest cheerleader even if you had no clue what I was talking about. My nonstop talking helped me through research and writing blocks, so your lending shoulder got me through a lot. Finally, I would like to thank my mom. After everything that we've been through, you always made sure that my goals and dreams were first, and you never let me forget that. Everything that I do is for you.

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The Foster Care System: A Segue to Sex Trafficking

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Abstract

Sex trafficking is a prevalent and persistent human rights, social justice, and economics issue. Fueled by a multi-million-dollar industry, this complex global epidemic is compounded by poorly resourced government and private sector response systems. The United States foster care system in particular serves youth at risk for sex trafficking and is well-positioned to provide trauma-informed services that support youth and act as a buffer for harm. However, given overall poor systems alignment and inadequate access to trauma-informed therapy and healthcare services, U.S. foster youth—who are disproportionately lower income and of historically excluded ethnicities—are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. As a result, advocacy groups have urged government officials to use their power for positive reform through the construction of systems and equitable foster care practices that account for race, ethnicity, and social class. This systematic literature review explores the evolution of sex trafficking in the United States between the years 2000 and 2023, examines systems response, and investigates a more effective approach to foster care and systematic reform in response to the prevalence of sex trafficking.

1. Introduction

According to the U.S. Department of Justice, human trafficking is the "exploitation of a person for labor, services, or commercial sex" (U.S. Department of Justice). More specifically, sex trafficking is "the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, obtaining, patronizing, or soliciting of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act" (U.S. Department of Justice). Underage victims are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, but it is especially important to note there is no such thing as a child prostitute. Minors cannot give proper consent to sell their bodies to overage men due to developmental and authoritative differences. This reveals the importance of being sensitive to youths' developmental age, individual backgrounds and circumstances, and vulnerabilities. Consequently, youth sex trafficking survivors are victims as opposed to delinquents.

Although it seems as if sex trafficking is an issue that concerns populations regardless of socio-economic status, research has shown that foster care populations prove to be disproportionately at risk and victimized. Numerous studies report that 50-90% of child sex trafficking victims have been involved in the child welfare or foster care system where the instability present in their foster placements, and the child welfare system as a whole, affords opportunities for traffickers to prey on these vulnerable children (Thorn, 2022). According to The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children "1 in 6 of the 18,500 runaways reported to [the center] in 2016 were likely sex trafficking victims," and that "86% of these victims were under the protection of foster care or social services" (Selig, 2018, p.1). Additionally, the Los Angeles Probation Department found that 60% of youths who were arrested for sexual labor had been involved in foster care or had some involvement/past with the child welfare system, further exhibiting the overrepresentation of foster youth as victims and targets of the sex trafficking industry (Selig, 2018). These statistics demonstrate how traffickers target and prioritize group homes and foster care facilities in order to recruit new victims that no one will go looking for. This suggests the child welfare system is a "pipeline to child prostitution" and an opportune target for luring and victimizing youth (Selig, 2018, p.1). As a result, researchers are led to question government-led child welfare as a whole and investigate how and why foster children are so heavily prevalent in the sex trafficking industry. This raises important questions about issues related to government responsibility, policy and practice reform, and possible systemic solutions.

Over the years, traffickers have become "skilled manipulators," developing more creative tactics to lure naive children and young adults into their traps. For instance, traffickers will pose as "sugar daddies," male models, modeling agencies, and businessmen in hopes of fooling potential victims on popular platforms like Snapchat and Instagram. As the scope of predatory online activity has grown exponentially, with online perpetrators employing encrypted technologies to conceal their identities and evade law

enforcement, it has become more important than ever to bring awareness to the potential predators lurking around the social media accounts of our younger generations and reinforce social media privacy and safety(Boys & Girls Club of America, 2019). An emphasis has been especially put on the protection of foster youth given their unique vulnerability and targeting in a multi-billion-dollar trafficking industry. Due to foster care youths' vulnerable, and often dire circumstances, traffickers have learned to intentionally prey on them, further contributing to their overrepresentation in the sex trade industry and child prostitution rings.

Historically, foster care and the needs of children were not seen as a "societal problem in the United States that needed an organized solution" (The Policy Circle, 2023). As issues in foster care, child abuse and neglect, and placements for homeless children began to gain recognition, state governments began compensating families that agreed to take in children which later led to the development of even greater subsidies for families that took in multiple children. It wasn't until the early 1900s when the federal government decided to make an official decree that "validated the authority of the state to step in and remove a child if they were a victim of abuse or neglect in the home" (The Policy Circle, 2023). This marked a turning point in state and federal government involvement in child welfare. On April 9, 1912, the Taft Administration created the federal government department devoted entirely to child welfare known as the Children's Bureau. With the establishment of this bureau, state-based social agencies began screening foster parents for suitable placements, keeping records, and providing services to families and children in need of familial support around the U.S. Although foster care seems to be a reasonable temporary solution for neglected or at-risk youth by moving them into a warm, healthy, safe, and stable environment, this "picture-perfect cloak disguises disastrous failures that leave children vulnerable and defenseless" (Chun, 2020) to the real dangers that lurk the streets around them. Those who remain in the system deal with a similar plethora of detrimental and negative living experiences.

The United States faces a nationwide shortage of competent and eligible foster parents and placements. This national crisis in the search for suitable foster parents is compounded by inadequate training and support for foster parents, and disjointed systems that segue youth into unstable and often revolving-door placements, further contributing to their unorthodox and poor development as growing children. Consequently, fueled by a lack of proper training and experience with youth who have experienced multiple traumas, and the physical, financial, and emotional demands faced by foster parents who wish to provide support, approximately half of all foster parents decide to quit fostering youths after their first year (Chun, 2020). Additionally, many foster parents abuse and neglect their authority by using their government stipends solely for their own needs. Although foster care is meant to be a safe haven and catalyst for the healthy development of these adolescents, "earnings are prioritized over ensuring [a stable] permanent child placement, which hinders the potential for adoption" (Pesavento, 2021, p. 139). Not only are some foster parents financially

motivated, but they are unfit to parent a child with such a complex traumatic past and fail to love and care for these children properly. As the pool of capable and willing foster caregivers continues to diminish, countless children find themselves uprooted from their homes, left without a place to call their own and subsequently placed in juvenile detention facilities, shelters, and foster/group residences — all locations deemed by child welfare specialists as the "last resorts" for a child's growing environment (Chun, 2020). Not only are youth in these circumstances placed in isolated facilities, but they are also often repeatedly removed from their placements and moved from shelter to shelter. Chun (2020) refers to youth in these untenable situations as "homeless in foster care."

When youth age out of the foster care system they are often exposed to a variety of potential hazards and hardships such as a "lack of viable employment, incarceration, pregnancy, lower levels of education, and homelessness" (Selig, 2018). This increases their vulnerability to sex traffickers. In this context, many youth default to traffickers and "the streets" where they have freedom, some level of familiarity, a source of income, a place to stay, and perceived independence. In addition to receiving little support in the system while aging out, youth survivors also endure frequent occurrences of physical and sexual violence, cognitive impairment, sexually transmitted infections, and traumatic brain injuries, alongside a significant prevalence of depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (APA). Those who remain in the system deal with a plethora of similar detrimental and negative living experiences such as caregivers who lack experience and sensitivity to the youth's situation; an overall lack of basic house resources; support; and effective healing therapy to cushion their transitions.

With the numerous impacts affecting young girls, many tend to struggle to thrive in the outside world and end up back in the places that either formed or reinforced their trauma from their past lives. When considering the colossal impacts of these realities, it reveals the importance of spreading awareness about this epidemic and calls for action to improve the conditions for the entire foster youth population to ensure their success and well-being later in life. This review will investigate the shortcomings of the foster care system, bring attention to systemic solutions, educate the public on the realities and dangers of the sex trafficking industry, and reinforce the responsibility of government authorities to honor their positions as legal guardians of children in state care.

2. Methodology

This systematic literature review, using methods by Petticrew and Roberts (2006), drew on research and technical reports conducted between the years 2000-2023 with a specific focus on young girls within the commercially sexually exploited (CSE) foster youth population. The research used the following search engines: Google Scholar, APA format manual, Zotero, and University of Oregon Libraries. In order to mold this research, searches were based on the keywords "foster youth," "sex trafficking," "policy reform," and "Sexual Trauma-focused Therapy." After an initial review, these keywords were

adapted to focus on data-based publications that used qualitative methods and technical reports that specifically addressed the research questions. In addition to the 23-year timeframe, articles and technical reports were selected from either peer-reviewed publications or technical reports produced by a) widely accepted discipline leaders, b) organizations that dedicate their time to fighting the sex trafficking industry, and c) government-published resources. This review's overall purpose is to identify the necessary steps to transform sex trafficking response systems, including child welfare and foster care policies and practices. The review addresses the following primary research questions:

1. What current child welfare system practices are negatively impacting child development and contributing to the risk of sex trafficking for foster care youth?

2. What child welfare system reforms and strategies may best reduce sex trafficking risk and improve outcomes for foster care youth?

3. What are the most effective policies and practices within the child welfare system that will ensure the success and healthy development of these youths in the future?

Of the 300 English language manuscripts that met general inclusion criteria, approximately 50% met full search criteria parameters. Among those manuscripts, about 100 directly addressed the 3 primary research questions. Of those, 30 sources fully aligned with search parameters and research questions, and 25 of those 30 were accessible through databases and institution-affiliated libraries. After reading and reviewing each source, it is apparent how each author highlights the intersectionality of sex trafficking and foster care with an emphasis on provider skill and experience level, policy reform, and shortcomings within the child welfare system as a whole. Policy and systemic reform were the most emergent solutions throughout these articles, emphasizing the improvement of in-house frameworks and policies. For instance, a vast majority of included sources focus on learning to understand the needs of sex trafficking victims first, and then addressing what resources and services will be necessary for a healthy and stable transition and experience in the child welfare system. According to researchers Heather Clawson and Nicole Dutch, once the immediate emergency needs are met for victims, such as health screenings and addressing miscellaneous medical injuries from traffickers, the next best steps for healthy development long term are: "service needs, including a) child care (for both adults and minors with children), b) education (GED assistance, enrollment in school, technical training/certification), c) life skills training (including assisting some international victims with the operation of basic household appliances, using public transportation, using a telephone, mailing a letter, etc.), and d) job training, finding employment, financial management, and where appropriate, family reunification or repatriation" (U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services). These kinds of services and growth opportunities are vital to the success and well-being of victims who have dealt with such complex trauma and further exhibit the importance of a structured and reliable support system to guide them through the trials and tribulations of adult life after aging out of the system or running away from home.

This systematic literature review will identify the various necessary practices and strategies that will successfully confront the sex trafficking epidemic, reduce the risk of sex trafficking among foster youth, improve outcomes for foster care youth, and ensure the success and healthy development of these youths in the future. Not only will this review address the needs of commercially sexually exploited foster youth, but it will also hold the government and child welfare system accountable for contributing to the overrepresentation of the foster youth population in sex trafficking and officially abolish this "pipeline to [child] prostitution" for good (Selig, 2018).

3. Systematic Literature Review

This literature review identifies 4 primary themes 1) staff and foster care resources, training, and suitability, 2) policy reform, 3) trauma-informed systems, and 4) trauma-specific health care. Following the systematic literature review, core concepts and insights from these scholarly resources were summarized according to the themes previously mentioned.

3.2. Staff and Foster Care Resources, Training, and Suitability

Although the child welfare system attempts to maintain a framework that promotes safety, permanency, and well-being, many children in foster care find themselves in unsafe environments, unstable living placements, and with little of the support or resources necessary for their health and development (Smith, 2020). When taking a closer look into the structure and practices of the child welfare system, there are a series of shortcomings that negatively impact the development of foster youth and further contribute to their trauma and risk of being trafficked. Vulnerable youth are placed into shelters and group homes that often lack basic necessities, adequate living space, or in-house chaperones who are adequately trained or equipped to meet the needs of the children they care for. Given the diverse trauma and abuse experienced by these youths, caretakers must be trauma-informed, patient, and empathetic to provide the necessary quality care for their complex transitions at such a young age. Additionally, caretakers should also be able to form meaningful connections with youth to enforce feelings of trust and security for foster children.

Along with inexperienced staff, foster care providers and shelter care systems will also lack the on-call psychological services necessary for youth navigating body dysregulation due to trauma and turbulent histories. When youth are struggling with trauma and are

unable to find a safe outlet to go to, they tend to resort to old patterns and contacts that reinforce their trauma or bad habits. Additionally, when foster homes lack the institutional support they need to support youth, the emotionally fragile children in their care are more prone to "turn to the underground sex industry, where pimps promise them the security and affection they crave" (Walters, 2017). Activists, therefore, generally call for building a child welfare and foster care system that bolsters protective factors and shields youth from well-known strategies employed by traffickers. This entails establishing a form of 24/7 trauma therapy and counseling within the home to ensure youth are supported when needed in order to buffer against would-be traffickers.

3.3. Policy Reform

In addition to finding solutions to systemic issues within child welfare agencies and group homes, it is important to call upon government authorities to use their authority to combat the sex trade industry in its totality. Because of the new and sophisticated methods of manipulation and coercion used by traffickers to prey on vulnerable foster youth populations, there is an increased responsibility for government authorities and organizations to diminish the supply chain of underage youths. Although government officials have published statements regarding the sex trafficking epidemic among youth in the U.S., such as the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, updated, vigorous, protections are needed. Reforms designed to change the legal and social landscape for foster youth health and wellbeing are especially necessary. The mission statement from Joe Biden's National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking outlines a list of 17 priority action goals "organized under six principles related to applying an equitable victim-centered and trauma-informed approach to engaging with victims; safeguarding victims from inappropriate penalization; expanding and improving victim assistance associated with federal law enforcement; seeking financial remedies for victims" (The United States Government, 2021). This legislation is designed to reduce risk factors, prevent harm, connect victims to social services, and lower revictimization. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released a manual, *Human Trafficking and Child Welfare: A Guide for Child Welfare Agencies,* which offers "a comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach that is coordinated at the local, State, national, and international levels" (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2023). These systematic recommendations identify the child welfare system as a key partner in any effort to curtail the victimization of children in, or formerly in, foster care including those who run away from foster placements (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families Children's Bureau).

3.4. Trauma-Informed Systems

With the diverse trauma and abuse experienced by trafficked youth caregivers must be trauma-informed, patient, and to provide quality care for youth's complex needs during

their transitions. These traits will help the caregiver to form meaningful connections with youth to foster feelings of trust and security with those in the home.

Given that foster children are at a higher risk of exposure to sex trafficking, it is increasingly essential to form systems and protocols that provide resources to meet the needs of abused and neglected children. This is why it is especially important for child welfare systems to develop and maintain a cadre of professionals who have the skills and knowledge to identify and respond to child trauma. An adequately trauma-informed child and family service system is one in which all parties recognize and respond to the impact of traumatic stress on those involved (Bartlett-Rushovich, 2018. This includes children, caregivers, and service providers. Programs and agencies within such a system infuse and sustain trauma awareness, knowledge, and skills into their organizational cultures, practices, and policies. They act in collaboration with those who are involved with the child, using the best available science to maximize physical and psychological safety, facilitate the recovery of the child and family, and support their ability to thrive.

Following the review, it was concluded that "Trauma-systems Therapy-Foster Care (TST-FC) is a systemwide model of trauma-informed care focused on meeting the emotional needs of children in foster care who have experienced traumatic events" and is the best possible solution to the current stability issue within foster youth placements (Bartlett-Rushovich, 2018). By providing an abundance of services and resources to these youths, along with employing trauma-informed individuals who will both be sensitive to their individual experiences and promote the healthy development of these youths, this model can ensure their success and well-being later on.

3.5. Trauma-Specific Health Care

One innovative solution to this mental health crisis would be to broadly implement the Trauma Systems Therapy Model (TSTM) developed by Dr. Glen Saxe. TSTM uses "a research-based integrative treatment approach that attends to both the child's individual emotional needs and his or her social environment, including parents and other caregivers, social service workers, and clinicians" (Bartlett-Rushovich, 2018). This model is rooted in Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), which acknowledges the interplay between individual development and the social ecology of children ages 6-18. Implementing this model in child welfare agencies will help "emphasize breaking down barriers between services, [and help to understand] the child's trauma symptoms in his or her developmental context," while also allowing for youths to be cared for from a trauma-informed approach. Furthermore, in a study on the effectiveness of this clinical model, researchers found that "child welfare staff reported that TST-FC was an effective training, increasing their knowledge about child trauma, offering useful strategies for working with children who have experienced trauma and providing a common language for talking about trauma that was beneficial to their work with one another" (Bartlett-Rushovich, 2018).

Not only does this model offer a sensitive approach to the complex trauma of each individual youth, but it leads to a reformed and trauma-specific child welfare outcome for children, including increased placement stability and foster home retention. This both supplements and improves youths' living experience and surrounds them with trauma-informed caregivers they can trust, and who will understand them with a more expansive level of knowledge on victims of sex trafficking.

4. Conclusion

In the words of Withelma Ortiz Walker Pettigrew, a youth survivor, "youth within the system are more vulnerable to becoming sexually exploited because youth accept and normalize the experience of being used as an object of financial gain by people who are supposed to care for us…" (Saar, 2014). After looking at the various factors that contribute to both negative living conditions and increased risk of sex trafficking for foster care youth, it is critical to bring awareness to the discrepancies and maltreatment experienced by these developing adolescents. Additionally, it is important to hold those who have the agency and authority to create lasting change and reform in the child welfare system accountable. By implementing strategies to improve the living environments and placements of foster youth, and by employing empathetic, patient, and trauma-informed specialists, foster care systems can then be better positioned to prevent future re-victimization. The reforms and legislation outlined in this review offer promise for creating valuable support and necessary resources for those in the foster care journey through their emerging adulthood. These efforts can collectively enhance the safety, well-being, and prospects of vulnerable youth, ensuring a brighter future beyond the foster care system. As the prevalence of sex trafficking continues to skyrocket, further contributing to the global sex trade epidemic, it is vital to tackle this massive adversary at the core of the issue, sustain trauma awareness, and build knowledge, and skills in the organizational cultures, practices, and policies of the child welfare system. This can disrupt the much too familiar pipeline from foster care to the sex trade industry, facilitate recovery, and build pathways toward thriving childhoods.

5. A Personal Reflection

Over the summer, I volunteered as an intern for a non-profit organization called Give-Mentor-Love and spent time mentoring both at-risk youths and young women involved in the sex trade industry or the foster care system. As a result of my time, I learned that these young men and women were experiencing extreme symptoms of trauma such as high anxiety, stress, depression, flashbacks, nightmares, and irrational acts of aggression. Additionally, these youth were not given the proper treatment during their healing process, and many of the young women I mentored were suffering from homelessness and were sexually exploited by pimps and Jons that abused their innocence and youth. My observations led me to have an increased interest in the topic of sexual trauma and its effects on such a young population. With my research, I can

learn more about this community and find ways to bring awareness to this community. As well as advocate for justice within the trauma therapy practice to improve the treatment methods for youths suffering from traumatic pasts. Furthermore, I want to hold those people accountable who have subconsciously and directly added to its prevalence with their lack of empathy and resources and their negligence of the real issues.

Acknowledgments

I would like to give a special thank you to my faculty mentor Dr. Jeff Todahl for his unconditional, professional guidance and support throughout this intensive research process of completing this manuscript. I would also like to thank our McNair Scholars Program Director and Coordinator Dr. Christabelle Dragoo and Denise Elder for their unrelenting support and resources used to facilitate this research process and make sure I succeeded in the world of academia and in my journey to grad school. Lastly, I would like to thank my fellow McNair scholars for the constant peer support and advice that aided in fueling my academic confidence both in my work and in myself. In sum, I would like to address my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to all faculty members, McNair staff, TRIO faculty, and McNair Scholars that helped me curate a wonderful final piece for my research.

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Afro-Nordic Raciolinguistic Landscapes
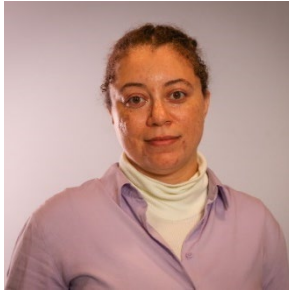
Amara Frost is graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Linguistics and German with a Scandinavian focus. Amara's research project titled "Afro-Nordic Raciolinguistic Landscapes" was mentored by Assistant Professor of Linguistics Dr. Rachel Weissler and Associate Professor of German and Scandinavian Dr. Michael Stern. Amara will be finishing her bachelor's degree and applying for graduate programs in Fall 2024 through Spring 2025.

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Abstract

The Nordic countries, starting in the 2000s, began to shift away from using the term "race" and focused on other identifiers such as ethnicity, which has led to a disconnect between racialized terminologies and their implications. The present research examines racial language use in Nordic countries and explores key themes through a raciolinguistic approach to define race and how the ideas of race may influence language use within this locale. Additionally, this research focuses on the Afro-Nordic experiences around racial language use in Nordic countries. Key themes that were found as a part of the research using academic texts were racial terminology, racial naïveté, and the denial of race. Using these themes, we explore sociolinguistic aspects around race, ethnicity, and identity and the implications of race. The findings of this paper were the complexities around the disuse of race within the Nordic countries and how that relates to identity and the concept of ethnicity when it comes to defining individuals.

1. Introduction

Raciolinguistics examines how language is used to define race and how the ideas of race may influence language and use. Results from a literature review examined race and racial language use in Nordic countries. These Nordic countries included Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and Åland, which have

a shared history of political unions and colonization that united them at various points throughout history. This paper examines research done in the Nordic countries to determine how race has been discussed in academic circles from the 2000s to the 2020s.

For the Nordic countries and many European countries post-WWII, race is viewed as an outmoded biological category without political validity. For example, the Swedish Government bill behind the Swedish Anti-Discrimination Act proposed to exclude race as a determining factor for discrimination, as there is no evidence of race in a biological sense. Using the term race would give legitimacy to racist beliefs and consolidate race as an existing category (McEachrane, 2014/2016). Despite the dismissal of race as a legitimate category, raciolinguistics remains important in Nordic countries. Although the Nordic countries view race as not biologically proven, much of the world still recognizes the presence of race and its influence on identity. A lack of understanding around racialized terms and their impact on non-white ethnically Nordic individuals has arisen within the white ethnically Nordic populations, which has disconnected the concept of race from identity. This paper explores the disconnect by examining key themes found in a literature review: racialized terminology, racial naïveté, and the denial of race. It explores identity and the complexities that extend beyond ethnicity and skin color. These factors influence the Anti-Discrimination Acts in the Nordic countries, which classify people using other identifying factors, rather than by race.

2. Methods

Raciolinguistic landscapes within Nordic countries, focusing on the Afro-Nordic experience, were explored through texts that address terms like race, racism, Afro-Nordic, and black Nordic. After an exploration through the anthology *Afro-Nordic Landscapes: Equality and Race in Northern Europe*, another search was conducted using the racialized terms *blámaður*, *blámenn*, *blökkumenn*, *svörtumenn*, *svartirmenn*, *svertingjar*, *neger*, Mulatto, Negress, and *negro* with a focus on the use within Nordic countries. These search terms were used to explore their usage from the 2000s to the 2020s and understand the history of their use.

The academic texts were reviewed for relevant uses of the terms, to investigate the language used in the context of the texts, and to understand what academics were writing about when using these terms. The analysis included interviews that the academics conducted with members of the Afro-Nordic diaspora, which provided insight into the use and perceptions around using racialized terms. Additional readings were gathered from references in anthology papers and from searches, which were compiled to form this paper.

3. Racialized Terminology

3.1. Exploration of Historical Terminology

Early concepts of identity, race, and otherness within the context of the Nordic countries were identified. These concepts led to the finding of the terminology of *blámaður*, *blámenn*, *blökkumenn*, *svörtumenn*, *svartirmenn*, and *svertingjar*, which were later racialized. During periods before the 19th century, there was no concept of racial hierarchy, but rather concepts that could be considered equivalent, such as the sense of nation. The term *blámaður*, translated to "blue man," dates back before the sixteenth century and was commonly used towards strange people living outside of Iceland. However, *blámaður* exists in other Old Norse texts, suggesting that it reflects an early notion of race. For example, a character present in Old Norse texts is the *blámaðr* 'black man,' a character that was viewed as "fantastical or demonic." Yet, there are moments where *blámaðr* is used with ethnic connotations, indicating that the roles of demon, monster, and racial others were not mutually exclusive with the use of *blámaðr* in Old Norse. *Blámenn* is similar to the former, as it is used in juxtaposition with both the fantastical and racial otherings, depending on the author of the Old Norse works (Cole, 2015).

In Icelandic folklore, *blámaður* was often negatively associated with the dark skin color of trolls and giants (Loftsdóttir, 2013). However, family relations with giants were not necessarily perceived as unfavorable in old Icelandic texts, as some great men of history were characterized as having such relations (Jakobsson, 2001 as cited in Loftsdóttir and Pálsson, 2013). Initial representations of Africa were diverse and not consistently negative, as it was not until later that *blámaður* gained the racialized meaning associated with "black."

In Iceland, the racialization of black and blue when referring to people of Africa was likely caused by the creation of the Icelandic national identity in the 19th-century and early 20th-century, forging of racial hierarchies with European "white" men at the top. Racial hierarchies in Iceland came from the journal *Skírnir*, published by *The Icelandic Literature Association*, as the primary source of engaging with news related to Africa. The most common terms used by the journal to describe African "black" people originated by using various combinations of black, dark, blue, and man: *blámenn, svörtumenn, svartir menn, svertingjar,* and *blökkumenn* (Loftsdóttir, 2014/2016). All of these terms fell out of use around the 20th century due to the implications of racism. However, despite the racial connotations, some terms continue to be used through the 20th and 21st centuries.

3.2. Exploration of Modern Terminology

Terms like *neger,* Mulatto, Negress, and *negro* remain in use through the 20th and 21st centuries when referring to groups of the African diaspora within the Nordic countries, despite having older roots and racist implications. The term "Mulatto" was used as early as the 1600s to reference mixed-race individuals and often involved implications of slavery. In the 20th century, a group called Queendom, a Norwegian/African art collective, had a manifesto explained they did not wish to be referred to by racialized terms like negro, Negress, or Mulatto (Kennedy-Macfoy, 2014/2016). The request from Queendom indicated these terms continued to be used despite objections from the impacted groups.

The term *neger,* as Kennedy-Macfoy explains, is equivalent to the North American counterpart "nigger." In the Swedish context, *neger* is used more often and is more criticized, compared to nigger (Hübinette et al., 2023). *Neger* is similar to *negro* but is treated more like nigger, despite nigger appearing in the language of post-war Sweden, because Swedish speakers do not distinguish between the two. The term Negress is seen as a feminine determination, inferred by the -ess suffix at the end of the word that typically denotes femininity. References to the word "negro" can be found in 2007 when a nursery rhyme titled *Ten Little Negros* was republished in Iceland; a song that was first named *Negrastrákarnir* (The Negro-boys). The republication of this nursery rhyme sparked debate in which many ethnically Nordic people of color spoke out against the use of this racialized term. In contrast, many white Nordics argued that it caused no harm, attributing the term's use to past ignorance rather than racism. Additionally, many believed those who were non-white and spoke out against the term being used in the republication were immigrants.

3.3. *Innvandrer* "Immigrant"

Another term used about individuals within the Nordic populace is *innvandrer,* which was examined in a Norwegian context within academic texts and translates to "immigrant." The term relates to identity and race due to the perceptions of otherness that it conveys. As a result, *innvandrer* is not just a word but a rhetorically powerful concept (Gullestad, 2004, as cited in Kennedy-Macfoy, 2014/2016). From this Norwegian context, *innvandrer* has different meanings and connotations in media, popular, and political discourse. Within discussions in media, the meaning oscillates between implying a "Third World" origin, different values from the majority, "dark skin," working class (skilled or unskilled), and a dictionary definition where these characteristics are irrelevant (Gullestad, 2004, as cited in Kennedy-Macfoy, 2014/2016).

3.4. Racial Naivety

Claims of ignorance of racism have allowed the continued use of racialized terms in the past, due to a homogenous society with no interaction with people of other races. The

1977 article published in Iceland, "Negro in Þistilfjörður [ˈθɪstɪlˌfjœrðʏr]," was referred to as the most famous headlining piece written in Icelandic history. In this article, a news reporter informed readers he had seen an 'African-negro' from Ghana working the farms (Loftsdóttir, 2014/2016). Loftsdóttir further indicated that they received the email in 2008, which showed that the reflective self-criticism of Icelanders revealed a sense of the past. Icelanders were unaware of what was appropriate to say, though their intentions were not racist.

The disconnect of racial terms stems from the idea that racism is associated with the Nazi ideology, apartheid in South Africa, and the segregation laws of the southern states of America (Kennedy-Macfoy, 2014/2016). Defining racism in this way suggests anything that else can fall outside of that definition. Consequently, past statements without understanding they could be racist are considered innocent. This disconnect is present in many texts written in the anthology and other academic texts used in the literature review.

In addition to the disconnect from and rejection of racism due to ignorance, there is the concept of "colorblind Sweden." Swedish colorblindness permeates Swedish society and is often equated with antiracism in the Swedish context (Hübinette et al., 2023). While the concept of a colorblind country primarily only applies to Sweden, per Hübinette et al., the use of these racial terms remains in use and is considered to be harmless. For example, Loftsdóttir (2014/2016) analyzed the blog pages and interviews produced during the debate around the republication of the nursery rhyme *Ten Little Negros* or *Negrastrákarnir* (The Negro-boys). His analysis found that many sources expressed that the book was not racist because Icelanders were unfamiliar with racism. The analysis also notes that people with dark skin are seen as a distinct group but does not address the historical and ongoing issues of racism and hegemony. The nursery rhyme was not seen as perpetuating harmful racial terms because that term was used in the past and Icelanders were not familiar with racism when it was first published. According to Loftsdóttir, there seems to be a need to posit racism as external to Iceland, a philosophy that can be applied to the Nordic countries. Unlike other European countries, the Nordic countries do not feel the burden of guilt around colonialism and slavery due to the perception that they were not perpetuating the slave trade.

3.5. Comparisons of Circumstance

A trend arose in Sweden between 1945 and 1972 where comparisons were made between the *neger* experience prevalent in the United States – specifically the black American experience with segregation and disparaging treatment – and the experience of white Swedish women and later white Swedish workers and laborers (Hübinette et al., 2023). This comparison was used against many groups, not just the white ones, perpetuating the use of this racial term without fully addressing its impact on the black individuals

whom *neger* describes. The trend was denoted as the "Swedish Negro issue" that overlooked the historical harm that racism and segregation caused.

The first use of the comparison between the *neger* experience with Swedish white women's experience occurred in the article "Our Swedish Negro Issue," written by Richard Sterner in the weekly called *Vi*. Sterner writes that whites have a superiority complex in the United States compared to Negros and relates that to Swedish men believing they have superiority over Swedish women; they turn them into worse people (Sterner, 1945, as cited in Hübinette et al., 2023). Hübinette et al. indicate that while this comparison was done before Sterner's work, it was this article that led to the linguistic, popular, and political breakthrough of the discourse on the "Swedish Negros." Many more instances followed of similar usage, primarily focusing on the issues faced by white Swedish women. The comparison between women and *neger* appropriated the black experience while continuing to fuel the usage of negro, which coined the term "Swedish Negress." As mentioned previously, the use of Negress in Norway continues to be perpetuated into the 2000s.

The other group, while not the last that used this term to compare their circumstances, was the workers and laborers. A writer under the alias Phocas noted a phenomenon that certain restaurants would not admit male customers who were collarless and not dressed formally – typically being working-class men and men in the military or naval services. This was argued to be a parallel of racial persecution in other countries (Phocas, 1946, as cited in Hübinette et al., 2023). The working-class men began identifying and writing about themselves as "Swedish Negroes" (Hübinette et al., 2023). Although, they did not face any ethnic or racial discrimination as they were Swedish, they felt that the class discrimination was equivalent to how the United States treated black Americans.

4. The Denial of Race

In exploring the Afro-Nordic raciolinguistic landscape and how things have changed in the last twenty years, the government's role in the perception of race must be considered. The *Afro-Nordic Landscapes: Equality and Race in Northern Europe* indicated that in 2009 the Swedish government and the Discrimination Act excluded the term race. The Act aimed to combat discrimination and promote equal rights and opportunities to all regardless of race, sex, transgender identity or expression, ethnicity, religion or other belief, disability, or sexual orientation. Additionally, the Act defines ethnicity as the national or ethnic origin, skin color, or other similar circumstances. In the Finnish Non-Discrimination Act and the Norwegian Anti-Discrimination Act, race is not mentioned, but discrimination based on ethnic or national origin and ethnicity is prohibited (McEachrane, 2014/2016). Although the government characterizes ethnicity as national or ethnic origin, this definition does not encompass what ethnicity can be or how individuals may define it.

4.1. Defining Ethnicity

The Oxford Languages Dictionary defines ethnicity as belonging to a population group or subgroup with a common cultural background or descent. However, given Sweden's diversity, many people born in Sweden do not look like the typical Swede – conceptualized as having fair skin, light eyes, and blond or light-brown hair. Based on the original definition, anyone born in Sweden to Swedish citizens who do not match the stereotypical perception should be ethnically Swedish. However, they may face discrimination based on their perceived ethnicity or other individual factors. Discrimination could manifest from being perceived as an immigrant or being subject to slurs based on the perceived immigrant status. Contrasting the dictionary definition of ethnicity with a sociolinguistic view, ethnicity is not simply about the shared cultural background or descent. Fought (2014) indicates that the construction of ethnic identity is not simply influenced by or correlated with factors like gender or class independently. Hence, ethnic identity consists of many factors beyond nation or ethnic origin. A crucial principle of the modern sociolinguistic theory is that individuals often index polyphonous identities through language use (Barrett, 1999, as cited in Fought 2014). The speaker's utterances reflect the nuances of identity in multilayered ways that cannot be broken down into smaller components (Fought, 2014). *Polyphonous* comes from polyphony, a simultaneous combination of two or more tones or melodic lines in music. In this context, polyphonous identities signify many aspects of an individual's identity, or voice, coming together. These concepts indicate that ethnicity is more complex than the nation or ethnic origin as was defined by the Anti-Discrimination Acts. Every country is diverse, with communities that shape individual identities, and language often reflects these distinct communities.

4.2. Structuring of Identity

Comparing ethnicity through both the dictionary definition and the sociolinguistic view shows that identity formation is complicated and depends on the individual. This contrasts with the definition of ethnicity by the Nordic governments and adds complexity to the concept that ethnicity is solely characterized by national or ethnic origin. McEachrane explains that referring to people as black, white, or any other feature goes beyond just skin tone. It generally encompasses an individual's appearance and ancestry, with skin tone being a factor that may or may not be decisive. In talks of anti-discrimination, using skin tone literally can be socially useless because skin tone often does not refer to where one originates. People are frequently categorized as black, white, or non-white, which does not capture the full context. We can also add polyphonous identities and language to the structure of identity. Curzan et al. (2023) explain that language connects to identity, culture, and community. Judgments about how individuals use language are linked to groups of people, particularly those connected by race, ethnicity, gender identity, social status, geographic location, and education. These judgments may contradict an individual's self-identity. By focusing solely on ethnicity, as

the Nordic governments define it, an ethnically Nordic person can still be perceived as an *innvandrer* due to their outward appearance, even if they speak a language fluently.

The term *innvandrer* and the concept of what comprises the perception of who an immigrant is plays a role in structuring identity. If identity comprises a facet of many different factors, including details such as skin color, then the term *innvandrer* may be applied to someone of a different skin color. The term has come to reference many different perceptions due to its use in popular media, which includes the idea of "dark skin." Referring back to the conversations with members of the group Queendom, they struggle with the perception of being seen as Norwegian. They struggle with the burden of proof to show they belong in the Norwegian space. They want to eliminate the need to prove their worth by demanding recognition as equal Norwegians rather than an ethnic minority (Kennedy-Macfoy, 2014/2016). The need to prove that one belongs immediately classifies one's identity as separate rather than as part of the whole, based on skin color and not one's nation of origin. Gullestad (2004) explains that immigrants could be classified as people who, or whose parents, come from regions considered 'non-Western.' Nine out of ten majority Norwegians use the word immigrant to refer to people with what is perceived as "dark skin color." Perhaps it is because, unlike America, children born in the Nordic countries do not automatically gain citizenship and are considered forever immigrants. However, even if a parent has citizenship, their child could still fall into this category of immigrant, which contributes to the challenges that members of Queendom experience. The perception of identity is distorted because nine out of ten Norwegians, per Gullestad, assume skin color automatically indicates immigrant status, which creates a gray area not addressed by the anti-discrimination laws.

4.3. Issues of Ethnicity

Since the Nordic governments no longer use race when shaping the Anti-Discrimination acts, it raises the question of ethnicity and the issues that arise from its use, especially when referring to national or ethnic origin, skin color, or other similar circumstances. During the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the UN Committee indicated that the lack of acknowledging race may lead to further discrimination. McEachrane references a 2013 report that warns people that deleting race from the Swedish Anti-Discrimination Act may complicate the processing of racial discrimination complaints, hindering the victim's access to justice. Replacing race with the term ethnicity, which includes "skin color and other similar circumstances," leaves no clear terminology when referring to people as white, black, East Asian, and more. The change prevents accurately addressing and redressing what is the most widespread form of discrimination within Sweden and the other Nordic countries, aside from gender. This shows the complexity of defining someone purely within the category of ethnicity and illustrates how identity is made up of many parts to form a whole. Discrimination can still occur when defining someone by the broad category of ethnicity, as skin color or these "other circumstances," cannot

always reflect someone's origin when the assumption is made that a non-white skin color originates from anywhere other than a Nordic country.

Given these assumptions of ethnicity based on skin color, judgments may be made for people who do not fit into the model of what someone may consider as part of the whole, such as the typical characteristics of a Nordic individual. This creates a gap where race is considered a valid identifier, allowing non-white individuals who are ethnically Nordic to face discrimination simply from the perception of being an "other" in the country or as an immigrant. On the other hand, the individual perpetuating the discrimination may not consciously discriminate against the individual, but instead, they may have a bias in their perception of an ethnically Nordic person. Revisiting Kennedy-Macfoy's piece on Queendom, these black individuals are not perceived as Norwegian. Specifically, the director of the Norwegian Language Council believed that outsiders could not enter Norway and tell Norwegians how to speak their language. However, given the definitions of ethnicity and identity, this is problematic as the people speaking out against racial language use are ethnically Norwegian, but do not stereotypically appear that way. This is a form of discrimination where black individuals do not fit in the whole, with their perception of ethnicity skewed by the biases of skin color and the prevailing stereotype of what makes one Norwegian. If individuals are Norwegian but not recognized as such due to the color of their skin, the anti-discrimination act would struggle to support their voices in addressing the use of racialized terms.

The disconnect occurs when someone is ethnically Nordic due to their citizenship and birth in that country, but their appearance does not align with the stereotypical image of a Nordic person.

5. Conclusion

Ultimately, the raciolinguistic landscape for the Afro-Nordic diaspora reveals there is a lack of understanding around the harm that many of these racialized terms perpetuate. It is hard to disconnect these terms from their history of harm, especially when they align with terms commonly used in the United States' history of slavery and segregation. One cannot claim that because a term was used in the past out of ignorance and racism, it is acceptable to continue using the term now. Afro-Nordic groups seek to prevent the use of terms that align with the harm done by slavery; however, their voices are largely ignored due to assumptions of their ethnicity and origin. They are told they should not enter a country to tell others how to speak their language.

Individuals born in Nordic countries to parents with Nordic citizenship are ethnically Nordic and can have skin colors that do not align with the stereotypical view. This can cause them to fall under the category of *innvandrer*, rather than ethnically Nordic. The disparity makes it hard for the Anti-Discrimination Laws to be enforced when claims are made that the discrimination is not based on their ethnicity. Discrimination becomes

more challenging to identify when the definitions of ethnicity and discrimination are vague, though the laws attempt to consider all aspects of how someone may experience these disparities.

Upon reflection, there was an apparent lack of black voices on the topic of race in the Nordic countries, which is likely because the term race is no longer used within these countries as an identifier. A lack of black voices in this space reduces the representation and experience with the issues discussed. More voices lead to more diversity, a chance for change for the better, and more inclusivity.

Future research into the raciolinguistic landscapes will be broadened to explore how the term *innvandrer* is applied to groups of non-white ethnically Nordic people. It would be interesting to contrast this with the Sámi people and their navigation with racialized terms over the 2000s to the 2020s. Similar to people of the Nordic countries, the Sámi people have a vast history of discrimination and segregation.

Acknowledgments

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