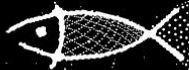


VOLUME I ISSUE I: GERMINATION

a social science journal



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MINERVA'S KALEIDOSCOPE

Volume 1 Issue 1: Germination

Table of contents

1

Editor's Word

pag. 4

2

The 'Construct of Gender'
& Violence

pag. 5

3

Not Merely Toys: an
analysis of the gender-
typing of toys in the
United States and China
and their interaction

pag. 12

4

Untangling the Puzzle:
Coping Methods for
Chinese International
Students Facing Negative
Stereotypes.

pag. 25

5

Priscus & the Huns - The
Representation of "the
Other" in History

pag. 37

6

Do minimum wages do
what policymakers intend
them to do?

pag. 44

7

Quotation of the Issue

pag. 49

Editor's word

Dear Readers:

Hope this letter finds you well. Welcome to the first issue of Minerva's Kaleidoscope, a social science journal. Our journal is the brainchild of a discussion between a group of high school social science lovers. In school, we have plenty of writings for school and for hobbies, but there isn't a common place for us to share our ideas and creativity. We sincerely hope that this journal would provide a unique platform for you, whether you are a history fan, geography enthusiast or an economist-to-be, to express your own thoughts and publish your writings. Hopefully, this journal would bring together a tight-knit community of social science scholars, each inspiring each other. Hereby we name this magazine Minerva's Kaleidoscope: Minerva, the Roman counterpart of Athena, is described by poet Ovid as the "Goddess of a thousand works." To us, she represents unbounded wisdom across different social science disciplines; Kaleidoscope, the toy using lights and mirrors to interweave colorful patterns, symbolizes our wish that this site would bring about an interplay of ideas from different perspectives, sparkling together.

This little idea draws our editing team together. The editing team consists of like-minded high school social science students across China, the United States, and the United Kingdom, who are connected by a shared passion for social sciences. We aim to select social science submissions from high school students who display high creativity, academic rigor, and engagement. In publishing these submissions, we hope to form a close-knit intellectual community, bringing about rational discourses and celebrating the diversity of ideas. Distinct from other journals, our team are student-led and not for profit, dedicating 100% of our energy to the sole intellectual pursuit.

Our first issue, "Germination", is mainly concerned with the intriguing relationship between the individual and society. Erica's insight into the gender-typing of toys draws on social-construct theory, exploring how gender identity is constructed via social interactions than genetic characteristics; Amaris examines the gendered aspect of human violence by evaluating the dualistic male-female model of gender; Johnson, in his survey of Chinese international students, analyzes the coping methods for them facing negative stereotypes; also concerning the representation of foreign people, Amaris, in another submission, discusses the representation of the nomadic Huns in Roman ethnography; Kevin, in his venture in economics, evaluates the effectiveness of the minimum wage in terms of reducing inequality and poverty alleviation.

We would like to thank those who've submitted, and express our sincere gratitude to the amazing editing team for their hard work. We are also calling for submissions for our next issue, which will be published in the next semester. We welcome submissions of any format, whether it's commentaries, essays, articles, or even poems, as long as it's social-science-related. The whole team is looking forward to your creative ideas!

MINERVA'S KALEIDOSCOPE EDITING TEAM

March 2023

THE 'CONSTRUCT OF GENDER' & VIOLENCE

Amaris Wen

Introduction

From independent episodes of cruelty and violations to the collective and systematic killing of people from other groups, humanity has proven throughout history that it has the physical ability and mental capacity to exert terrible violence upon its own species.

This essay explores the gendered aspects of human violence by evaluating the construct of gender. It will primarily explore this violence in terms of the dualistic male-female model of gender and how that model has acted as a destructive force of division throughout history, creating societies primed for conflicts and brutality. In other words, how the construct of gender became a contributing factor in enabling humanity's "inhumanity."

The following discussion focuses on establishing the construct of gender as a thread that links human violence at different points on a scale. That scale reaches from the private and individual to the public and collective, from domestic violence to total warfare, from the physical to the structural and symbolic violence, on the basis that the relationship between conflict and gender has been grounded in correlations, rather than causations.

Gender as Violence Enticing Norms

It has long been established that gender construction is more than simply biological. It is one of the most culturally significant, shaped, regulated, and symbolic of all human constructs. While the anatomical and biological differences between male and female serve as the genesis for gender, the notion of gender refers to the social and cultural differences assigned to different groups of people. According to West and Zimmerman, the construct of gender is "an emergent feature of social situations: both as an outcome of and a rationale for various social arrangements, and as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society." Being one of the fundamental social arrangements, "gender power is seen to shape the dynamics of every site of human interaction, from the household to the international arena."

The construct of gender is socially situated and includes social norms and roles associated with being a woman and a man. When discussing the concept, the functionalist scholars often trace back to the pre-historic hunter-gather societies, where the gendered division of labor enabled the two sexes to perform tasks suitable for their physical capabilities. After a closer examination of the development of this construct in history, however, we see its influences go beyond behavior expectations and extend into political and symbolic applications that, in contrast to the alleged claims of some scholars of promoting social solidarity and maximizing human productivity, are proven by historical evidence to be more destructive than beneficial. As a result, rather than focusing on the genesis of, or justification for differences between the genders, the more important question should concentrate on how those differences are used to create societies primed for violence.

According to Johan Galtung's theory of violence, cultural, structural, and personal violence are the three corners of a violence triangle. Therefore, before delving into the specific acts of violence and war, we shall first explore how the construct of gender plays an often unrecognized role in constituting the underlying cultural and social norms that legitimize and facilitate violence.

Although gender is a social construction that varies over time and across cultures, gender is persistently used as a benchmark in almost all societies to determine access and power—a supposedly biological-based and functional rubric under which the unequal distribution of power and resources is justified and maintained. Throughout history, we see the access to education, wealth employment, political representation, differing in a huge degree between the two genders. The unequal power levels and subsequently unequal life opportunities brought on by the social construction of gender are demonstrations of structural violence. Many scholars have argued that such an environment of structural and cultural inequality promotes the use of force, resulting in a greater likelihood of conflict both at the interpersonal and international levels.

To illustrate, through socialization and gender stereotyping, masculinity in many cultures is linked to the "power of violation," whereas femininity is "open to vulnerability." The characteristic male attributes often involve more aggressive concepts such as ambition, pride, and competitiveness, while female attributes lean towards passive concepts such as being sensitive and attentive. The disparity in the gendered attributes constitutes a power dynamic. This cultural and structural power dynamics imbue people's worldviews with the idea that violence is righteous and inevitable, endowing the male group with the "right of violence and domination." Consequently, through the process of socialization, these gender roles create and sustain structural inequality and systematic exploitation that becomes a standard part of the social order. Gender construction, thus, becomes a multifaceted aspect of discrimination in which structural and cultural violence of one group against another is institutionalized.

In societies highly segregated by gender, gender relationships sometimes are seen as hostile or oppositional, with one of the genders (usually female) viewed as potentially threatening. The externalization of this underlying insecurity brought about by the segregation of gender roles can be seen in parts of the Islamic world where women are required to wear veils in an effort to eliminate the alleged dangerous, enchanting force females possess. As a consequence, the construct of gender is accompanied by a sense of underlying separation, power imbalance, and insecurity.

The discussion above demonstrates how the construct of gender promotes malignant norms of domination and subordination that thrive on social conditions like exploitation, repression, and discrimination. In return, the prevailing gender model sustains systematic inequality that solidifies a worldview that is competitive and divided rather than cooperative. It does this by providing the framework for justifying intransigence and violence, setting the stage for the acceptance of division, intolerance and conflicts as "natural."

Gender and Violence on the Personal Level

The promotion of segregation and violence that results from the construct of gender is evident in abundant cases on a personal level. Through gender dynamics, societies develop intricate, symbolic structures that "allow" the use of violence on an individual level. In most cultures, the ability to use violence is attributed to the male gender. As a corollary of the gendered distribution of power, women are five times less likely than men to domestically assault their partner and suffer more repeated and systematic violence, severe assault, injuries, and hospitalizations than men. Outside of the domestic sphere, incidents of male violence are also significantly more prevalent than female violence. According to the National Crime Victimization Study sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice in 2007, 75.6 percent of all offenders in violent crimes were male.

The gendered power dynamic consolidates male dominance, and the implicit polarization and antagonism between the two genders, caused by the distinct disparity between femininity and masculinity, created social anxiety. As the construct of gender became so deeply ingrained into an individual's social identity, the right to utilize violence became a means of enacting individuality. For example, violence has been a significant resource for "re-establishing" male identity in a situation of crisis and when traditional concepts of masculinity have been devalued. The reassertion of masculine identity after crises is a potent explanation for the high level of domestic violence in the post-world war eras, where demobilization and unemployment lead to higher rates of violence that men use to re-establish their dominant positions. Furthermore, the wars in former Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the early 1990s brought international attention to the symbolic meaning of wartime rape. The acts of rape and sexual assaults are widely seen as an assertion of hegemonic masculinity, and they have become an embodiment of "conquest and power."

Gender and Conflict on a Collective Scale

The violence-inducing implications of the construct of gender extend far beyond the individual cases. They play a significant role in intrastate and international warfare. This section shall explore conflict with the perspective that violence is a highly gendered activity and that the construct of gender can be used to provoke and justify war.

According to M.Caprioli's *Primed for Violence*, a strong sense of group identification with a concomitant in-group/out-group distinction increases the likelihood of violence and is necessary to mobilize groups towards collective action. The dichotomy between men and women is an integral aspect of nationalism. "Throughout the period of state-building in the West, nationalist movements have used gendered imagery that exhorts masculine heroes to fight for the establishment and defense of the mother country." To illustrate, historians have suggested that gender discourse has promoted and sustained American military interventions. In *Fighting for American Manhood*, Kristin Hoganson explored how gendered politics provoked the Spanish-American and Philippine-American wars. The Spanish were portrayed as "effeminate aristocrats" and "savage rapists," as the Cubans and Filipinos were also highly feminized. The portrayal of distastefully feminine or repulsively masculine enemies underscored American superiority. It heightened military actions as a way to prove American manhood's dominance over the inferior and supposedly feminine enemies and also as means to eliminate competition by annihilating other masculine enemies. The power of violation and the vulnerabilities encompassed by the construct of gender thus legitimizes violent American manifestations.

Furthermore, the militarization of ethnic nationalism often depends on persuading men that warfare validates their manliness. This prompts them to perform as soldiers either in the state's military or in insurgent autonomous forces. For soldiers, the willingness to die for abstract concepts such as "nation" and "religion" is not "natural," and neither is the willingness to apply violence as means of social interaction. As a result, militarism throughout history is largely substantiated by the reproduction of hegemonic masculinities that promote men to engage in violence. Examples of this notion are abundant in Jessie Pope's renowned work, *War Poems*, where combat and war are romanticized and glorified into honorable masculine acts to suit the purpose of exhorting men to fight.

To a certain degree, the notion of war in most societies is rooted in the consensus that soldiering and fighting are constitutive of masculinity. This is not to erase the female role in the conduct of violence in warfare; women have indeed constituted a considerable sector of war efforts throughout history. But it's important to note how female combatants, in most societies, are judged through the lenses of masculinity, with female participation in wars believed to exemplify masculine qualities. War slogans such as "women can do what men do" developed under the premise that the battlefield has been dominated by males. Examples include Russian female war participants in the First World War symbolically cutting off their long hair, thus reducing their feminine traits, to join the Russian Women's Battalion.

Coral Cohn has described how cultural scripts of war are acted out in sexual relations, including sexualized imagery in the language of defense, such as the chant of U.S. soldiers in basic training: "This is my rifle, this is my gun; one's for killing, the other's for fun." In *Gender and War*, Goldstein cites literature that describes how the restoration of manliness became a goal for nations on the eve of World War I and in Germany in the run-up to World War II. Similarly, we see the modern-day Chinese government launching media campaigns against the allegedly "feminine" idols and calling for the male citizens to "man up" as we enter an era of increase international tension. In both cases, the masculine gender role is utilized as a political apparatus to channel nations into a more hardline attitude towards its opponents on the international arena.

The gender dichotomy of domination and subordination, and the dividing force of gender construction, are also evident in the justification of exploitive international relationships and imperialistic expansion. In *Gender and Empire*, Philippa Levine evaluates the gendered aspect of British colonialism. The masculine notion of fatherhood characterized the concept of "imperial masculinity," in which the exalted, civilized British forces justify imperial violence as a manly attempt to protect, educate and discipline the allegedly childlike and primitive "rude people."

Indian women were viewed as degraded victims of barbaric society, and Bengali men were seen as effeminate and incapable of caring for their dependents. The British standards by which masculine and feminine characteristics of other groups were defined and judged assisted in drawing the distinction between the "truly civilized society" and the underdeveloped outer groups. These exploitative and violent processes of constructing and maintaining gender differences were also evident across the English relations with indigenes and the plantation colonies of the Atlantic.

To summarize, in different historical contexts, masculinity represented strength, protection, camaraderie, aggression, rivalry, while femininity represented weakness, fragility, passivity. The gendered binary opposition becomes a representation of the binary opposition in collective human violence. Gender constructs are a crucial dimension of group identity dynamics and intergroup conflicts and have been highly politicalized social constructs used throughout history to justify and promote expansionism, domination, and violence.

Conclusion

The Functionalist approach views the construct of gender as a social contract between the opposite sexes that gives structure to social interactions and creates norms that substantiate social solidarity. But the discussions above prove that the construct of gender is exploitive, repressive, and violent. Social solidarity or cohesion it supposedly creates produces meaning within global security orders that enable war through the privileging of combat over peaceful alternatives. The construct of gender serves as a destructive and divisive force, both in the sense that it polarizes the opposite sexes and reinforces inequality, and in the sense that it antagonizes different groups and communities. The divisive force of gender construct, combined with the capacity to use violence been throughout much of history an integral part of male habitus, contributes to inducing, naturalizing, and perpetuating violence at all levels of humanity.

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NOT MERELY TOYS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE GENDER-TYPING OF TOYS IN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA AND THEIR INTERACTION

Erica Zhang

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to 1) examine the ways and implication of toy gender-typing in the United States, 2) explore the ways of toys being gender-typed in China, 3) compare the findings in the two countries and discuss how they interact and how far do they agree with each other, 4) conclude the gender stereotypes shared between both countries that education needs to tackle. In this paper, the idea, implication, interaction, and impact of the gender-typing of children's toys are discussed.

Introduction

In the popular children's cartoon "Peppa Pig," the toys and playtime experiences of Peppa and George subtly align with the stereotypical play manner of girls and boys. Despite that the cartoon is praised for being a feminist cartoon that breaks gender stereotypes and features capable, empowered female characters, "Peppa Pig" nevertheless fails to avoid the gender-typing of children's toys. Although Peppa and George's favorite toys are both animal dolls, the messages delivered through how the dolls are played with are vastly different. Peppa's teddy bear experiences cuddling, role-playing, babysitting, and dress-ups, all typical ways to play with "girl toys". George's dinosaur, however, is played aggressively (as George often attempts to scare others using Mr. Dinosaur) and boisterously.

Gender-typing of children's toys has a profound impact on early childhood development. Toys play an important role in children's lives and socialization, particularly since children spend time playing with toys by themselves as well as with their peers, parents, and other family members (Weisgram and Dinella, n.d.). The study of gender-typed toys and playtime experience allows society to become aware of its impact. It also alerts them of the importance of providing children with gender-neutral toys and playtime experiences.

In this research paper, I draw on social constructionism theory which considers gender roles to be more of a result of social interactions than naturally coded characteristics. By compiling and analyzing the effects of gender-typed toys on children's perception of gender roles in the United States, I reaffirm that the gender-typing of children's toys cultivates toxic masculinity. Therefore, gender-typed toys have been perpetuating male aggression, heteronormativity, and misogyny. The gender-typing of toys and play also hints that women are subjects under male dominance who are bound to adhere to the role of caregiver and shoulder domestic duty.

However, not much relevant study has been done in China. Thus, I conducted a micro-study to see how applicable the pattern and phenomenon in the United States are with the current situation in China. I also explored how westernization has changed the dynamic of toy gender-typing in China. Due to the limited number of resources available, I adapted the "scavenger methodology" and collected informally published information from website articles, and shopping website, namely Sohu, Baidu and Taobao. The fact that few formal studies were done in the gender-typing of toys in China suggests that this issue has not been valued enough in this cultural environment. I compared my findings with the situation in the United States, using the literature in this topic and conclude the characteristics of toy gender-typing in both countries.

This study potentially makes several contributions to the literature. First, it provides a detailed description of the gender-typing of toys in both the United States and China. Second, it makes cross-cultural connections and comparisons that can help identify some of the most ingrained gender stereotypes education needs to tackle.

vWhy is gender-typing of toys a topic worthy of discussion?

Gender-typing of children's toys refers to the social phenomena of limiting children's interests by promoting some [toys] as only suitable for girls, and others only for boys ("Home - Let Toys Be Toys" 2021). When we put toys into the binary division of "boy toys" and "girl toys", we could be unconsciously limiting their interests and thereby the possibilities of their future academic focus and career. By early primary-school age, studies suggest children already tend to have absorbed ideas about the jobs that men and women do (Davies 2018). The gender stereotypes perpetuated through the gender-typing of toys have a resounding impact that extends far beyond childhood. These stereotypical notions can then be very hard to shift and can, for instance, feed into the low numbers of girls taking STEM subjects and men entering professions such as childcare ("Home - Let Toys Be Toys" 2021).

The gender-typing of children's toys is worthy of every bit of attention it can get. Toys and playing are hugely significant to children's daily lives and early development. Most psychologists, educators, parents, and caregivers would agree with Jean Piaget that play is an important component of children's development. Centuries apart, philosophers Plato and John Locke both emphasized that children's play should be encouraged as part of their education and development, a position reiterated by preeminent psychologists Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky (Weisgram and Dinella, n.d.). Play is a crucial aspect of healthy development, and what children play with thereby has non-negligible significance. Toys are one of the very first and constructive introductions of gender roles for children. That said, play serves as the interactive bond between children and other children, children and parents, and children and society; toys are the indispensable tools and medium in these processes.

However, research in many parts of the world has shown robust gender differences in children's play and toy preferences (Weisgram and Dinella, n.d.). The gender differences in toys date back to 1200s BC and continue to this day. Girls in ancient Greece, ancient Rome, and medieval England often played with homemade dolls, imitating their mothers as they cared for younger siblings and learning to sew clothing for their dolls—skills needed in adulthood as they took on domestic roles. Boys in ancient Rome played with toy soldiers and chariots, and in medieval England played with wooden crossbows, arrows, and swords to emulate the men who were soldiers and the knights who were prominent in their community, and to train them to take on these roles in adulthood. These toys allowed children to imitate same-gender role models, a behavior that is found in children cross-culturally. Such toys also train children to do the work of adults in a way that was safe and age appropriate. Some toys were more likely to be given to only boys or girls because the toys simulated the roles children would have as adults. These roles were historically very gender differentiated. These differentiated experiences may be related to gender roles and social, emotional, and cognitive development. They may also develop different career aspirations (Weisgram and Dinella, n.d.).

Ancient Rome and Greece are the foundation of modern Western society. The resounding impact of continuing traditional gender roles still resonates today as we gender-type children's toys. Allegedly, our perception of gender has undergone stupendous changes, and individuals are now less bounded by traditional gender roles. Toys, however, remain in a stereotypical, binary opposition, and unnerving as it is, in the exact same way: girls still play with dolls, taking care of them and dressing them up; boys still play with "soldiers and chariots" and weapons, only now they are named "action figures" and "models". Therefore, gender stereotypes are perpetuated throughout the earliest development and social interaction when children are most susceptible to modeling and shaping.

Ultimately, we cannot underestimate the power and importance of toys and childhood playtime experiences. They are much more influential to children's perception of gender roles than we think. Gender typed toys form a cycle of kids nurtured, raised, and cultivated with stereotypes, who grow up and further develop the society in the same pattern. There is abundant evidence that shows how dismissive and unconscious we have been. In order to provide an early education that does not limit children's future possibilities through stereotypical notions, toys need to stop reinforcing traditional gender roles. Therefore, tackling the gender-typing of toys is one of the most significant, urgent needs for the field of education.

Gender-typing of toys in the United States

Abundant evidence has suggested that the gender-typing of toys in the United States is perpetuating traditional gender roles and enhancing toxic masculinity and vulnerable femininity. There is a clear blue-pink division in the aisle of many retail stores, and grown-ups prepare children with hugely different toys based on the biological gender of the child. The entire process is highly cisgender-normative and reeks gender stereotypes. Interestingly, parents' choices are frequently less gender-stereotyped because they often choose educational or artistic materials suitable to all genders. Salespersons, however, tend to steer customers in the direction of gender-appropriate toys. In addition, toy distributors and online vendors frequently steer consumers to gendered toys (Auster & Mansbach, 2012). Online purchasers will typically find that toys are classified by age and gender. However, this trend may lessen over time. For example, recently, Target, a major U.S. retailer, decided to eliminate gendered toy aisles in their stores (Weisgram and Dinella, n.d.). Therefore, reducing the gender-typing of toys is the job of the entire society instead of parents. The gender-neutral playtime experience some parents strive to provide their children with is fragile under media influence, peer pressure, and many other social interactions. It is a more profound issue than we thought. To avoid gender-typing children's toys, we must first know about the different facades where gender-typing may occur. I aim to provide a detailed analysis of gendered color-coding and the skills different toys develop. Thereby, I would be able to deconstruct the inherent social implications that we pass on to the next generation.

Color is one of the most apparent, straightforward components of a toy, and it delivers considerable implications and gender stereotypes. Color is one of the myriad ways children themselves classify toys to gender (Culture and Orenstein 2021). Colors themselves are not, and should not be, inherently gendered. However, there are large differences in the colors of "boy toys" and "girl toys". For example, according to Carol J. Auster and Claire S. Mansbach, most (96.3%) red toys are marketed as "boys only", and most (86.2%) pink toys are marketed as "girls only" (Auster and Mansbach 2012).

In a study of children aged 7 months to 5 years, LoBue and DeLoache showed that by 2 years, girls tend to show a preference for pink over other colors. This preference to the detriment of other colors is even more pronounced by 2.5 years. Boys, in contrast, show a clear avoidance of pink by that age. The gendered color-coding indicates that we have been adding subjective social connotations to originally gender-neutral elements, such as color.

According to statistics compiled from the Disney store website, only toys in pink and purple are marketed more as “girl toys” than “boy toys”. This means all the other colors listed are more of a “boy color” than a “girl color”. The limited color choices of “girls only” toys suggest that boys have more options than girls. Most “girly toys” are colored in pink and purple, while boys can choose amongst a lot more colors. On top of that, in terms of color palette, more boldly colored toys are classified as “boys only” and more pastel-colored “girls only”. Together, the toy manufacturers have provided boys a brighter and more colorful set of boys and girls a more pastel and monotonous set. Boys are thus more likely to receive visual stimulation from the color of their toys, which could contribute to their development of aggression, vigilance, and bravery. For girls, they are limited to pink and purple toys, which have a bland, monotonous, and single-tone hue. Pink and purple, especially pink, the girls would grow up to notice, are seen as juvenile, superficial colors. Pink, with its negative connotations of being playful, passive, and associated with frivolity, now cast as a “girl color”, implies the gender stereotypes of women being just as superficial, frivolous, and inferior. In other words, the social, stereotypical negative connotations of pink and its tight bond with femininity correspond with the misogynistic culture perpetuated in Western society.

Interestingly, pink, which most modern-day “girls only” toys are colored, was once considered a “boy color” because it resembles the color of diluted blood, which symbolized gallantry, power, vitality, aggression, and ultimately, masculinity (“The History Of Pink And Blue” 2021). Nowadays, it is seen as a “girl color”. Relative to its prime color ancestor red, pink has a lower saturation level, and thereby produces less visual impact when people look at it, which means as a color, pink communicates less aggression, but more gentleness than red. On the other hand, blue, at the time when pink was a “boy color”, was designed for girls as a more tranquil, gentle, and soothing color. In recent decades, blue represents “boys” in the blue-pink division that separates gender into a binary opposition, and 70.8% of blue toys are “boys only”.

Despite the changes in the color-coding scheme, the messages gendered color-coding delivers did not change over time. Pink is a secondary color that comes from the combination of red and white. According to the website sensational color, pink “takes all the passion and energy of red and tempers it with the purity of white”. Adding white to red brings chastity. Blue, on the other hand, due to its association with water, ice, and clear sky, can also convey “purity”. Therefore, pink or blue, girls are praised for their innocence, purity, and chastity (virginity) anyways.

1 From the history of the social implication of blue and pink, we can see that throughout western history, gender division of color often hints at male aggression and female passivity. It is just that the connotation of colors has changed as our perception changes; the underlying message remained the same no matter if it is red and pink, pink and blue, or blue and pink.

There is a bigger, underlying pattern of how gender-typed toys and playtime experience indicate misogyny in modern-day culture. The gender-typing of toys puts limitations and restrictions upon both males and females. However, the nature of the constraints is different for boys and girls. For example, although both genders play with figurines, it is interesting to note the comparison between Barbie dolls and G. I. Joes and other action figures are marketed. Accessories for Barbie are usually used to act on the doll rather than for the doll to use. In contrast, weapons are often part of the action figure's own body and involve "bad guys fighting good guys". The seemingly small difference has profound implications in terms of gender roles. Dolls are passive objects: they are dressed, groomed, and taken care of; action figures, simply by their name, are active subjects who carry out actions. These differentiated play styles may be related to cognitive and social development. For instance, because boys engage in more rough-and-tumble play than girls, Pellegrini and Smith (1998) suggested that this prepares them for adult male-on-male competition. Similarly, boys tend to have more experience in outdoor play with props and tasks requiring eye-hand coordination. Several researchers (e.g., Bjorklund & Brown, 1998; Cherney, 2008; Doyle, Voyer, & Cherney, 2012) have suggested that this type of play and ensuing experiences may prepare them for spatial cognition. Because male-dominated jobs are associated with mathematical, mechanical, or scientific skills, aggressiveness, and risk-taking, early play with masculine toys may inspire boys to pursue these careers. For girls, the differentiated play style may prepare them well for careers that emphasize language-related domains and nurturing skills (Weisgram and Dinella, n.d.).

Children are thus conditioned at an early age in terms of what is gender-appropriate, cutting off options before they get to know and understand them. The gender-typed toys and playtime experiences put a limit upon children's academic interests and career choices. For example, in the United States, women are often discouraged to take part in STEM careers. Women only made up 27% of the workers, despite being 48% of all workers in the United States. There has indeed been significant progress: in the 1970s, women made up only 8% of STEM workers (Bureau 2021). Nevertheless, women's participation in STEM has always been limited by gender-typed toys. According to Piaget, children begin engaging in symbolic play in the second and third years of life as their motor and cognitive skills mature and develop (Piaget).

On average, girls prefer and play more than boys with dolls and domestic toys, whereas boys prefer and play more than girls with transportation and construction toys, military toys and toy guns, sports-related toys, and building sets. If customers choose toys based on gendered marketing and children restrict their play to toys marketed to their gender, then boys' and girls' experiences will be limited. This leads to boys and girls learning different sets of skills (Cherney and London 2006), including cognitive, emotional, and social skills (Weisgram and Dinella, n.d.). Therefore, the fact that building blocks are often gendered as a "boys only" toy might be harming girls' spatial and motor skills from the very beginning.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, amongst all STEM occupations (divided into biological scientists, chemist and material scientists, computer and mathematical occupations, and engineering and architecture), engineering and architecture, which has the highest demand in spatial cognition and hands-on ability, has the fewest female workers (16.5%) (2021). Spatial skills are important for success in science and mathematics. The lack of female participation in the field of architecture and engineering resonates with the insufficient "outdoor play with props and tasks requiring eye-hand coordination" as young girls. More women participate in biology and chemistry. Biology is related to the nurturing of life, and chemistry requires attention to small details. Both fields have a high demand on language skills, especially biology. Girls have been raised and taught to take care of things and be meticulous about details, whilst boys are encouraged to explore and build things. Girls are generally better at language and boys at spatial cognition. Such phenomenon in adults' world has an unnerving overlap with the gendered toys people tend to receive at a very young age.

It is very easy for us to miss that we are perpetuating gender stereotypes, especially when it comes to the fields of research in STEM, in which simply the participation of female students, scholars and professors is seen as a big step towards gender equality. In fact, the media has been sustaining gendered STEM occupations in recent decades. Even though more and more women found their position in STEM field, there is the subtle boundary that divides STEM subjects into "male science" and "female science". Take "The Big Bang Theory", one of the most popular American sitcoms as an example. The audience is exposed to careers in STEM and people who devote themselves to a life in academia. However, the fields which the screenwriters of "The Big Bang Theory" place male and female characters in are quite gendered. Most female scientists featured or mentioned in this TV series work in the field of biology and physiology: Amy and Beverly in neurobiology, Bernadette in microbiology, Emily Sweeney in dermatology, Mandy Chao in marine biology, Stephanie Barnett in surgical medicine, Olivia Geiger in nutrition.....

Amongst them, Amy, Bernadette and Beverly are important resident roles, and all appeared almost throughout the series. The only four female scientist who work in the field of physics are Leslie Winkle, Ramona Nowitzki, Alex Jensen and Elizabeth Plimpton. All of them are minor characters who appeared only a few times in the entire twelve seasons (The Big Bang Theory 2018). The gender-typing in the field of STEM has a subtle yet alarming correlation with gender-typed toys. We could be limiting the possibility of future academic focus and career choices of children based solely on their assigned, biological sex in the very beginning of their life.

It is also important to note that gender-typed playtime experiences can also lead boys away from certain careers. For example, in education, training and library occupations, female participation exceeds male participation in every sub-division (postsecondary teachers, preschool and kindergarten teachers, elementary and middle school teachers, secondary school teachers, special education teachers, tutors, other teachers and instructors, archivists, curators, and museum technicians, librarians and media collections specialists, library technicians, teaching assistants, and other educational instruction and library workers), amongst which preschool and kindergarten teacher has an appallingly low male-female ratio (women made up 98.8% of the total employed) (2021). The incredibly low male participation in early education professions aligns with their lack of nurturing playtime experience, such as taking care of a baby doll. It is possible that our belief in women's almost instinctive maternity has led to more approval of women undertaking jobs in early education. Similarly, in the field of arts and design, female participation is also notably higher than male participation. Women made up 81.5% of the floral designers and 84% of the interior designers . These occupations are very much related to the childhood game of playhouse, (2021)which is gendered as a "girl game". The rare engagement of boys in playhouse, toy kitchenware, decorations, exposure to aesthetics could be a fundamental cause of their low employed percentage in floral and interior design.

Different toys help develop different skills and abilities of children, but the toys are often gendered. That said, gender differences in toys and playtime experiences could cause children to develop different skills required in different fields. Hence, it is possible that toys, in a very subtle but influential way, can limit children's academic performance and career choices in the future. The color, the ways toys are played with, and the skills different toys cultivate align with the traditional, gendered parenting that encourages boys to be strong, independent, and brave, and girls to be gentle, passive, nurturing and conservative.

Gender-typing of toys in China

In China, globalization has brought in foreign toys and replaced the traditional ones. The Chinese toy market and children's playtime experience have become Westernized. This brings up the question: before the global trade market, were toys in China less gender-typed? If yes, then how has the increasing Westernization shaped the perception of gender roles of Chinese children? What social expectations have changed? If no, then despite the vast change in toys available, the gender-typing is not rendered moot at all. What are the gender stereotypes that are perpetuated regardless of time and culture? What seems to be the difference?

In China, there were indeed toys and games shared almost exclusively by one gender in the late 1900s. For example, marbles and card games are considered "boy toys and games" whilst rubber-band skipping is considered a "girl game". However, it is not because the toys or games themselves are strongly gendered. Marbles and card games are not overtly gendered, and in both games, collecting is a crucial part of children's playing. There were marbles of different colors and cards with different pictures printed on them, something both boys and girls would supposedly enjoy. Rubber-band skipping is a physical activity that requires coordination, agility, and flexibility, as well as creativity and teamwork. Overall, there were quite a few rather gender-neutral games played only by boys or girls. The reason that games are not shared between genders is not that the games favor or please one gender in particular, but because boys and girls did not play together.

The social etiquette of "男女授受不亲" that originated from 《Mencius》 dictates that unmarried males and females cannot be too intimate (Wen 2016). Therefore, due to the restrictions put upon male and female interactions, the playtime experience of boys and girls in 1970s-1980s China was naturally separated. The rather sexually conservative, even abstinent culture permeates not only China but also across the East Asian cultural circle. It is possible that before the global trade market and China's Reform and Opening which encouraged and increased international trade, Chinese toys were not as gender typed as nowadays. The gendered playtime experience is more of a result of social etiquette than gender-typed toys.

Some might argue that it was Westernization that made the playtime experience gendered. As gender-typed toys flowed into the Chinese market, the gender-typing of Chinese children's playing was enhanced. Not only do girls only play with girls like they used to, but the toys they play with are also made overtly gendered, and vice versa. The global trade market had an impact on the playtime experience of Chinese children. For instance, the influx of Barbie dolls and Western aesthetics has altered the body image of Chinese girls; for some of them, the new culture from the exotic west awakened their pursuit of beauty. Westernization has introduced China to a less conservative and abstinent culture, and thereby inevitably made girls care more about their looks.

Generally speaking, whether toys and play in China were less gendered before Westernization is more of a “yes and no” instead of a “yes or no” question. There is a substantial influence that globalization brought. More and more toys became available, and the pattern of gender-typing, like the toys themselves, has also traveled overseas and reached China. However, to some extent, the playtime experience of Chinese children can be viewed as inherently gendered before the Reform and Opening, when Western toys were introduced. Overall, the Westernization of Chinese toy culture has made playing more overtly gendered. This is inevitable as China joins the international trade market and accepts foreign goods as well as foreign culture.

Before the 1980s, toys were considered less gender-typed because most of them are handmade or coarsely made and sold along the streets. At that time, children in China played with toys and games similar to those their grandparents played with when they were young. The most common games usually required lots of physical movement (聂蓬 2021). There was not much room for design and marketing comparing to toys in the Western market, thus Chinese toys in the 1980s had less space to be gender-typed: the toys were made out of gross materials as re-utilization of waste products; the wrappers were not intricately designed; toys were sold in alleys and along the streets by individuals and with many other toys, providing no room for marketing.

There is, however, a “no” side. Despite not being overtly gendered, toys and games played by children of different sex nurtures different skills and are quite different in nature. For example, a typical “boys only” toy back then was chess, which requires military knowledge, strategic thinking, determination, and so on. The skills and qualities chess helps develop serve the role of a leader, decision-maker, a manipulator who has power and courage. On the other hand, sewing and knitting are typical “girls only” activities, which prepares them for their future roles as caregivers with excellent domestic skills. Sewing and knitting have significant demand on the participant’s hand-eye coordination, as well as patience. Boys manipulate chess pieces and girls manipulate the needle and thread, or balls of wool, both require patience and thinking but of completely different kinds.

The patience needed in a chess game is the ability to maintain one’s position and advantage while waiting to spot the loophole of the opponent. This process is interactive because there is an enemy. Therefore, playing chess prepares boys for competition (presumably, like the chess games, also male to male) in adulthood.

For girls, they need the patience to tolerate repetitive tasks during knitting and sewing. Girls also need the patience to undo the entangled threads. Compared to boys, activities such as knitting and sewing seem to be nurturing their patience of being gentle, emotionally stable, and devotion-consistent with repetitive tasks, which resonates with the ability needed to rear a child. The skills sewing and knitting develop surprisingly resonate with that of the baby dolls. So do the boy toys, which, for both cultures, also agree with the stereotypical gender roles. In both cultures, before the interaction of culture and toy market, the toys and play are already gendered.

In recent years, the Chinese toy market flourished. In Taobao, the most popular online shopping app in China, the variety of toys is almost overwhelmingly diverse. I have looked up for 10 of the most popular toys, amongst which clay, coloring books, puzzles, chess and board games are almost not gendered at all: they are colorful, purchased by parents of both boys and girls, and in their ads featured either no children or children of both genders playing with the toy. However, dolls, model vehicles and role-playing games are still very gender typed. One toy called “Little doctor’s kit-girl’s medical kit for kids-play house-role playing-stethoscope–babies-tools” is equipped with at least 34 and utmost 60 model medical tools depending on the level of how profession this simulation is; some comes with a dog to perform dental care or a baby. It says in the name “little doctor’s kit for girls”, and in the cover, the description and the detail, all are presented in pink even though the set has blue as an alternative color. It does feature both boys and girls playing with it, but not in the cover where most people would see when they are coarsely browsing the webpage. It is advertised that kids would be less afraid of visiting dental clinic and hospitals, and all grown-ups, parents or nurses, are female figures. On the other hand, a model trains and railway set is gendered as a “boy toy” and features only boy players. Like the gendered color-coding in the United States, this railway set is bright in color with no pink or purple. Although girls are also mentioned its name (a toy for boys and girls), other stores that sell the same item did not include girl players. The pattern of dolls being classified as “girl toys” apply as well. The most popular dolls have a gendered title that specifies “girls only”. For the most popular barbie doll, a comment from a specially invited child and maternal product specialist calls it “a toy every little girl must have” (“天貓淘寶海外，花更少，買到寶！” 2021).

Limitations

There were some limitations to this research, mainly associated with the limited number of resources available about China. The scavenger methodology I applied only looked up information in one shopping app and did not include any offline transaction. Neither did the information this paper provides succeed to cover the rural and less developed areas in China. The coverage far from being holistic but does provide some information of how gender typed toys are in e-commerce.

Future Research

There are many aspects of this study that could be pursued further. First, future researchers could carry out investigation on a larger scale and obtain more data in China to reach a more complete portrait of toy gender-typing in China. Second, future researchers could investigate the influence of Westernization. For example, how far did the influx of Western dolls change the body image of Chinese girls and the beauty standard in China? Third, future researchers could devise and do experiments to test the reaction of children and parents towards different toys. Basically, future research could focus on the gender-typing of toys in China as there is little done in this area.

Conclusion

The gender-typing of toys touches upon many aspects, such as name, color, and skills they nurture. The gendered color-coding is very similar in the United States and China, and so are the types of toys allocated to boys and girls. The gender-typed playtime experience is closely related to the early development of skills and perception of gender roles. Overall, aside from certain cultural legacy, the situation in the United States and China mostly agree with each other. So far, toys in both countries are still maintaining and continuing traditional masculinity and femininity, with an impact that extends far beyond childhood. However, a study done by BBC in their documentary "BABIES: THEIR WONDERFUL WORLD" in 2018 suggested that children perceive far less stereotypical gender roles than 20 years ago. This trend is a result of effort from every individual who fought to dissolve gender stereotypes and make this world a more equal and liberated place. We are now more and more aware of how problematic toy gender-typing is and thus have made visible progress. The current situation is far from perfect, but it is of immense importance to remain hopeful of the society finally succeed in providing children with a gender-neutral playtime experience.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares that she has no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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UNTANGLING THE PUZZLE: COPING METHODS FOR CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS FACING NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES.

Jonathan Yuan

Abstract

It is a widely known fact that stereotypes targeting Chinese international students exist in the United States. As a result, top Chinese international students face the ordeal of countering stereotyping to enroll in elite American colleges. Five in-depth interviews with four males and one female 11th grade students both studying in the US and China and grounded theory analysis unveils that Chinese international students are faced with stereotypes of being not socially active, having higher standardized testing scores, potentially holding more illegitimate grades, and specializing in STEM. To parry these negative stereotypes, these students use strategies of being more Americanized, choosing a less popular major, applying with passion and deep understanding, and attending a multitude of valuable activities. These findings contribute to the existing literature by exploring the self-perceived stereotypes that international Chinese students experience and examining innovative coping strategies that international Chinese students developed.

Keywords: Chinese, Undergraduate education, Stereotypes, International students, Qualitative study

Introduction

Recently, the high-profile lawsuit against Harvard University filed by the advocacy group Students for Fair Admissions back in 2014 that alleged Harvard's race-based admissions system is unfair against Asian American students ended when A federal appeals court in Boston ruled that Harvard University was not guilty in their admission process in discriminating Asian American students. This event shed light on American elite colleges' subjective assessment of Asian Americans, revealing the discrimination Asian Americans face in their applications to elite American Universities. Chinese international students, who are less welcomed than Asian Americans in top American colleges, may face even greater stereotyping than Asian Americans.

Therefore, I explore various stereotypes that academically gifted Chinese international students face while applying to elite American private colleges in this paper. I also seek to examine how Chinese students plan to overcome these stereotypes in order to maximize their chances of enrolling in top American private colleges. Multiple previous studies have investigated on-campus stereotypes that international students face in the U.S. (citation), and others have looked into discriminations of elite American private graduate program admissions from the perspective of the admission officers (citation). However, while extant literature focuses on the people who hold stereotypes against others, there is scant empirical work that investigates the applicants themselves as targets of such stereotypes and potential unequal treatments. Using qualitative research in the form of in-depth interviews with current Chinese applicants of undergraduate programs, I investigate how Chinese international students subjectively view stereotypes as a challenge in their application process to elite American colleges and the strategies they employ attempting to overcome such stereotypes. In addition to filling the existing literature gap by directing attention to international students as targets of stereotypes, my research aims to provide higher equity to international students in their future applications to elite American private colleges as well as enhanced diversity through making the stereotypes of Chinese international students in the American college application process more transparent.

As defined by Secord (1959, p. 309), a stereotype is a categorical response, i.e., membership is sufficient to evoke the judgment that the stimulus person possesses all the attributes belonging to that category. Write something about the negative impact of stereotypes: why is it bad? While extensive previous studies have focused on the on-campus stereotypes in American colleges that international Chinese students encounter, little research has focused on the stereotypes in the application process to these colleges. Americans described Chinese international students on campus using many stereotypes associated with previous literature such as smart/hardworking, shy/not social, and bad English/not assimilated (Ruble 2013, Zhang 2013). While these stereotypes may reflect the general implicit stereotypes that Americans hold against Chinese students in colleges, the study is not reflective of the stereotypes that Chinese students perceive themselves. Moreover, Ruble's and Zhang's research is not reflective of the stereotypes specific to the American college application process.

On the other hand, Valdez (2015) explores in his studies that Chinese international students experience a double consciousness in American colleges, and they try to distance themselves from typical stereotypes that Americans hold. This study does center around the Chinese students' self-perceived stereotypes, but it is limited to setting in classroom experiences in American colleges as opposed to the college admission process.

Multiple previous studies highlighted stereotypes that members of the college admissions committee hold against Chinese international students, but few have focused on the subjective opinions of Chinese international students on their perceived stereotypes. While Posselt (2016) explored the inside application process of top American graduate programs through extensive interviews and observations, her research was strictly restricted to elite graduate programs in the US. Specifying multiple aspects of the stereotypical views that the admissions committee holds on Chinese applicants such as cultural distinction and distrust in English skills, Posselt's qualitative approach directly reflects the stereotypes that Chinese applicants are facing. However, admissions in top graduate programs differ from that in top undergraduate programs since top graduate programs require applicants to be more experienced in their areas, and much more aspects such as the GRE and college reputations are taken into account in the top graduate program admissions. Moreover, my research largely focuses on the subjective opinions of Chinese applicants on stereotypes and their solutions to overcome them, as opposed to the direct stereotypes of the admissions committee that Posselt investigates.

Jiang (2011), curriculum director in two prestigious public high schools in China, claimed that American college recruiters are tired of all the fraud involved in Chinese students' applications, such as fraudulent test scores and transcripts, and he criticized the lack of critical thinking of Chinese students. Jiang underscores specific stereotypes that American college recruiters hold, but it is not reflective of Chinese student's self-perceptions.

Though various existing studies have investigated Chinese international students' efforts to overcome stereotyping in their American college lives, little research has been done on how Chinese students plan to succeed in their applications in spite of stereotyping in the elite American college admission process. Heng (2016) observed that once admitted into American colleges, Chinese international students tried to overcome traditional American stereotypes of Chinese being rote learners by showcasing how these students learn how to think like "Westerners" and how they desired to learn critical thinking skills. Similarly, Mathias and Bruce (2013) also argued that Chinese international students challenge the Western stereotype of Chinese being rote learners by displaying multiple learning approaches that Chinese international students utilize instead of repetition. Even though these studies explored how Chinese international students seek to overturn conventional American stereotypes in order to enjoy better success at American colleges, Chinese international students are targeted by a different set of stereotypes as they go through the college admission process. If international applicants are disproportionately excluded even before they can enroll at American colleges, more attention should be directed to understanding the nuance and subtlety in the application process. Failing to attract and admit worldwide talents will ultimately harm the competitiveness of American higher education in the long run.

Research Design

Grounded Theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) is the primary method used in this study. The research consists of 5 qualitative, in-depth interviews with three 11th grade Chinese nationals studying abroad in the US and two 11th grade Chinese nationals studying in Chinese public schools. In-depth interviews are used since a comprehensive view of the stereotypes that challenged Chinese international students and their various coping methods require a multitude of information that only in-depth interviews could satisfy. In this segment, I detail the sampling, data collection, and analysis of the study.

Sampling

I use convenience sampling to recruit participants. As a high school student studying in the United States who has previously studied in a Chinese middle school, I have acquaintances who both study in Chinese public schools and American private high schools. Of the 5 individuals interviewed, all aim to enroll in the top 30 American private universities, and all are rising seniors in their high schools who are applying for these American colleges in less than half a year. While 3 of the participants study in private high schools on the East Coast in the U.S., specifically in New Jersey and Massachusetts, 2 other participants study in public high schools in Eastern China, specifically the city of Nanjing and Hangzhou.

Data collection

The 5 interviews are conducted in Chinese since by using Chinese, the first language of the participants, the interview could be a more natural process. The interviews are conducted online through WeChat, and a phone recorder is used to capture the full lengths of the 5 45- minute interviews. While the 3 participants studying in private schools in the US represent the special Chinese applicants to US colleges that have already studied in American high schools, the 2 participants studying in public schools in China represents the general population of Chinese who have been through traditional Chinese education and is aiming to pursue an American education. Pseudonyms are used for all participants.

Table. Sample Characteristics

Name	Location of Education	Application Majors
Jack	Massachusetts, the United States	Sociology
William	New Jersey, the United States	Religion
Lisa	New Jersey, the United States	Business
Jacob	Nanjing, China	Geography
Mike	Hangzhou, China	History

Findings

The interview is divided into two categories. The first category “Stereotypes Confronted by Chinese Applicants” indicates four types of stereotypes that international Chinese applicants face when they are applying to elite American Universities. The second category “Overcoming Stereotypes” explores four strategies that Chinese international applicants establish to counter stereotypes to yield a better application result.

Category I: “Stereotypes Confronted by Chinese Applicants”

All participants acknowledged unfair stereotypes in the eyes of American college admission officers inaccurately represent their applications. The particular stereotypes can be divided into four subcategories below:

Stereotype A: Chinese Students are less socially active than other students.

While discussing stereotypes that college admission officers might hold against international Chinese applicants, three of the five participants expressed that American college admission officers might find Chinese applicants, in general, to be “less active members of the community”, citing cultural differences as a reason. For example, after Mike shared how he thought this stereotype exists, he shared how he thought cultural difference plays a major role in forming this stereotype:

“[The stereotype of Chinese students being socially awkward] is a real thing. I think this is a case of the cultural gap; it will not go away. I feel like I used to be identical to that stereotype [of Chinese students not socially fit] in the eyes of American admission officers. In middle school, I could not even understand petty cultural differences like a Chinese student studying in the US dying his hair. After I decided I want to study in the US, I experience a gradual adaptation familiarizing American cultural norms.”

However, of the three participants who recognized the Stereotype of Chinese students being less socially active, only Mike aligned himself with that stereotype. The other two participants, Jack and Jacob, addressed that the stereotype is inconsistent with them since they are active members in the setting of an American community. For instance, Jack depicted how he enjoyed his homestay in the US, and he portrays his active role as a contributor in multiple events in his American high school.

Stereotype B: Chinese Students tend to have higher GPAs and standardized testing scores than other students.

All five participants expressed that the admission officers at American colleges seek higher GPA and standardized testing scores from Chinese applicants than other applicants, which pressured them to score high on exams and other qualifications to have better chances at succeeding in their applications. For instance, Jack has previously told me that he scored 1460 on his SAT, placing him in the 97th percentile in all test takers (Is 1460 a good SAT score? (n.d.)). However, he expressed that his score is not enough to give him an advantage over American applicants because the SAT score bar is much higher for Chinese applicants compared to American applicants. He also talked about how he aimed to improve on his SAT score soon:

“ [I could have an advantage over American applicants] because I have higher SAT scores than them? I don't think this is an advantage, because we Chinese have to face a higher bar than Americans... I plan to retake my SAT in October. If I could improve my math and reading, I think that I can reach the score of 1500.”

Here, Jack perceived the score of 1500 on the SAT as a goal of his to achieve. Though his score of 1460 is already excellent compared to American applicants, Jack sees the 1500 score as an obstacle he had to traverse for his application for top American universities to be successful.

Stereotype C: Chinese Students tend to have more illegitimate grades than other students.

Participants acknowledged that American college admission officers can easily associate illegitimate grades to Chinese students, but they deemed it an unfair stereotype not representative of most Chinese applicants. When discussing the value of standardized testing scores, all five of the participants recognized that some of their Chinese peers used fraudulent grades to apply for American colleges. Three of the five participants even either said that they knew Chinese students who forged their transcripts or said that instances of Chinese students cheating were widely known. Here, Jacob explained how accusations that some Chinese students own illegitimate grades is true:

“Yes. There is this problem [of Chinese students cheating]. We have this problem in our school... I think that stereotypes [on Chinese applicants] exist. It is absolutely true that some Chinese students use illegitimate means to acquire their desired scores, but only these few people definitely could not represent the actions of all the Chinese applicants. American college recruiters might form a bias on all of the Chinese applicants only because of these illegitimate individuals. This is a problem.”

On the issue of Chinese students cheating, Jacob did not deny its existence. However, he repelled the assumption of cheating being prominent among Chinese applicants, arguing that few irresponsible individuals did not represent all Chinese applicants.

Stereotype D: Chinese students specialize in STEM.

All five of the participants suggested that American college admission officers view Chinese students as students specializing in the field of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). For example, William asserted that Chinese students were often strong at math due to the vigorous math program at Chinese public schools:

“[I think that American college admission officers view Chinese students as] good math students. It is so apparent. I think that this is primarily because of the effective math education in Chinese public middle schools or high schools. It is a matter of fact that Chinese schools offer a better math education than American schools.”

Category 2: “Overcoming Stereotypes”

Countering the unfair stereotypes in their applications to top American colleges, participants established methods, which could be divided into four subcategories below:
Strategy A: Being more Americanized to be more socially active.

When asked about how they would cope with the stereotype of Chinese applicants being less socially active than other applicants, three participants expressed how Americanization would provide them with a crucial advantage over their peers. Here, Mike explained how he planned to be more Americanized so that he could be more active in his future activities and be more successful if an American college offered him an interview:

“ I would start talking to my more international friends, I would look at how they live, I would look at how they handle issues in everyday life, I would learn step by step. ... I think that being more Americanized is crucial, not that I do have to be more Americanized; I am living a fine life in China. However, I do have to learn to possess the ability to switch to an Americanized attitude. I would have an easier time in the US, and it would benefit me if I were to get an interview from an ideal college.”

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Strategy B: Applying for a less popular major to counter the Asian STEM stereotype.

While discussing the advantages that the participants possess over American and other Chinese applicants, all of the five participants cited their targeted major, which was all not STEM-related and less popular majors, as an advantage. Though four of the five participants revealed that math is one of their strongest subjects, none considered applying any math-related subject as their major. Here, William, an excellent math student who actively participates in math competitions elaborated on why he chose to apply for a religion major instead of a math major:

“It is true that math is my strongest subject, which is unfortunate because it matches the stereotype of Chinese students being good at math. I would rather apply for religion because I could not only be successful in my application essays applying for religion but also go into detail on Buddhism and Daoism in China which I have great interest and experience in.”

Moreover, Jack, a committed sociology student, also explained how his strong math skills are supplementary to his sociology application, which he deemed as unique:

“Math is my strongest subject, and I do have a high GPA in my school. These are some of the advantages in my application, but I think they are not great advantages because there are many students, whether in the US or China, who are on my level or exceeding my level. I think that my only advantage is the extensive sociology activities I attended such as that time when I volunteered as a teacher to teach poor students in rural China.”

Strategy C: Applying for a major with a strong passion and deep understanding.

Three participants stated that their passion and their depth of understanding of their respective subjects would prove to be greatly beneficial to their upcoming applications. For instance, when Jacob is asked about whether he thought applying for the unpopular subject of geography would give him an advantage over typical Chinese applicants applying for STEM studies, he expressed that the immense amount of fieldwork, research, and passion he poured into geography was very difficult to be exceeded by his peers, and he emphasized that what was driving him to apply for geography was his passion instead of the advantage that applying for geography provides:

“The depth of my research could be paired with that of an undergraduate Chinese geography student, and I am right now trying my best efforts to do more extensive fieldwork and research. When I apply for [geography], I have little to no consideration on whether applying for it would provide me with any advantage. I have a genuine love of this subject, I want to study this subject, my future job would be related to this subject. As a result, I have an innate motivation for achieving excellence in this subject.”

Strategy D: Validating a strong academic interest through multiple sources.

When discussing how the participants plan to validate their genuinely strong academic ability to counter the stereotype of Chinese students inclining to cheat on standardized testing and other scores, three of the five participants asserted that their involvement in multiple activities hosted by authoritative organizations greatly corroborated their high standardized testing scores to form an effective application. For example, Mike claimed that it could be a difficult journey to break free from the stereotype that Chinese students cheat, and he listed a series of activities hosted by authoritative organizations that would prove his genuine academic strength:

"[To break free from the stereotype of Chinese students cheat more often], you have to engage in more activities, you have to endure more tiring experiences. Eventually, at least they will know that you are clean. This is crucial. ... [One of my more valuable activities involves] a famed American professor teaching me classes, and I had to write multiple papers involving what we discussed in class or involving the specialties of that professor. Another valuable activity for me is to attend competitions hosted by authoritative organizations such as the time when I attended the international Olympic linguistic competition... I am inclined to attempt these challenging events."

Limitations

The sampling of the participants in this study is limited because they all share a common educational agency. Though the participants in this study share similar application strategies because they are advised by the same agency, the participants study in different schools, live in different cities and countries, and share different academic interests. Moreover, using educational agents to aid students' college application is a ubiquitous practice in China. According to National Association for College Admission and Counseling (NACAC), around 60% of Chinese students apply for American colleges with the help of agents. One other limitation is the similar geographic location of the schools that my participants go to. On the American side, participants' high schools are located on the East Coast. On the Chinese side, participants' high schools are located in the Eastern Coastal areas. Though my participants' schools' geographic locations are similar, most of the private high schools in the US are located on the East Coast, and most of the Chinese students who are applying for American colleges live in Eastern Chinese coastal cities.

Conclusion

Throughout this study, four common stereotypes that Chinese international students face in their American college applications are outlined, and four countering strategies that Chinese international students developed are identified.

Though the participants identified stereotypes that I anticipated Chinese international students to express, it is noteworthy that most of the participants did not think that the stereotypes that they thought the American college admission officers would view them as is an accurate portrayal of their true selves. For instance, while most of the participants acknowledged that some Chinese students use fraudulent grades in their application to American colleges, they distanced themselves as far away as possible from such dishonest deeds.

Another intriguing discovery was that there was no significant distinction on the perception of stereotypes and the coping methods of the stereotypes based on the distinction of whether the Chinese student studied in the US or China.

This research contributes to the literature by providing a qualitative approach to explore Chinese international student's perception of the stereotypes they face in the application process to top American colleges. Aiming to provide more transparency in the application process for future Chinese international students, this research also provides academically gifted Chinese international student's insights on how to succeed in American undergraduate while facing stereotyping.

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PRISCUS & THE HUNS - THE REPRESENTATION OF “THE OTHER” IN HISTORY

Amaris Wen

In the ancient texts of the Byzantines, ethnography, the study of foreign peoples, formed a relatively coherent genre (or subgenre) as scholars and historians wrote in classical Greek about the complex international scene of competing and emerging cultures at whose center stood the Christian Roman empire. Widely cited in Byzantine sources, the greatest part of Priscus' work is found in the *Exrepta de Legationibus*, where his fragmentary history provides a detailed account of the struggle between the Romans and Attila the Hun. Of particular value is Priscus' first-hand account in Fragment 8 of an embassy to Attila in 449 to discuss the exchange of fugitives in which Priscus himself served as an assistant to Maximinus, leader of the diplomatic mission sent from Constantinople. In his documentation of his observation along his journey, Priscus' not only discussed diplomatic matters but explored the social and cultural aspects of the Hunnic society through his interweaving of historical and ethnographic themes. These records, however, not merely served as a chronicle of events and reports of observed facts, but also a system of representation of a foreign people. So, when drawing from Priscus' depiction of the Hunnic lifestyle, instead of simply reading it as straightforward unproblematic ethnographic descriptions, it's important to evaluate to what extent did the knowledge presented engagement in real experience and to what extent were they fantasies filtered by the Roman perception in an attempt to qualify "alterity". Upon a close read of Priscus' Fragment 8, we see this historical ethnography as an invaluable source in understanding the sophistication of a nomadic society but also a work where the veracity is constrained by the author's cultural frameworks and political agendas.

It should be acknowledged that, unlike his predecessors, Priscus had made the Huns into full-blooded historical agents, not just simply into a negative mirror of Roman virtue. The actuality and accuracy of his account of the Huns, therefore, indicate a gigantic leap in the historians' ability to relate to foreign peoples.

Priscus does not indulge in the type of historical fiction that we find in Ammianus, the contributor to the earliest systematic description of the Huns. In Ammianus' book *Res Gestae* from 395, he referred to the Huns as "a race savage beyond all parallel". Ammianus gives a physical description of the Huns as "the cheeks of their infant children are deeply marked by an iron... and accordingly, they grow up without beards, and consequently without any beauty... though they all have closely knit and strong limbs and plump necks; they are of great size, and bow-legged." He points out what he believes to be their lack of personal beauty and put emphasis on beastly, primitive attributes. He also describes the living practices of the Huns by saying that Huns "are so hardy that they neither require fire nor well-flavored food, but live on the roots of herbs as they get in the fields, or the half-raw flesh of any animal, which they warm by placing it between their own thighs and the back of their horses," further accentuating the "uncivilized" nature of the Hunnic lifestyle.

Information Ammianus had about the Huns consisted only of garbled descriptions of the visual appearance of customs that he lacked the cultural background to interpret properly. By comparing the foreign people to animals and representing them as subhuman, Ammianus establishes an antithesis between the "civilization" and the "uncivilized", placing the Romans and the Huns on the two extremes of a spectrum.

Priscus, on the other hand, did not dehumanize the Huns and depict them as the empire's barbaric, morally degenerated foes, as Ammianus had done in the previous century. He provides us with a relatively accurate and detailed account of Hunnic activity and practices, presenting the Huns not as the beast, but a unique group that had table manners, food culture, and habits of their own.

His writing provides an indication of his attempts to understand the Hunnic cuisine, as he carefully describes the food culture "in the villages" that supplied the envoy with food. Specific references are made to the foods' local names and their ingredients:

".....millet instead of corn, and mead, as the natives call it, instead of wine.....and a drink made of barley, which the barbarians call kam."

Priscus then perceptively went on to depict horses, the animal of paramount importance in the nomadic culture, not merely as a means for transportation but an integral part of the Hunnic lives. He accurately draws a distinction between "the boats the barbarian row (the envoy) across the river in" and horses. While the practical usage of boats was simply brought up in a brief remark of events, the horses are presented as an instrument not just with practical but also of cultural value. Priscus mentioned observing Attila eating "as he sat on his horse" with "his attendants raising the tray to his saddlebow." Such descriptions give us a glimpse into Priscus' understanding of the nomadic tradition.

Furthermore, Priscus' profound understanding of the nomadic social organization is evident in his account of a banquet he attended during his journey:

".....when the viands of the first course had been consumed we all stood up, and did not resume our seats until each one, in order before observed, drank to the health of Attila in the goblet of wine presented to him.....two barbarians coming forward in front of Attila sang songs they had composed, celebrating his victories and deeds of valor in war."

From the references to Hunnic table manners in the account of the banquet above, we see the worship of the leader at the core of Hunnic values. In the Hunnic society, the cult of a strong, heroic leader was inextricably linked to the nomadic social organization. The Hunnic society relies on the authority of its leaders for social cohesion, which is determined by the looseness of its nomadic social organization. Priscus' ability to grasp and interpret the social arrangements of the foreign people marks significant progress from the previous Roman accounts where nomadic societies serve as chaotic and beastlike counterparts of the complexity and organization of the Roman society.

When examining the intricate details in Fragment 8 that make accurate references to the Hunnic culture, it's evident that Priscus' account mirrors an effort to look at an alien culture sympathetically, endowing them with individuality and provides a well-informed, sensitive record of the complexities of the nomadic society.

Priscus, indeed, was an observant and open-minded traveler; however, his national pride and ethnocentric viewpoints do lurk out in his records. Throughout the account of his envoy in Fragment 8, we see Priscus putting particular emphasis on small details that indicate the Roman influence on the nomadic culture.

Due to the relatively hostile military, political and diplomatic relations, the cultural exchange between the Huns and the Romans at the time was generally limited to the material culture and language. Priscus' description of Roman cultural influence towards the Hunnic society, therefore, focuses primarily on these aspects.

When observing the Hunnic residence, Priscus noted specifically that the Hunnic nobleman Onegesius modeled himself on the Romans by building baths. "Not far from the enclosure," Priscus recorded, "was a large bath which Onegesius - who was the second in power among the Scythians --- built, having transported the stones from Pannonia." Baths and the bathing culture were some of the defining symbols of the Roman civilization. By emphasizing the bath's status as the only stone building in the Hunnic residence, and the laborious effort of a high ranking Hunnic official in using "imported material" for the architecture that presumably served as a public display of wealth and prestige, Priscus implicitly expresses a sense of national and cultural pride.

Priscus also noticed that "sending gifts" was an important way for Roman material culture to spread into the Hunnic society, especially among the upper classes. The gifts given by the Maximinus mission to Bleda's widowed wife "consisted of things which are esteemed by the barbarians as not produced in the country--three silver phials, red skins, Indian pepper, palm fruit, and other delicacies." Priscus' stressing of the gifts as "esteemed by the barbarians," reflects a certain degree of his confidence in the "superior" Roman civilization. In addition, Priscus observed how the Roman language and values of the Romans had some influence on Hunnic society. By Attila's time, some Huns could communicate in Latin, "but no one could speak Greek with ease". Attila used "a mixture of Hunnic and Gothic Latin" at a banquet in honor of Maximinus' delegation. Priscus even stresses the fact that some Huns were able to use Latin. For example, Priscus records a detail at the welcome banquet. "When I was astonished that Attila was paying particular attention to one of his sons and neglecting the others, a barbarian official sitting next to me, who knew Latin, explained to me....."

Priscus also recorded a case of court ruling during his journey, which may result from unconsciously emphasizing the docking of the legal concept between the Huns and the Romans and deliberately highlighting the influence of the Roman legal concept on the Huns' society. Priscus, at Attila's court, sees "him (Attila) standing before his house, accompanied by Onegesius, and many petitioners crowding round to receive his judgment." Attila's decision on disputes might be understood from the perspective of the Huns as a result of the traditional leadership authority of the nomads. Priscus, on the other hand, uses technical concepts such as "litigation" and subjectively adds a layer of legal concepts from the perspective of the Romans.

As a member of the elite class of Roman civilization, Priscus' account of the Hunnic society to an extent represents the general mindset of the Romans when they faced the nomadic Huns from the inland steppe of Asia. Priscus, limited by his time, his educational background, and the historical memory of the Roman state, looked at the Huns from the traditional Roman perspective. The Roman culture was placed at the center of Priscus' interpretation of the Huns, leading to an exaggeration of Roman influence on Hunnic lifestyles and the filtering of Hunnic culture through the lenses of Roman standards and expectations.

Apart from the biases in Priscus' interpretation of the Huns, it's also important to notice that some information in Priscus' account was designed to score points in internal Roman debates and not primarily to present objective information about foreigners. One of the prominent examples of such cases is Priscus' description of an encounter with a Graikos (Greek Speaking Roman), who had been taken captive by the Huns but later chose to live among them when his master set him free for "he considered his new life among the Skythians better than his old life among the Romans."

The encounter with the Graikos enables Priscus to stage a debate on the ideals and practices of the Roman *politeia*. The Graikos attacks the way in which the *politeia* operates in practice, stating that "the condition of the subjects in time of peace is far more grievous than the evils of war, for the exaction of taxes is very severe, and unprincipled men inflict injuries on others because the laws are practically not valid against all classes." Priscus, on the other hand, defends the rationale behind many of its arrangements, conceding that they do not always work as intended. At the end of the discussion, the Graikos concedes that in theory, the *politeia* is good, but it is being ruined by the people in charge of it.

Although there seemed to be kernels of truth in most of Priscus' descriptions of the Huns, most scholars suspected that the entire exchange of Priscus and the Graikos was fictional. Priscus has likely either invented him entirely or developed an accidental encounter in order to make a more general statement. The presence of a viable "Other" allows Priscus to dig deeper into his analysis of the structure of his own society. By contrasting the officious weight of the late Roman bureaucracy with "barbarian peacefulness", the idyllic life of remote peoples and the corrupted civilization, Priscus manipulates the traditional opposition of the Roman and the barbarian and in order to air his own criticisms of the Roman state without compromising his loyalty to his nation.

Therefore, it seems that Priscus allowed the balance of his ethnographical account to be greatly influenced by his own political interests. The ethnographic accounts, on some occasions, become an instrumental model of covert self-reflection. They exist to encourage Roman readers to think more deeply and critically not about the barbarian societies but their own. The account of the foreign peoples, as a result, are often resorting to fiction to achieve such a goal.

In conclusion, while Priscus' work did represent the Huns as a sophisticated society and culture that weren't simply the stereotypical image of the "uncivilized" serving as an antithesis for Roman civility, his representation of the Huns in the ethnographic accounts were largely influenced by his Roman perspective and political motives. Historical ethnography of the nomads like Priscus' is more a system of representation that speaks to the political goals of the author than the "realia" of the subject matter. The creation of these ethnographies was a process in which the historians collect relevant material and "rationalize" the phenomenon in terms of the macro scheme history of their civilization. Nevertheless, value still lay in the ethnographies, as studying Priscus' ethnography gives us a glimpse of who the Byzantines themselves were, or thought they were, in relation to the wider world they inhabited.

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DO MINIMUM WAGES DO WHAT POLICYMAKERS INTEND THEM TO DO?

Kevin Feng

Minimum wages, the legally mandated and binding lowest amount of remuneration a worker has to be paid by employers, was first implemented with slightly narrower objectives than in today's world. Starting with New Zealand's introduction in 1894, minimum wages initially offered only selective protection and served as a short-term stopgap before agreements on wages were made (Starr, 1981; Neumark and Washer, 2008; Marinakis, 2008). The United States also saw growing attention towards the working conditions of women and children in the early 1900s, which triggered the implementation of minimum wage laws; the prototype of the Federal Minimum Wage, as we see today, was passed by the Supreme Court in 1941 (Neumark and Washer, 2008) to protect workers against unduly low pay (ILO, 2021). Minimum wages gradually became prevalent in the 20th century, with increases not just in the number of countries implementing similar systems, but also in their influences on different sectors and occupations.

Policymakers employ minimum wages as a tool to achieve macroeconomic aims while attempting to minimize the costs incurred by its implementation. Hence, using both a theoretical model and empirical evidence, the evaluation of the effectiveness of minimum wages in this essay will focus on poverty reduction, inequality reduction, and unemployment minimization. Alternative governmental measures will also be discussed to provide a comparison with minimum wages.

By implementing minimum wages, policymakers intend to ensure a minimum quality of life for low income workers and reduce income inequality while incurring only small associated costs (mainly unemployment). In theory, workers previously earning below the minimum wage will acquire a pay rise, increasing their disposable income, while the floor is non-binding and non-influential for higher-earning workers, consequently reducing income inequality. A 2014 report published by the International Organization of Employers describes policymakers' rationale when deciding on the minimum wage, which perfectly corresponds with the two objectives: i) reducing inequalities, and ii) poverty alleviation (IOE, 2014). On the other hand, as minimum wages usually incur a disemployment effect on the labor market, governments naturally aim to minimize this side-effect to promote economic growth. Admittedly, there could be other expectations such as balancing power in employment relationships (IOE, 2014) or motivating workers' productivity, but these are usually considerations for specific cases rather than general patterns and thus will not be included in this essay for the sake of concision.

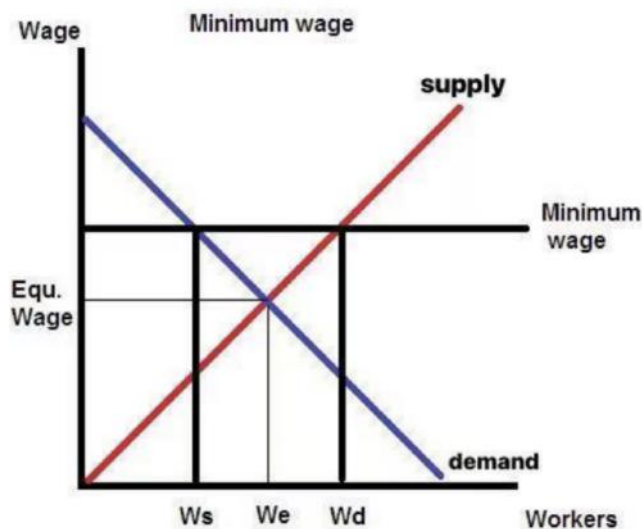


Figure 1: Minimum Wage Model (econ101help, 2015)

An examination of the classic minimum wage model seems to boost policymakers' confidence that the minimum wage can achieve the aforementioned expectations. By setting a minimum wage higher than equilibrium wage, workers would be better off as the companies are required to pay them at the minimum wage by law (Figure 1). In the US, for example, 1.6 million workers (1.9% of all hourly-paid workers) experience a rise in income as well as a rise in disposable income due to the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 (BLS, 2020).

The introduction of, or a rise in, the minimum wage boosts living standards for low-income earners. For workers whose wage rate is below the minimum wage floor, the new higher wage rate provides them with higher disposable income, which grants them access to a broader range of goods and services. In an interactive economic forecasting model by CBO, if the Federal minimum wage is gradually raised to \$15 by 2026, 20.4 million workers will have their earnings increased in an average week, while the mean number of people lifted out of poverty is 0.9 million by 2026 (CBO, 2021). Especially in developed countries where wages are typically 70%-80% of total income (ILO, 2015), this increase in wages will drastically change low-income earners' total income and, consequently, disposable income, which allows for more consumption of goods and services, as well as higher life quality. Though it may be argued that, at a higher wage rate, workers are disincentivized from working the number of hours as they could make the same income with less hours, the fact that minimum wages only provide a bare minimum to sustain living is a strong rebuttal of this possibility because a reduction in working hours would once again plunge them into poverty.

However, the excess supply in the model, illustrated by the distance between W_d and W_s , reveals the problem of unemployment in the real world. At a higher wage rate, employers are willing to demand less labor to maintain the same total cost of production. For policymakers, their optimal outcome would be a large increase in the equilibrium wage rate with low unemployment; this, however, is likely unattainable according to the model unless both demand and supply are highly inelastic, which would not hold true particularly for low-skilled workers who are the typical beneficiaries of the minimum wage - for example, the elasticity of demand for low-skilled workers is found to be 0.21 higher than the average of the labor force (Caplan, 2018).

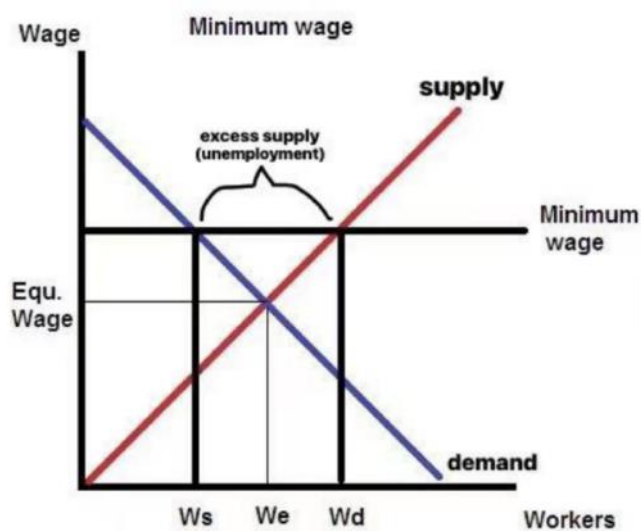


Figure 2: Minimum wage model

Unemployment caused by minimum wages is a significant problem that cannot be neglected as it can slow down economic growth and cause severe harm to individual wellbeing. With a higher wage rate, employers may turn to capital-intensive production methods which are now relatively cheaper. Studies in the 1990s looked at youth unemployment and found employment elasticity values between -0.1 and -0.3 (employment elasticity = % change in minimum wage/% change in employment) (Neumark, 2018); more recent studies found elasticities between -0.3 and -0.5, and for the lowest-wage earners, the value can be as significant as -1 (Clemens and Wither, 2016). The subjects used in the studies are suitable for discussions on the minimum wage, as young people (usually unskilled) and low-earning workers are most affected by minimum wage policies - to illustrate, a Bureau of Labor Statistics study (2018) reported that workers under 25 constituted about half of the population earning below the minimum wage. The results indicate a strong, negative correlation between minimum wages and employment. Some argue that the usage of the neoclassical supply-demand model does not consider monopsony markets; though it is true that in a monopsonistic market, a minimum wage might not cause disemployment as the equilibrium wage, unlike in a competitive market, is lower than MRP (Marginal Revenue Product), but such markets are much more uncommon than competitive markets in the real-world.

Moreover, the minimum wage also fails to address the problem of income inequality as it can cause a "ripple effect" (ILO, 2017) which negates the expected reduction in inequality. When the lowest-earning workers in a firm or industry get a pay rise due to the minimum wage, workers with a higher job status may also demand a pay rise to maintain the wage differentials. For instance, a minimum wage in the US should supposedly only benefit about 5% of workers who actually earned below the floor, yet, in reality, 25% received a pay rise, including workers who earned as much as 150% of the minimum (Belman and Wolfson, 2014). Another example would be the US's implementation of the \$7.25 minimum in 2009. Between 2009 and 2010, there is a fall of the Gini coefficient from 40.6 to 40, which indeed signified reduced inequality. Yet, by 2011, the coefficient increased to 40.9, even higher than pre-implementation periods, indicating that the floor did not reduce inequality in the long term (World Bank, 2021). Of course, low-income earners' wages are most directly impacted while other wage changes are merely weaker side-effects, but this ripple effect renders minimum wages at least less effective than policymakers' expectation of inequality reduction.

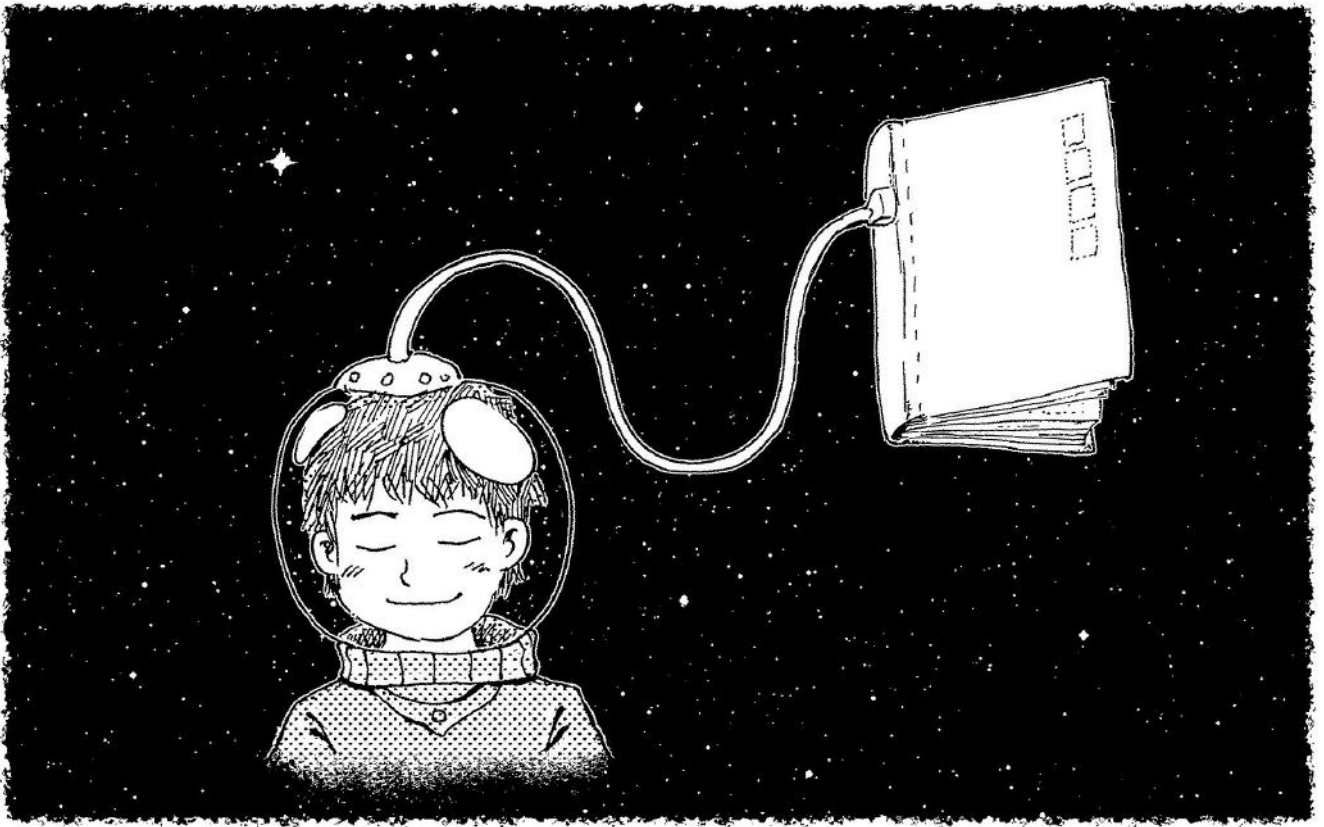
With the ineffectiveness of minimum wages as a policy to reduce poverty and inequality while maintaining employment, policymakers should turn to alternatives. Firstly, wage subsidies - government payments to low-earning workers - would eliminate these drawbacks while also increasing workers' income. Minimum wages cause unemployment and do not lessen inequality; wage subsidies, on the other hand, would increase employment as they lower labor costs for employers and reduce inequality as the greatest subsidies will be given to the lowest-earning workers (Harris, 2014). Yet the provision of wage subsidies involves opportunity cost for the government, as they can also use their budget to increase spending on social benefits including the provision of public education and healthcare. Research has proven that both increasing spending on public education (Mitra, 2011) and healthcare (Bivens, 2020) would improve the chance of workers finding employment, as they boost aggregate demand in the economy and enhance workers' abilities to work. Such spending also tackles the fundamental cause of inequality, as individuals now have better chances to escape the poverty cycle and fulfill their potential. Thus, although these policies would put more burden on the government's budget in the short run, they are desirable in the long run as the economy would benefit from higher employment, less inequality, and economic growth (Piabuo and Tieguhong, 2017; Carmignani, 2019).

To conclude, minimum wages certainly achieve part of policymakers' goals, yet its drawbacks prevent it from being the most desirable policy. The analysis in this essay could be furthered by considering how the effectiveness of minimum wages could vary for different countries due to the differences in current economic development, which largely influences the impact of a change in the minimum wage on actual income and consequently the evaluation of minimum wages' effectiveness on achieving the outlined goals. Nevertheless, under any circumstance, policymakers should always be aware of minimum wages' limitations and consider alternatives like wage subsidies and social benefits.



“Alas, the human race is not a single, rational entity. It is composed of nasty, envy-driven, irrational, inconsistent, unstable, computationally limited, complex, evolving, heterogeneous entities. Loads and loads of them. These issues are the staple diet—perhaps even raisons d’être—of the social sciences.”

~
RUSSELL, STUART



GERMINATION

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