

Collegiate Anthropologist

State University of New York College at Potsdam

INSIDE:

Africa's Meningitis Belt
Memes as social resistance
Romani Language in the US
and beyond



A photo essay,
advice column,
and more...

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A Note from the Editor.....	1
Archaeology at Camp Union: The 2020 Field School Experience.....	2
Romani Language in the US and Beyond.....	6
Memes, Memes Everywhere: An Examination of the Use of Memes as a Form of Resistance.....	12
This Belt is Too Tight: An Inside Look into Africa's Meningitis Belt.....	20
Advice Column: Getting Involved in the Anthropology Department.....	26
Photo Essay: The Digital Anthropology Film Festival.....	28
How-to Column: Ethnographic Vlogging.....	30

COVER PHOTO: SUNY Potsdam student Catherine Gagnon screening soil at the Camp Union field school in Potsdam, New York (Photograph by Jason Hunter).

A Note from the Editor



The Collegiate Anthropologist is happy to present another issue filled with the work of students from SUNY Potsdam's Anthropology Department. The students who have conducted research in the department are given the opportunity to disseminate their findings and display the wide diversity of topics that can be studied through anthropology. Through the combined efforts of this year's editorial team and the student authors, we have created another amazing edition of the Collegiate Anthropologist.

In this issue, there are articles discussing topics from multiple fields of Anthropology. Within these pages, you will find everything from information on the culture of memes and their political value, to the Roma and their relationship with their language. If you are more interested in visual and digital anthropology, you should look at our column on how to do ethnographic vlogging and the photo essay on the 2019 Digital Anthropology Film Festival. All this, along with many more fascinating articles, can be found on the following pages.

After finishing up my time as the Editor-in-Chief, I have nothing but the sincerest gratitude to express for the group of people that I have worked alongside that have made this a uniquely amazing experience. I am very grateful for the editorial staff who have put so much hard work into this publication. I also want to thank the authors for sharing their fascinating work with us. Thank you to Dr. Lydia Rodriguez for all the time and effort that she has given us to ensure that this publication is the best that it could possibly be. Lastly, I would once again like to thank all the individuals who worked so hard throughout the entire process to make sure that the publication went through despite the social distancing required by the outbreak of COVID-19. This year's publication of the *Collegiate Anthropologist* would not have been possible without all of these individuals' dedication to the journal. I hope you all enjoy!

Sincerely,

Tara

Tara Stern
Editor-in-Chief

Archaeology at Camp Union: The 2020 Field School Experience

EMILY COX

Every summer a group of SUNY Potsdam students grab their trowels and strap on their boots for an intensive four-week long field school. Students experience a wide range of weather conditions, from intense heat to heavy rain showers, and are exposed to new environments. SUNY Potsdam's Anthropology Department has held field schools in the country at sites in the Adirondacks and Virginia, and outside of the country at sites in Mexico and South Africa. For the 2019 field school, archaeology students got to experience local history in the heart of Potsdam through archaeological excavation at a site previously known to be a Civil War training ground. The field school was led by Dr. Hadley Kruczek-Aaron with two teaching assistants, Lissa Herzing and Emily Willis.

Camp Union was a Civil War training ground used by members of the locally raised 92nd regiment. Now occupied by the Meadow East apartment complex, other commercial businesses, and private residences, this site was once home to hundreds of soldiers who lived and trained there under Col. Jonah Sanford from 1861 to 1862. These men, who came from across St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties, went on to fight in 16 battles, and more than 200 lost their lives during service. The Camp Union project represents an exciting collaboration between SUNY Potsdam's Department of Anthropology and the Potsdam Public Museum. The goal is to learn more about the history of the property, explore whether deposits associated with the brief Camp Union occupation can be identified, and to share this

history with the community. Since the current owner of Meadow East is planning to build in what was our project area, the work carried out during field school can also be viewed as an opportunity to save the archaeological resources we encounter and to lessen the impact that the future building project has on different areas of the site. Thus far, no archaeologists have ever carried out archaeological testing at Camp Union. As a result, the work carried out as part of our field school offers an opportunity to reveal important



The subsoil at the site was a dense clay that was extremely difficult for the students to screen (Photograph by Dr. Kruczek-Aaron).

new insights into the experience of those whose actions helped to alter American history. The training camp once included a barracks (big enough to house 1000 men), a hospital, a dining hall and cooking room, and drill fields. The project area for this excavation was only a small portion of the overall training ground on the property of Meadow East apartment complex. The goal was to preserve any information we

might find on what remains of these buildings (or others not previously known) using archaeological excavation and survey techniques.

No time was wasted from day one, for the first half of the day all students gathered in the Archaeology classroom in MacVicar Hall to go over field school expectations, paperwork, research goals, and receive our tool bags. A special guest was also in the classroom, Jan, a retired Clarkson professor who has a wealth of knowledge on Potsdam's local history. Jan was a huge supporter of the collaborative work

Camp Union field school

Dr. Kruczek-Aaron and senior Alex McWhorter discuss finds from an area of the site where horses likely were present (Photograph by Jason Hunter).

being carried out at Camp Union and he would check in throughout the four weeks to see how everyone was progressing. He would arrive with a smile on his face and make everyone happy. The second half of the day was spent out in the field. We unloaded equipment and eased into things by digging STPs (shovel test pits) in groups of two or three and sifting through the soil. Digging STPs was a great way for the students to learn how to identify soil color and texture, the percentage and size of inclusions (gravel, cobbles, etc.), and sketch a profile of the wall. Being able to do these tasks would make it easier when working in bigger units. Along with digging STPs, other surveying methods used were metal detecting 10x10 meter sections and pedestrian survey. The latter was done by walking across the landscape so we could feel the rise and fall of the ground, which helped us decide where to open up units in the hopes of discovering a feature. In aerial photographs, there is a rectangular outline that appears on the surface. It was presumed that this was evidence of a feature and many of the units excavated were done around this area of the site.

Various units were opened across the site from 1x2 meter units to 2x2 meter units. Each student was able to experience different types of digging conditions. In the southern section of the field, the units were being dug in clay rich soil and the northern section produced many cobbles in loosely compacted soil. If all the students at the field school were asked what their least favorite experience was, the consensus would mention the difficulty of sifting through compacted, wet, clay rich soil. You were lucky if you spent more time working in the north of the field because the soil up there is reddish-brown and could easily be sifted through and made the day less tiring. A wide range of material was found during the excavation. We had modern material like plastic, styrofoam, and modern nails; 19th century material like cut-nails and a stoneware fragment with a makers mark; and material that does not have a specific age range (without diagnostic features) like horseshoe nails and fused glass. We likely found two buildings at the site. There was no evidence of stone foundation, but it is believed that the type of construction used was post-in-ground because we



In one area of the site students recovered numerous horseshoe nail fragments. Because no whole nails were found, it is likely that these represent nails that have been pulled out of hooves, thereby suggesting the presence of horses on site (Photographs by Dr. Kruczek-Aaron).



In the area associated with the building, students recovered ceramic fragments, including this piece of a stoneware vessel. Its mark revealed it was made by a potter in Manhattan during the mid 19th Century (Photograph by Dr. Kruczek-Aaron).

found evidence of post holes that lined up across the site. Written sources have told us that the material used for the buildings at Camp Union was sold off after the soldiers left for war. This explains why we did not find a permanent foundation and only have evidence of where posts were likely placed for supporting the building.

Students were able to experience the process of working at a site, how to place and dig units, how to interpret the meaning of soil stratigraphy, how to use a total station and metal detector, and how to work as a team with peers. Being able to work with other people of different personalities is difficult, but we were able to overcome any hardships in communication and the weather. Every morning was spent bailing water out of units from overnight rain and this was the time for us to have some fun conversations before getting serious with our work. Some days were a guessing game on whether it was to rain or not. We set up tents over units that needed

to be worked on through the rain and cover others while we hoped for the showers to last only a few minutes. We were lucky if it was a small rain shower. Some day we got stuck with heavy rain and a select few would get caught without their rain gear and be soaked by the rain or from falling water from the top of the tents. We made a lot of fun memories together that only strengthened our comradery and made working on the site more enjoyable.

The location of the field school was not in a forest or a site far away from human activity; it was in the heart of the Town of Potsdam. Everyday students went over their jobs and one person would be the public relations manager for that day. They would greet anyone from the public that came to the site. The job of the public relations manager was to answer questions and explain the type of work we were doing and why it is important to history and the local community. Students were able to improve on their speaking skills and enforce what

Camp Union field school

they were learning in the field school by teaching it to members of the community. We found it meaningful to explain the contribution of the local community in supporting the 92nd regiment, something that is not commonly mentioned in the history books, and that their location did not affect their beliefs in maintaining the Union of the country. This field school taught us the skills

needed in our career, but we also learned the importance of community outreach and how our work can impact present-day views and beliefs. It is something that we would not have been able to gain anywhere else. The work done at Camp Union will not be forgotten; it will be remembered as a summer experience that will be talked about for many years to come.



The 2019 SUNY Potsdam archaeology field school cohort (Photograph by Dr. Kruczek-Aaron).

About the Author

Emily Cox is a junior Archaeological Studies major with a Geology and Art History minor. She attended the 2019 field school at Camp Union as part of a collaborative project between the Department of Anthropology at SUNY Potsdam and the Potsdam Public Museum. She is highly involved at Potsdam, from participating in the Anthropology club to doing independent research through the Presidential Scholars program. After graduation she plans to work in CRM before pursuing graduate school.

Romani Language in the US and Beyond

NICOLE WEED

Introduction

The Roma have a long history in Europe, Africa, and Asia, but their existence and identity in the Americas is often overlooked. Not to be confused with Romanian, which is the nationality of those from Romania, the Roma are a people from India who traveled extensively through Europe and other continents since approximately 1000 CE. Linguistically, the term "Roma" comes from their language, with "Rom" meaning singular man and "Roma" being its plural form. There are disagreements and opinions on the correct terms to use, but it is generally accepted that the word "Roma" is used to refer to the people of this descent, while "Romani" is used as an adjective when referring to their culture and language. Other spellings and alternative titles include Romano, Romni, Rromani, Rroma, Romany (Hancock 1993). An important term to mention is that of "Gypsy." When people use "Gypsy" as an ethnic marker, they are referring to the Roma. While used by some of the people under this category, it is widely discouraged as a slur or a derogatory term, as it likely originated from "Egyptian," where the Roma were believed to come from and was rarely said kindly. It has connotations in the Romani culture of something dirty, impure, or illegal, and so is rarely used as a self-identifier.

History

The Romani people originate from Northern India but entered the Balkans in the mid-13th century when escaping the spread of Islam. They became desired for their excellent artisan skills and therefore tried to flee again from their demands, but legislation was put in place to make them the property of their employers. The Roma became slaves, being traded and sold throughout the Balkans and then, around the 19th century, across the Atlantic to America (Hancock

2010). Before this, however, the first accounts of Roma in America were during Christopher Columbus' voyages. On his third voyage to the Americas, it is claimed that Columbus brought three or four Roma with him, though whether they were slaves or not is unclear. Ian Hancock, an expert in Romani language and history and Roma himself, was told by some Roma that their ancestors came by that ship, but the vast majority of Roma in the Americas arrived during great immigration events or forced transportation in the following centuries.

The Roma are historically of darker skin than

"In a community where there is no commonly held land nor a shared religion, the one unifying feature can be language."

Europeans and, while the group originated from India, they did not have a country of their own, causing them to be frequent migrators. These factors, in addition to having their own language, culture, and dress, caused them to be outcasts and scapegoats for everyone else (Hancock 2010). They became slaves in many regions, such as Wallachia, Moldavia, and Russia, and laws were passed that forced their removal from many more, such as France, Sweden, England, and Milan. In Switzerland, any Roma found were to be put to death, and Portugal began deporting them to

its colonies in 1538. They were forcefully recruited to fight in other people's wars and were subject to ethnic cleansing. During World War II, between 220,000 and 1.5 million Roma were killed in concentration camps and targeted attacks, and throughout the 20th century and until at least 2007, Roma women were deceived and forced into sterilization in an effort to cut down their population (Zampas and Lamačková 2011). The fate of the Roma is particularly awful because, in contrast with other minorities, they had few public figures associated with them or willing to speak in their defense. They were universally agreed as "less than," and therefore no one stood up to their persecution.

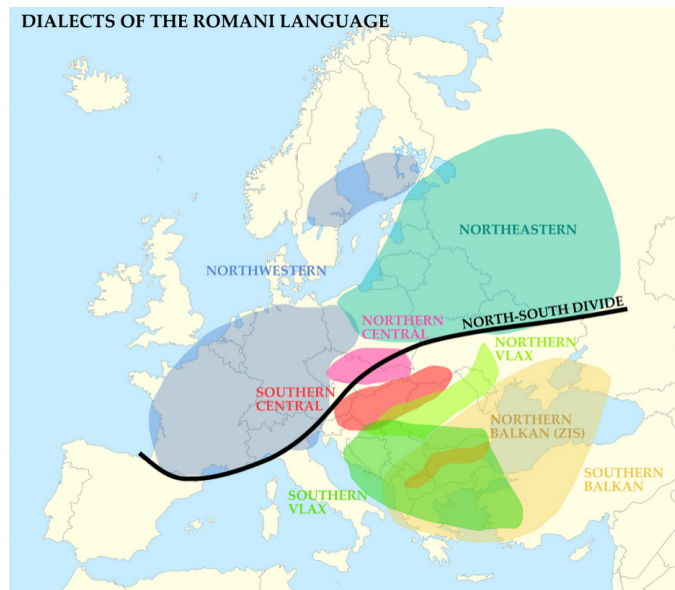


Figure 1. *Dialects of Romani*. Drawn by Arnold Platon, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index>.

Vlach Romani

In a community where there is no commonly held land nor a shared religion, the one unifying feature can be language. Standard Romani is a neo-Indic language that has many dialects spoken throughout the world, and while it is still the most commonly spoken language among the Roma, it is also very common for Roma to speak para-languages and mixed languages. Bernard Gilliat-Smith made a distinction in 1915 between Vlach (/ˈvla:k/) and non-Vlach varieties. Vlach Romani is believed to have “emerged in Romanian-speaking territory” during the time when the Roma were kept as slaves or serfs (Matras 2002: 7). The syntax, phonology, and morphology all resemble those of Romanian, more so than the other Romani varieties, indicating a relationship with that region and the occurrence of loaning. Many migrations of these speakers occurred, some “at least connected” with the end of slavery in Romania (Matras *ibidem*). This led to Vlach being the variety with the largest geographical distribution and

number of speakers. Ian Hancock wrote that Vlach, as well as another variety, Danubian, are the dialects that “have become the ones most often used for national and international communication” (Hancock 1993: 92). All of this considered, it is not surprising that Vlach has emerged as a universal language for Roma in America.

There are 10 Vlach dialects that are mutually intelligible to a high degree, with even some lexical differences being understood through passive knowledge of the other dialectal lexicons. Hancock, examining the multiple varieties in North America such as Vlach, Balkan, and Central Romani, determined that it was possible to make union dialects for all of them separately, but they would not be able to naturally combine to create an intelligible union dialect for all Roma in North America. The fact that Vlach dialects are used more commonly makes the fact that Vlach is becoming a variety-specific union language for communication understandable.

Mixed and Para-Languages

Due to the persecution of the Roma and their need to continue traveling, the Romani language and its variants were forced to meld with the cultures and languages surrounding them, leading to many mixed and para-languages. People who are knowledgeable in two or more languages will sometimes “mix” them, keeping aspects of each to make a new language that can be passed down and understood on its own, thus forming a mixed or para-language. For the Roma, these usually involve the Romani lexicon incorporated into the grammatical structures of the superstrate language. Para-Romani is an entire subset of mixed languages, but they, unfortunately, are not very well documented. The shifts from Romani dialects to mixed languages were not able to be captured due to the disinterest in the people and their languages as it was happening, and even now most of the documentation “consist of wordlists and small numbers of sample sentences” (Matras 2002: 243). Still, many of them are used in their regions and can be studied.

Caló is one example of a mixed Romani language that originated in Spain, consisting of a Romani lexicon and Spanish grammar, that is different from other Para-Romani languages in that it was fairly well documented due to a sudden interest in the language from Bible Society agent George Borrow (Gamella, Fernández, & Adiego 2015). It has been repeatedly studied but is rarely used as a first language, so the knowledge is kept passively in mind instead of being actively used. How Caló is transmitted was also studied and the researchers found that grandparents often used Caló words and taught them to their grandchildren, skipping the generation in the middle. Unfortunately, this method of transmission is known to only pass on the vocabulary, with the words inserted into otherwise Spanish speech, and therefore does not make the

language any more usable as an individual method of communication. The language was also transmitted in public places such as markets and celebrations, where non-Roma are also present and it is a source of power to send “secret” messages to those of the same identity, to the exclusion of others. The third method was by performing research and being active in the attempted revitalization of Caló, which was becoming more popular among the young adults and those not even of Romani descent.

Another example of a Para-Romani language is that of Bohemian Romani, spoken by the Roma in the Bohemian region of the Czech Republic. There were roughly 6,500 Roma registered as living in Bohemia and Moravia prior to World War II, but following the genocide in Nazi concentration camps, there were only around 700 Roma left that could be identified, 100 of which were Bohemian Roma (Donert 2008: 127). Due to the collapse of community and the residual fear of genocide, Bohemian Romani ceased to be used and taught to future generations. The language is now considered to be extinct.

Relationship with English

One of the problems when it comes to mixed languages and the discrimination of Romani varieties is the pressure to conform to the regional language that is perceived as being more prestigious. In the United States, English is by far the most common language and a prevalent attitude is that when in America, immigrants should seek to speak as Americans do. This is especially the case for school-age children, as they are surrounded by other kids who are being trained by their parents but do not yet have a social filter. Among the Roma, children commonly do not actually go to school for longer than a few years, usually to get them out of the way of the mother’s work. The reason for this is that there is a fear among the Romani people of assimilating

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Romani Language

to the non-Roma culture and losing their individual culture, so children are mostly kept at home and among the Roma. Another reason is the mobility of the family, as it might make attending a single school impossible. On the side of the children themselves, Roma children often face teasing and bullying by non-Roma that ruin school for them, causing them to want to be at home helping their parents (Hancock 1971).

Because Roma children, therefore, did not spend a large amount of time with English-speaking children in schools, the English used is mostly the variety spoken at home, which is commonly mixed with Romani. The Romani dialects are still widely used among speakers, with a variety of English containing Romani words also being used within households. Hancock described “[t]his Romani-English” as a variety that appeared when “English in any form was not well known by Rom[a]” (Hancock 1971: 359).

The Roma are stated as being aware that non-Romani English exists and view it as a special knowledge to have, where business transactions often use Standard English and using it was a point of pride, but it was still not a household or social dialect and was therefore not taught directly to children. Adolescents did, however, pick up a fair amount of English from cartoons and television shows, and this leads to a common characteristic of languages with different phonological systems where similar-sounding words are confused with each other (Hancock 1971: 361).

Identity and Minority

In a community where there is little else to act as a center, language can emerge as the cultural adhesive, keeping some people in and others out. Romani is the separation between the two worlds, determining who is Roma and who is not, and stands as a proud ethnic marker (Matras 2002). The Roma



Figure 2. Flag of the Romani People. Author: AdiJapan. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons. Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1253421>

are counted as perhaps the largest minority in the world, and also one that is very under-represented. Even in the cases that the Roma are displayed in media, it is often in a light betraying the attitudes of centuries of discrimination and violence, as well as the harmful stereotypes that are rarely attempted to be challenged. Though their numbers in America are thought to be approximately 1 million, the Roma are not usually thought of as an identity associated with the United States. Although populous and represented (however poorly) in Europe, American Roma are hidden behind other minorities, usually of their own doing. Hancock states that because Roma have a negative image through informational and recreational media, and because their image is so strongly portrayed as wandering fortune tellers and con artists, they would rather be misidentified as various other minorities such as Native Americans or southern Europeans. At least through that image, they are part of a wider and more accepted group that already has pre-formed public understanding (Hancock 2010).

Because of all this, language continues to be one aspect of their culture that they hold onto. Though English is more commonly becoming a required language for them to speak, and in other countries, their mixed languages are changing to act more like the superstrate languages, Romani has managed to survive so long because families are still using it for socialization. It is recognized by many as an important aspect of identity, but it must be realized that other aspects are just as if not more important, including their area of habitation and the practice of early betrothal of adolescents (Pnevmatikos, Geka, & Divane 2010). Ethnic pride and identity are strong indicators of living a happy life among the Roma, even if many people choose to keep it somewhat hidden in America (Dimitrova, Ferrer-Wreder, & Trost 2015). Identity can be history,

"Romani is the separation between two worlds, determining who is Roma and who is not, and it stands as a proud ethnic marker."

music, and cuisine, and though language stands as one of the most appreciated and necessary forms of identity among the Roma, it is possible to be proudly Roma through dress, lifestyle, or tradition, and speak the regional language.

Conclusion

Though facing the problems of language shift like any other minority language, Romani is managing to survive within communities where there are still speakers. What is interesting to note, however, is that Romani is considered to be one language with many varieties. Many researchers of this subject mention how the varieties differ so much due to geographical boundaries and surrounding languages, that many are divergent enough to be languages of their own. Does this reflect attitudes towards the Roma or is this just a perception of linguists?

Romani and its mixed languages are not well known outside of the speakers and a few interested scholars, but the revitalization of the language is important to retain the culture.

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About the Author

Nicole Weed is a senior majoring in Anthropology with a double minor in Linguistics and Archaeology. In her three years at Potsdam, she has had the pleasure of working with Dr. Rodriguez as a Research Assistant studying and coding gestures, as well as being accepted into the Presidential Scholar program with a project on long distance communication. Her work as a Teaching Assistant for the Spring 2020 Language and Culture class has encouraged her to pursue a career as a college professor. This is her first published work.

Mememes, Memes Everywhere: An Examination of the Use of Memes as a Form of Resistance

AMBER ROUNDS

Introduction

The term “meme” was coined by the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins who, in *The Selfish Gene* (1976), describes memes as a “cultural parallel” to biological genes in that they self-replicate. Memes to Dawkins were ideas, behaviors, phrases, or trends that could be shared, copied, and could transmit information between individuals. To Dawkins, memes acted of their own accord, and their replication was the direct result of the meme itself, not human interference. There has been much debate, theorizing, and discussion about memes; what they are, the impacts they have, etc. (Rogers 2014). Renewed interest in “memes” was stimulated at the beginning of the 21st century when ever-growing digital spaces resulted in the emergence of Internet memes, the focus of my research, on a large scale. To many scholars, the understanding of the Internet meme is that they operate on the same basic principles put forth by Dawkins, with two important distinctions: they are created and circulated on the world wide web, and their creation, replication, and circulation is influenced by human beings. Unlike Richard Dawkins’ concept of memes, Internet memes are understood to be the product of human creativity, and it is human use and consumption (be it verbal or visual) of memes that results in their thriving or failure (Rogers 2014). To the broader public, Internet memes typically encompass images, videos, challenges, or other spreadable media that are shared and distributed to wide audiences online.

Coming into this project, my understanding of memes was one similar to that which is shared by most of the people I know in my life. When I hear the word “meme”, my mind immediately formulates the picturesque meme: a funny image (probably of a cat or a scene from the children’s television show *SpongeBob SquarePants*) with a witty caption at the top or funny text labels overlaying the image

itself. I grew to learn over the course of this research however, that memes encompass a much broader spectrum of content. People’s creation, use, and consumption of them is complex and too often oversimplified or generalized. Memes, while often used for entertainment, can also include artwork, screen captured text posts, political cartoons, and challenge videos (viral videos that see internet users/creators uploading videos of themselves or others completing certain popular “challenges”).

Mememes are a huge part of people’s lives, particularly those who grew up in this digital world.

My own exposure to mememes has been of great magnitude, and I use them daily. They have become deeply integrated into the social lives of teens and young adults. In my own life, mememes have been used for entertainment, as a way to connect and bond with friends, and as a way to express and share opinions and feelings with people across the world. Examining the use of mememes through an anthropological lens allows us to broaden our understanding of the significance of mememes as a cultural phenomenon.

Our world increasingly shifts to become deeply integrated with digital technologies. These

technologies, the Internet, and the vast impacts they have had on people and culture are not going away. Digital technologies and online spaces are becoming a more important and consistent part of people’s everyday lives and practices. As such, it becomes increasingly important that we shift more anthropological attention to how these technologies impact the social and cultural dimensions of human life, the ways people are greatly impacting and shaping the technologies and spaces, and the ways that these technologies are used and experienced across different walks of life.

Since the development of what we know as the internet meme is relatively recent, research on the topic, especially in anthropological literature,

"Examining the use of mememes through an anthropological lens allows us to broaden our understanding of the significance of mememes as a cultural phenomenon."

Memes as Resistance

has been limited. That which has been done has been conducted by linguists, communications specialists, and political scientists, and tends to focus on the creation, life-span, spread and success of memes in a digital space (Bebić and Volarevic 2018; Cannizzaro 2016; Zenner and Geeraerts 2018; Zakem et. al 2018). Much less work, particularly ethnographic study, has been done that looks at the sociocultural dimensions of meme creation and sharing, and how the use of memes can impact offline spaces, communication, and the development of ideas.

I would argue that Internet memes and the communities that are creating and using them, when examined as cultural phenomena, can be an incredible source of study. People's use of memes, as I will illustrate in further discussion, is complex. This research aims to take on the task of highlighting one way in which people use memes. People are utilizing memes and social media in creative ways to spread messages. Dialogue stimulated by meme sharing is complex and dynamic. These findings can add to, or reshape, our understanding of online communities. Anthropology has a lot to offer this topic of study, and viceversa, this topic of study has a lot to offer anthropology.

Theoretical Influences

There are several theories and concepts that influenced the interpretations I made of the data. I tackle the concept of technological affordances, or perceptions of how an object is to be used (Gaver 1991), in my discussion of the impacts that the structures of social media platforms are having on the interactions and engagement of people with memes and other users on the site. Each site possesses technological limitations and features that guide the way a user interacts with the site. However, to this end, I also seek to illustrate that while there are limitations imposed by technological affordances, people ultimately use creative ways to overcome these limitations. By adopting a social constructionist framework, we can examine the ways that people are using these platforms in opposition to how they were supposed to be used, illustrating individual autonomy. A strictly technological determinist view is flawed and ignores the complexity of human action and agency.

The work of Michel Foucault has been central to shaping my interpretations. Foucault believes there is an inextricable link between power and knowledge. Those who have power control the flow of information, and through this, can maintain social control, or a status quo in which the wealthy and powerful stay wealthy and powerful (Social Theory Re-Wired 2016). My research shows that while this link is absolutely there, people with less power can also use knowledge and insider jokes to fight back and resist the oppressive power of those at the top; by doing so, they are fashioning their own power. It is the work of Angelique Haugerud that I draw from to illustrate this very phenomenon.

Haugerud's work looks at the Billionaires, a group of activists who use political satire, irony, and humor to combat the gross inequalities of wealth in America. Haugerud believes that the power of a joke lies in its ability to build solidarity and enact or inspire change. Her work illustrates the power that people can harness with jokes and insider knowledge, which allows us to expand on Foucault's work in conjunction with the concept of social constructivism to explain the human interactions and behavior we see online (Haugerud 2013).

Research Questions

Through this research, I aim to further our understanding of the use of Internet memes in political discourse, particularly that which people feel is spreading harmful and dangerous rhetoric and ideologies. To do so, I set out to answer four more questions: What types of meme formats are most popular within the discourse themes I am examining? How does the structure of the social media site shape the ways people are engaging with each other in dialogue about the topic of the meme? How are these memes used to spread ideas about certain political movements and ideas? In other words, what are the messages shared within the meme and how do they get shared? Finally, I ask, how are these memes received or perceived? Are they successful in getting people to side with the message of the meme? If so, are there patterns within the comment/meme data or the website structure that might suggest why some are more successful than others?

Methods

To answer the question of how people use memes in the context of resisting harmful or dangerous ideologies and discourse, I developed a plan for data collection that would give me both quantitative and qualitative data relevant to the developed sub-questions. The methods I employ were influenced by my guiding research questions, previous research on similar topics in similar spaces, and the limitations of the project itself.

To begin the research, I established two "field sites", or social media platforms. This would allow me to observe the impacts that each site's structures might have on meme posts and interactions on those posts. These field sites served not only as locations for data collection but serve as data themselves. The first site I chose was Instagram. Knowing that Instagram serves as a hub for many types of posts, memes being a major one, prompted me to choose it. Instagram is very sharer/consumer-oriented, meaning that many of the memes that are posted and circulated on Instagram are coming from other locations and creators. The second platform I decided to focus on was Reddit. Reddit, unlike Instagram, is much more creator-centered. This is a place where memes are created and posted first-hand. Both platforms have categorical systems of tags, hashtags, or subreddits, which allows for easier searchability of particular memes and topics. These categorical systems are important to the structures of the sites, and, as I realized throughout the research process, impact the ways people navigate the site and engage with content and with other users. Each site also allows for a dialogue to happen within the comments sections. Both have structures that make it easy to follow conversations (i.e. there is a reply system).

I chose to examine meme posts related to anti-vaccination ideologies and "Trump rhetoric". They both are topics that some online users feel spread harmful or dangerous messages, and both are

very relevant at this moment in time. When looking at anti-vaccination memes, I specifically utilized two hashtags and two subreddits to locate memes: #antivaxmemes, #antivax, r/AntiVaxMemes, and r/AntiVaxxers. To find memes related to Trump rhetoric, I used: #antiTrumpMemes, #trumpmemes, r/PoliticalHumor, and r/AntiTrumpMemes.

After locating meme posts, I collected data including: the message of the meme (from an etic perspective), the number of likes/upvotes a post got, how long ago it was posted, and all of the comments on the post, including the number of likes they received and how many of the comments were users tagging other users. All usernames you see are pseudonyms to protect the identity of the people leaving comments and posting the memes.

Data and Results

The types of memes that I came across in data collection encompassed a much broader/diverse spectrum of posts than I had anticipated. My preconceived notions about what passes as a meme were proved to be ignorant and derived from my own experiences. While I did see memes that consisted of funny/unflattering images with captions and text, posts tagged with the word "meme" also included activist artwork, political cartoons,

and screen captured text posts (often from Twitter).

On average, anti-vaccination meme posts on Instagram received 2,600 likes, while the same types of memes on Reddit received, on average, 3,200 upvotes. Upvotes on Reddit work differently from traditional systems of "likes". On Reddit, users have the option to upvote or downvote a post (should they not like it). Total upvotes are calculated by subtracting downvotes from the upvotes. This makes it likely that the actual count of upvotes on a Reddit post is much more than is shown. Such a system allows users to express dislike in a more subtle way, a way that does not require exposing yourself in a comments section where there could be a backlash. When looking at the

"The creation and sharing of politically charged memes is an online extension of the offline practice of creating and reading political cartoons in print media."

Memes as Resistance

likes and upvotes of Trump memes, the numbers are much smaller. On Instagram, such memes averaged likes around 170. On Reddit, average upvotes were around 670. Within both topics, Reddit posts seem to garner more support in terms of “likes”.

Throughout the data collection process, I started to turn more attention to the hashtags on the meme posts of Instagram, something I had not really planned on doing when the research began. I realized soon that there were interesting patterns in the hashtag sections of Instagram posts. For example, both anti-vaccination and Trump meme posts utilized hashtags that were both pro- and anti- the subject/message of the meme itself. Trump memes were being tagged with #antitrump, #impeach, #notmypresident, etc., while also being tagged with #trump, #america, #republican, which, upon further inspection, are tags that are full of pro-Trump posts.

Comment sections on Instagram tended to consist of users tagging other users to bring their attention to the post, users making short jokes

relevant to the topic, trolls (users intentionally making controversial or sarcastic statements to get a rouse out of others), arguments, and interestingly, educational dialogue (albeit heated at times). Take, for example, the exchange on an anti-vaccination meme posted on Instagram, shown in Table 1.

A user, whom I am calling *Inivandra*, goes on to write a very long response detailing scientific research and data that has been presented on the subject. The language used suggests the user was being friendly in their response, in an attempt perhaps to educate the others interacting in the comments section. This was the first instance I saw that illustrated the dynamics of conversations that happen on meme posts (particularly those related to controversial topics), but it certainly would not be the last. Comment types were diverse and spanned across all the categories of comments I saw. This particular interaction reflects how Instagram meme posts were generating educational dialogue. On Reddit, comments were different. There were no instances of

User 1: “These parents are uneducated followers.. So sad.”

Likes- 2

Replies:

User 2: “@User 1, Not completely true. Sure some are sheep that follow whatever some friend/blog tells them but many have done their research. I commented about this above.”

User 1: “@User 2, what research? Can they read medical journals and understand them? I barely can understand medical journals and I am a Dr. PhD.”

User 2: “@User 1: Do you have a hard time understanding peer reviewed research that describe side effects or possible injuries? Because those are out there. Have you heard about the VICP?”

User 3: “@User 2, your peers are flawed. Listen to the doctors and scientists who are in consensus.”

User 2: “@User 3, Who do you think does the peer reviewed studies?? Doctors and scientists. It’s not mainstream but there are many doctors who don’t fully believe in either the vaccine schedule or the vaccines.”

User 3: “@User 2 and those doctors have been handedly discredited. Repeatable experimentation with measureable results. Science does not care about anything else. There is no popular opinion with science, its not politics or religion.”

Table 1. Example of anti-vaccination meme from Instagram.

trolling or argumentation, and educational dialogue only occurred when someone was confused, needed clarification, or simply asked to learn more. This dialogue, unlike that on Instagram, was much less heated and seemed more in solidarity. Other comments included jokes that expounded on the meme or its message or statements of support.

Interpretation

Throughout the data collection process, I noticed some patterns and trends that emerged under three main themes that align with my research questions. The first theme I examined was the use of different types of memes across the different topics I was exploring. Under the umbrella of anti-vaccination memes, memes tended to be the standard image with either a caption at the top or text overlaying components within the image to convey a message or story. They were intended to be funny and were often received that way. Within the anti-vaccination meme hashtag on Instagram (#antivaxmemes), there was also a significant amount of screen capped text posts from Twitter that called out the anti-vaccination movement. While these posts were not always necessarily intended to be funny, they were being tagged with the word "meme" nonetheless.

When looking at Trump memes, however, things were quite different. There were fewer of the standard memes with images and witty text. Instead, there were more political cartoons and professional activist artwork being shared across the two social media platforms. This can likely be attributed to the nature of the topic. Where political leaders are involved, political cartoons often follow. The spread of these political cartoons with the tag "meme" is particularly interesting. In many ways, standard

internet memes and political cartoons share a lot in common, and perhaps the creation and sharing of politically charged memes is an online extension of the offline practice of creating and reading political cartoons in print media. The repurposing of political cartoons as "memes" in the digital world also speaks to this idea that offline practices continuously move into digital ones. These usages of the word "meme" have

been significant in understanding the emic perspective of meme culture.

The second theme I found deals with the visibility of these memes and their messages and how this varied across the two platforms. On Instagram, I noticed how oftentimes, posters would utilize hashtags that not only supported the message of the meme but also ones that opposed it, as well as other random hashtags that were not necessarily related to the post at all. Hashtags, as they were intended to be used, are meant to tag posts and images with terms related to the post itself. People are putting a twist on this concept to increase the visibility of their posts. By using so many hashtags and, in particular, hashtags that have lots of followers (even if completely unrelated to the post itself), the memes are reaching larger audiences. In many ways, this can be related to the practice of "clickbait". 'Hashtagbait' is being

used to pull in more attention to a post. For sharing a message of resistance against a particular person or idea, visibility is crucial. If the goal is to get as many people on the side you support, then the use of many hashtags, especially those used by people who support the opposite, becomes paramount. Not only does it bring the post into a hashtag that has a lot of attention and followers, but people browsing that hashtag might not agree with its message at all, which stimulates a different type of dialogue.

"For sharing a message of resistance against a particular person or idea, visibility is crucial. If the goal is to get as many people on the side you support, then the use of many hashtags, especially those used by people who support the opposite, becomes paramount."

Memes as Resistance

Reddit was quite different in terms of post visibility, which in many ways can be attributed to the structure of Reddit. The use of subreddits creates smaller communities where people share a certain opinion. In a subreddit dedicated to “antivax” memes, or memes aimed to denounce anti-vaccination practitioners, there are not going to be many, if any, actual anti-vaccination users subscribed to see such posts. This, similar to the use of multiple hashtags above, stimulates a different type of dialogue.

The third theme refers to the types of dialogue occurring on these memes and how they differ across sites concerning message visibility. The five types of dialogue that occurred multiple times in my comment data include: arguments, statements of agreement or support, trolling, further expounded jokes, and educational discussion.

On Instagram, where meme visibility is higher across more diverse audiences, the dialogue tended to consist of trolling, arguments, and further joking about the topic. What was quite surprising, however, was that there was still a considerable amount of educational discussion occurring within anti-vaccination meme posts. People of different beliefs and ideologies posted comments of opposition, but those who were indeed pro-vaccination rose to spread information they had about vaccines, sometimes linking to sources and peer-reviewed works. More often than not, however, these comments were accompanied by other pro-vaccination user comments that were not intended to be educational, only argumentative. These comments often resulted in heated discussion where even educational comments would be laced with some sort of insult or barb. Despite the backlash that many people faced when posting opposing comments, it was not unheard of for productive conversation to follow where people left either with a change of opinion or at least took away some new

information.

On Reddit however, where subreddits are essentially small communities of people who feel similarly about a topic, there was considerably less arguing on controversial meme posts. Much of the dialogue consisted of general statements of agreement, further joking, and educational dialogue. Many of these conversations were not laced with contempt like those I saw on Instagram. The lack of these posts’ exposure to larger audiences with diverse beliefs is likely to contribute to this phenomenon. What I did notice, however, were two cases in which a user on

Reddit linked a subreddit of anti-vaccination users, encouraging people to join that subreddit and engage in discussion with those people to attempt to make them see a different way. This serves as an example of how people, despite the limitations that subreddits place on users, overcome problems of message visibility. Some people are actively finding subreddits that belong to those in which they know share an opposing belief and are directing others there.

Both cases (hashtagbait and subreddit culture) can be connected back to this idea of technological affordances and social constructivism. These media sites are structured in

a specific way that may try to limit how people engage with others, but in the case of Instagram users manipulating hashtag usage and Reddit users finding ways to engage with other subreddits, users are displaying clear human agency. We can also find links between this human agency and Michel Foucault’s theorizing about the relationship between power and knowledge. Users of these two sites are fashioning their own power, rising above limitations to try and spread messages of resistance to broader audiences. In the context of the memes, knowledge is being spread by one group. They are controlling the spread of this information, who it reaches, how people are engaging with each other in dialogue, and

"Users of Instagram and Reddit are fashioning their own power, rising above limitations to try and spread messages of resistance to broader audiences."

this is powerful.

Connecting it back to Angelique Haugerud's (2013) work, jokes, and in this case, memes, have the power to bring attention to social issues and expose the hypocrisy of political messages and ideologies. Serving as hubs for dialogue and stirring reactions from those whom they are resisting, memes, and more importantly, those who post, share, and engage them, play a role in activism, even if it isn't as big as organizing large protests or engaging in acts of civil disobedience. They may not be mobilizing large movements or actions, but they certainly do play a part in the spreading of messages that seek to resist the corrupt and oppressive, or the harmful and dangerous (Haugerud 2013).

Conclusion

People use technology and social media in significant ways that are often overlooked. Memes and social media platforms are being harnessed through creative and innovative means that exemplify the creativity, endurance, and autonomy of individuals who fight back against harmful and dangerous rhetoric and narratives. Human agency becomes clear when we look at the ways people are overcoming imposed limitations to engage in the sharing of a message. The digital world is here, and it is deeply entwined in the everyday lives of people. It demands our attention, the attention of those who can shed light on its deep connections to people and culture and community. Further research on this topic needs to be pursued. This research just barely scratches the surface of what needs to be done, leaving many avenues for future work. Future research should examine the differences in experiences of people from different social and cultural backgrounds. By using the full range of anthropological tools and methods, more light can be shed on this area of study.

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This Belt is Too Tight: An Inside Look into the Community Perception of Meningitis within Africa's Meningitis Belt

DAKOTA DICKERSON

Introduction

Meningitis infects and kills many around the world every year. There is not a specific population to which is more susceptible to meningitis than another, however, there are significantly more cases of meningitis that occur within what is known as Africa's meningitis belt. This 'belt' contains a total of 26 countries stretching from Senegal in the West to Ethiopia in the East. The most prominent type of meningitis that will be discussed is bacterial meningitis. There are vaccines to help keep the epidemics down, but the combination of the financial burden many households face keeps these vaccines inaccessible. Environmental changes and access to resources, keep these meningitis epidemics strong. Many peoples participate in individualistic choices in treatment regimens, but having vaccines has been the most agreed-upon solution to fight the meningitis epidemic.

Meningitis

Meningitis is an inflammation of the protective membranes to which cover both the brain and spinal cord. Various types of meningitis can occur including bacterial, viral, and fungal. Bacterial meningitis is caused by bacteria and can be deadly, so it is of most importance that the individual receives immediate medical attention. Viral meningitis is caused by viruses and is serious but often less severe than bacterial meningitis. Fungal meningitis is caused by fungi and is rare, but it can be contracted by inhaling the fungal spores from the surrounding environment (Center for Disease Control and Prevention meningitis symptoms, 2019). There are vaccines for these types of meningitis and while some survive perhaps with lingering *sequelae* (symptoms), others become part of the large fatality rate in Africa for this disease.

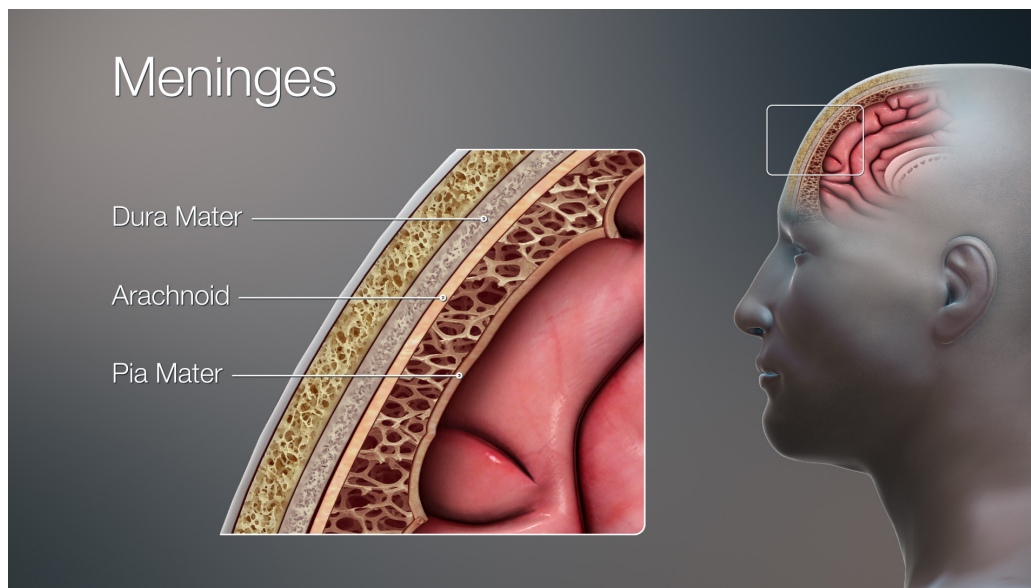


Figure 1. 3D medical illustrations showing Meninges in details, courtesy of <https://www.scientificanimations.com>. Source: Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

Africa's Meningitis Belt

Prevalence

Africa is a continent filled with sun and humidity. The combination of changes in land use, such as deforestation, creates climate factors that may have led to an increase in dust and a reduction in humidity, favoring the conditions for the epidemics (Savory et al. 2006). There is an epidemic and a non-epidemic season in Africa. This may seem like the disease takes a vacation for a portion of the year, but in truth, the disease never leaves, and part of the reason is Africa's environment. Every country within the belt seems to have a different epidemic season as it will vary in the region and year (Traore et al. 2009: 182).

In Africa's meningitis belt there have been cases and fatalities due to meningitis in all age groups, but it is very prevalent within infants. In Nigeria, 60 infants less than 1 year old died of nontuberculous meningitis, a rate similar to the death rate of 1 in 20 infants for malaria or pneumonia (Peltola 2001). Nigeria is only one country in the meningitis belt, and every epidemic season they seem to have the same number or more cases of meningitis. In 2009 a total of 5,300 people died of meningitis and 88,000 were infected with the disease (Saenz and Thorsteinsdottir 2012).

The Gambia the mortality rate due to Hib meningitis in children younger than 5 years old was 23 per 100,000 per year when a study was conducted in 1992 (Peltola 2001). This mortality rate for one population is the same overall incidence rate of Hib meningitis in many European countries. The generalization of this rate to other studies conducted around the same time resulted in a rate of around 56,000 fatalities per year (Peltola 2001). This may seem like a high number, however, many local peoples followed different treatments for the disease and often were either not treated by medical professionals or taken out of medical care too soon.

"When a case of meningitis has been identified, lab specialists determine the type of meningitis the individual has contracted checking white blood cell count, polymerase chain reaction, and cerebrospinal fluid."

With this information, the real number of fatalities may be higher than the estimate.

That is simply the fatalities, but many families with infected members of all ages may survive with *sequelae* that may be long-term or even permanent and rehabilitation is needed. It has been found that childhood bacterial meningitis remains a major problem globally despite the elimination of Hib meningitis through vaccination. In industrialized countries, only about 5% of patients with childhood bacterial meningitis die, and about 15-20% develop *sequelae* (Pelkonen et al. 2009). By contrast, many of the African countries in the meningitis belt are nonindustrialized. In these countries 12-50% of patients die and about 25-50% develop *sequelae* (Pelkonen et al. 2009).

Community Perception

The local peoples of Africa's meningitis belt have their own perception about what causes the infamous meningitis infection. Local peoples report that the wind or *harmattan* is connected to meningitis. According to this perception, food fouled by some kind of contamination can be carried by the wind, and eating the leftover food from a person infected with meningitis or poorly cooked food could also be a cause of infection. Along with the wind, the Moaga terms for meningitis are "*wintoog banga*" (sun disease) and "*segba banga*" (wind disease) (Colombini et al. 2009: 1521). Other potential causes of meningitis are to be in direct contact with an "ill person." It is also during these epidemic months that oily food, as well as green mangos, are avoided, as it is believed that these also cause meningitis infection (Colombini et al. 2009).

Meningitis is also commonly reported as being the result of the activity of sorcerers or soul-eaters, leading the Moaga to call the disease "*weog banga*" or sorcerer's disease. It is these acceptable beliefs by the local peoples of the meningitis belt that

are used to explain the increased risk of meningitis among children. The children are believed to be more susceptible because they eat the forbidden green mangos, play in the sun, and in the wind (Colombini et al. 2009).

The environmental, dietary, and supernatural causes believed to cause meningitis may act independently and have different outcomes. It has been reported by local peoples that "persons with meningitis due to environmental or dietary causes will respond to modern medical care and survive. Those afflicted by the action of a sorcerer, however, will not" (Colombini et al. 2009: 1521).

Sequelae

Sequelae, as stated earlier, are the symptoms that may occur from meningitis. The *sequelae* vary from each case in terms of severity. "Severe neurological *sequelae* were defined as blindness, quadriplegia and/or paresis, hydrocephalus requiring a shunt, or severe psychomotor retardation" (Pelkonen et al. 2009: 1107). Many forms of *sequelae* do not allow complete healing, therefore the effects of this illness that was perhaps contracted as a child may linger long into the future. A study conducted with 382 children showed that 195 of them either died or experienced severe neurological *sequelae* (Pelkonen et al. 2009). This number is only from one group of children. If this study had been conducted in all 26 countries within the meningitis belt, the number of those with *sequelae* would most likely have been much larger.

Diagnosis and Treatment

The physical treatment of meningitis will depend on the individual. Families have reported using therapeutic approaches including "a mix of interventions offered by soothsayers, traditional healers, and modern health care workers" (Colombini et al. 2009: 1521). Not all families use the same

treatment methods. For instance, some families avoid modern medical care when an individual is suspected of contracting meningitis. This practice is reflected by the average delay of 3 days between symptom onset and presentation to a health care center (Colombini et al. 2009). When it came to acquiring the assistance of soothsayers, families would turn to them if they believed the individual contracted meningitis from supernatural causes. The soothsayer would then protect the family against evil spirits through sacrifice and protection rituals. Families reported seeing traditional healers at all stages of the illness regardless of also obtaining modern medical care at the same time (Colombini et al. 2009).

Although soothsayers are believed to help all individuals with meningitis, traditional healers sometimes hesitate to treat patients. Government approaches to traditional healers also vary, and some have opted for training traditional healers. Many patients would appear at health centers unconscious, when the illness has developed too far to save the patient. While patients are in the care of modern medicine, professionals use different procedures to identify the type of meningitis a patient has. Professionals look for the rapid onset of fever and

"one of the following symptoms: stiff neck, altered consciousness, petechial or purpuric rash, or other signs" (Traore et al. 2009: 182) to identify possible cases of meningitis. Infant case identification begins with the onset of fever and bulging fontanelle.

When a case of meningitis has been identified, lab specialists determine the type of meningitis the individual has contracted checking white blood cell count (WBC), polymerase chain reaction (PCR), and cerebrospinal fluid (CSF). In Burkina Faso, PCR testing was required for all patients who tested positive with the CSF testing. This involved the CSF specimen being kept frozen until sent to the lab in Bobo-Dioulasso for the PCR testing (Traore et al. 2009: 182).

"In Africa, babies are vaccinated at birth, but it is hard getting vaccinations for those in other age groups because the vaccine doses are too expensive for the majority of the population."

Africa's Meningitis Belt

With so many families undergoing treatment, it has become a common practice for professionals and the government in many countries within the meningitis belt to encourage parents to seek medical care for their children sooner. Aside from encouraging the families, medical professionals are also adjusting to the epidemics by not only conducting a lumbar puncture for the majority of patients suspected to have acute bacterial meningitis, but also keeping “the indications for lumbar puncture flexible to distinguish bacterial meningitis from malaria” (Pelkonen et al. 2009: 1110). It was the practice in many African countries along the meningitis belt that treatment such as a lumbar puncture would be given to the patient before being transferred from the local health care center or local hospital to a reference hospital (Traore et al. 2009).

Financial Burden

Local peoples within the meningitis belt report that, regardless of their treatment plan, vaccination is the most effective protection against meningitis (Colombini et al. 2009). In Africa, babies are vaccinated at birth, but it is hard getting vaccinations for those in other age groups because vaccine doses are too expensive for the majority of the population. Not only are the vaccines expensive to patients and their families, but so are the hospital

fees, the loss of income from missed workdays, and even the rehabilitation of long-term *sequelae*.

Costs to medical care in Africa's meningitis belt countries will vary depending on each case. The two types of costs to households are DNMCs and DMCs. DNMCs or direct nonmedical costs are what households are required to pay in addition to their DMCs, direct medical costs. These could include food costs, as hospitals do not provide food in Africa, transportation, and loss of income or assets due to loss of productivity (Figure 2.). In the People's Democratic Republic of Burkina Faso the average DNMCs for households in 2006-2007 were US \$15.5 (Colombini et al. 2009). Direct medical costs are what was required of patients to pay to the hospital or health care providers. This included modern health care services, prescriptions, consultations, and biological analyses. This could cost households around US \$25.3 (Colombini et al. 2009). There was also an additional cost to households if the individual self-medicated or consulted with traditional healers. In this country, the total average cost per household for each meningitis case was US \$90, representing 34% of the GDP per capita. In Burkina Faso, the annual GDP per capita averaged US \$268 in 2007 (Colombini et al. 2009). It was expected that DMCs would be low, since the government had promised free health care for meningitis during the epidemic

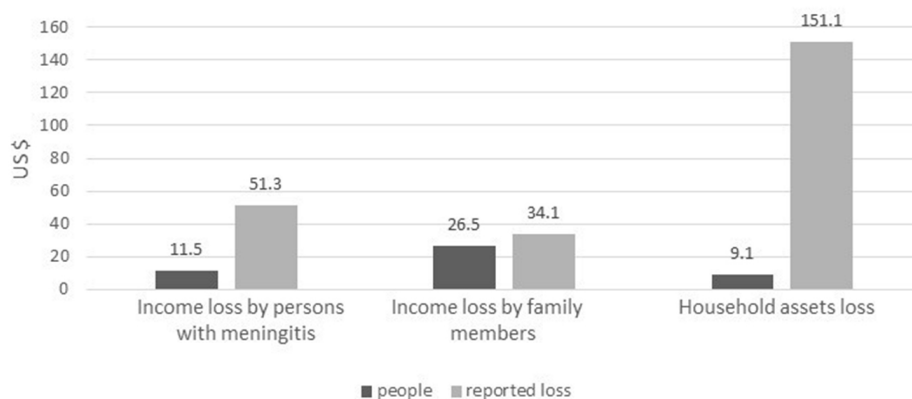


Figure 1: Average indirect costs of households per meningitis case in Burkina Faso, 2006-2007. Redrawn from Colombini et al. 2009: 1523.

periods. Despite this promise, 96% of households in this study paid for a part if not all their meningitis health care. Colombini and colleagues explain that “health care workers were often unfamiliar with the official guidelines regarding payment schedules for different interventions within the different [epidemic] seasons” (Colombini et al. 2009: 1523). Workers, being unsure of when to charge households, erred on the side of charging. Health care centers also experienced frequent shortages of the free medicines which were delivered by the Ministry of Health, which resulted in patients having to pay out of pocket for their medicine (Colombini et al. 2009).

Prevention

Vaccines are simply one of the many tools which are used by modern medical professionals. The current licensed 7-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine contains the serotypes 4, 6B, 9V, 14, 18C, 19F, and 23F. The proposed 10-valent vaccine also includes serotypes 1, 5, and 7F in addition to the serotypes in the 7-valent vaccine. There is also a proposed 13-valent vaccine containing the additional serotypes of 1, 3, 5, 6A, 7F, and 19A. These three vaccines would cover 6% (7-valent), 39% (10-valent), and 67% (13-valent) of serotypes among patients under the age of 5 years old. Older children would be covered by 7% (7-valent), 70% (10-valent), 77% (13-valent) of serotypes (Traore et al. 2009: 185).

Since there is such a large financial burden to households dealing with meningitis, companies like the GAVI Alliance have made the 7-valent vaccine available to eligible countries. GAVI Alliance made it so that the costs to households were more affordable at US \$.10-\$.30 per dose (Traore et al. 2009: 187). There have even been offshore companies such as Brazil-Cuba who have joined to make vaccines more affordable in Africa. The mission of these two companies is supported by WHO. They aim to make a vaccine with broader protection and a longer immunization period. The vaccine is sold at US \$.95 per dose, rather than the US \$15-\$20 a dose for the polysaccharide vaccines sold on the international market. One of the reasons the Brazil-Cuba vaccine is so successful is that it specifically targeted the strain of meningitis within Africa (Thorsteinsdottir and Saenz 2012).

Conclusion

Africa's meningitis belt spans twenty-six countries from Senegal in the West to Ethiopia in the East. The peoples who live within this region of Africa experience epidemic and non-epidemic seasons of meningitis throughout the year. The period when the seasons occur vary for each country. According to many different studies, as many as 56,000 peoples have become part of the meningitis fatality rate in the belt. There are vaccines to help keep the epidemics down, but the financial burden many households face keeps these vaccines inaccessible.

Since the environment of Africa impacts the meningitis epidemics as much as it does, there is not much that can be done even if deforestation was stopped indefinitely. Many of the countries in the meningitis belt are non-industrialized, however, even if they became industrialized there would still be a risk of contracting meningitis, especially as a young child. Whatever treatment the families decide to follow, whether it is seeing a traditional healer, a soothsayer, or a modern medical professional, they should be encouraged to not delay on getting the patient medical help even if there is only suspicion that the individual may have meningitis. People living in Africa's meningitis belt need affordable vaccines, and the governments of these countries should provide for people's healthcare needs, be these traditional, modern, or a combination of both.

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Africa's Meningitis Belt

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Dakota Dickerson is a senior majoring in archaeology with minors in anthropology and biomedical anthropology. In addition to her studies, she has enjoyed being Vice President to the SUNY Potsdam Anthropology Club. After graduation, Dakota plans to work with vital records in her home county. This is her first published work.

Advice Column

Getting Involved in the Anthropology Department

MARRIAH ALLEN PINA



Lance Jacobs throws an atlatl at the annual Atlatl Battle, one of the Department's traditions (Photograph by Jason Hunter).

There are so many ways to get involved with SUNY Potsdam's Anthropology Department. The easiest way is to join the Anthropology Club. Every week the club gathers to set up events, fundraisers, and sometimes play games. Make friends with like-minded people and those who understand your struggles in academia –who else will understand your love for Papa Franz and disdain for Binford? Fundraisers range from entertainment events like Club Sapien to selling an anthropology club classic: brownies made with crickets. Watch cultural movies and eat ethnic foods at cultural movie nights. Take trips to local museums and attractions like the winter carnival in Saranac Lake. Additionally, the club takes students to conferences every year, typically the Northeastern Anthropological Association (NEAA) in the spring. But club isn't the only way to be involved in the Anthropology Department.

If you're interested in digging up the past, SUNY Potsdam offers a field school every summer. In 2019, Dr. Kruczek-Aaron, our Department Chair, had students digging into Potsdam's local history at the Camp Union site, a civil war training camp located right here in Potsdam. Want to dig even further into the past? Dr. Messner often hosts field schools dealing with prehistoric archaeology, typically in the Adirondacks.

If you're looking for an opportunity to do your own research or join in on faculty research, many professors are happy to help you. They can mentor you through projects funded by the Kilmer Fund or the Presidential Scholars program. Or they can be your guide on independent research of any kind. There's a faculty member to help with any subfield or niche topic. Dr. Malit is happy to

mentor students in biological anthropology and paleoanthropology, from bones to pathology to burial practices. Dr. Kruczek-Aaron works with students on historical archaeology projects, especially those dealing with local history. Dr. Messner loves to get students involved in experimental archaeology. Not only through research, but through the atlatl battle held every fall during Anthropolooza. Students can practice as a team throwing darts with atlatls and compete against local colleges to show their skills. Dr. Weets can assist students if they're interested in learning more about a particular region and he always loves when students want to research dental anthropology. Dr. Rodríguez offers students the chance to gain experience as research assistants. Linguistic Anthropology RAs conduct data collection and analysis in Dr. Rodríguez's Research Assistantship in Linguistic Anthropology, offered each spring.

Aside from research, there are plenty of other opportunities offered by faculty to gain experience and get involved. Dr. Khan created the Digital Anthropology Film Festival, where any student can submit short ethnographic films or anthropology related vlogs. He also hosts a Digital Anthropology Internship where students learn about video production, which is offered each fall. Dr. Perkins coordinates internships at local museums so students can gain experience in museum curation and other museum studies areas. Some of his interns curate exhibitions in the Weaver Museum on campus every year. Finally, if you are a talented writer, you should consider joining the *Collegiate Anthropologist* Editorial Team, a fantastic way to gain professional experience in the publishing world.

The Anthropology Department at SUNY Potsdam is full of life and opportunities to get involved. Whether you're interested in research or something more hands on, like a field experience or internship, there is something for everyone. Join the community!



The 2019-2020 Digital Anthropology Internship cohort and Dr. Khan (Photograph by the Digital Anthropology Studio).

About the Author

Marriah Allen Pina is a junior majoring in Anthropology and Archaeological Studies with a Minor in Linguistics. This is her first year working for the *Collegiate Anthropologist*.

Photo Essay: The Digital Anthropology Film Festival

ALEX WILSON

The Digital Anthropology Film Festival (DAFF) was one of the events organized by the Department of Anthropology in the Fall 2019 that many students and faculty were excited to attend. DAFF was first held during the 2018 Anthropolooza, a day-long celebration of human history, culture, and creativity. Organized by Dr. Faris Khan, the Film Festival is a way to bring together people across many fields of Anthropology while giving the students a chance to share their work with the other disciplines. This year, DAFF was held in the Proscenium Theater in the Performing Arts Center, rather than the much smaller Knowles MPR, showing that the attendance had significantly increased since 2018. DAFF was managed by the Digital Anthropology Interns and was supported by the Anthropology Club throughout the evening. There was time allotted for attendees to have food and beverage and to take photos at the Step and Repeat and photo booth, allowing people to take home with them the memory of the event.

Once the time had come to move into the theater and everyone was seated, the guests were welcomed with a fantastic performance by the Potsdam Pointercounts, followed by a film created by the Interns of the Digital Anthropology Studio. Then, it was onto videos created by students from Dr. Khan's Cultural Anthropology Course. After a brief intermission, DAFF welcomed everyone back with a stunning performance by the Bear Witness Step Team followed by videos created by students in Dr. Messner's Ancient People and Places class. Then, the event moved onto the award ceremony. It was truly a night to behold and a wonderful place to gather and make many new memories, while learning about the kind of projects that students in the various subfields of Anthropology do. Given how well things have gone after one year of its creation, it is only a matter of time before this event might be as widely renowned as the LoKo Festival among the Anthropology community and beyond (All pictures are courtesy of the Digital Anthropology Studio).



ABOVE LEFT: Guests are welcomed with a reception at the Performing Arts Center.

ABOVE RIGHT: The winners of the Best Ethnographic Short Award, Dakota Dickerson, Tara Stern, and Emily Willis, pose with Dr. Khan.

LEFT: Students from from Cultural Anthropology whose work was featured at the Festival pose at the step and repeat with students from the Anthropology Club, who supported the Film Festival throughtout the evening.



FAR LEFT: Dr. Khan and Digital Anthropology Studio Interns planning a shot by the Saint Lawrence River in Cornwall Island, Canada.

LEFT: The film crew getting ready to shoot the next scene.



DAS Interns rehearsing and shooting indoor scenes for the Documentary Three Nations Crossing, produced by the Digital Anthropology Studio and directed by Dr. Faris Khan. The documentary was premiered at the DAFF.



LEFT: Dr. Faris Khan addressing the audience at the Proscenium Theater.

CENTER: Bear Witness Step Team during their stellar performance at DAFF.

RIGHT: Dean Galbraith gives her opening address at the Digital Anthropology Film Festival.

FAR RIGHT: The audience at the Proscenium Theater, composed of SUNY Potsdam students, faculty, staff, and Potsdam community members.

RIGHT: Potsdam Pointercourts ready to perform at DAFF.



How-to column**Ethnographic Vlogging**

CHEYANNE CRUZ



Ethnographic vlogging is a new but increasingly popular tool in Anthropology. It allows anthropologists to capture their work in action and visually present their research findings. Since ethnographic vlogging is a newer creation, one that has not been adopted by all, there is not much information about it or how to do it. However, that shouldn't stop you from incorporating this unique tool into your work. To understand what ethnographic vlogging is, let's take a step back and break it down.

Vlogging is a popular method of filming often used by creative professionals. If you watch YouTube videos, chances are you've seen a vlog or two before. For those of you who haven't, vlogs usually consist of people documenting their day-to-day activities: what they do at work, what they eat, and their traveling experiences. In other words, vlogging provides a sneak peek into the lives of people.

Now that we understand what vlogging is, let's talk about ethnographic fieldwork.

Dr. Faris Khan, a professor in the Anthropology Department at SUNY Potsdam, describes ethnographic fieldwork as a method used by anthropologists. This type of fieldwork is done over an extended period of time and it requires anthropologists to interact with the people they are studying (it's simply not enough to observe). Now, how does this connect to ethnographic vlogging? Ethnographic vlogging, like ethnographic fieldwork, takes some time. You should expect to spend a few months doing research before your vlog is complete. While conducting ethnographic fieldwork there are many different data collecting techniques a person can use: fieldnotes, participant observation, interviews, photography and much more. Vlogging is another helpful technique to use, as it allows the researcher to keep track of their experiences and the actions of their research participants.

Anthropology is all about studying people and piecing together their fascinating stories. There is so much to learn about the world and those who inhabit it. This emphasis anthropology puts on people and culture is precisely what caught my attention as a freshmen at SUNY Potsdam, and has continued to interest me thanks to the professors in the Anthropology Department. Now, what do anthropologists do with all the information they gather? Some may choose to share their work by writing articles or books. They may also choose to film themselves and document their experiences. This is essentially the idea of ethnographic vlogging.

What's so great about ethnographic vlogging is that anyone can do it! No, you don't have to be an anthropologist with years of experience or one that is conducting research in another country. All levels of research are important and ethnographic vlogging is a super helpful way for people to share what they are learning with others. If you're interested in doing some ethnographic vlogging of your own, here are some things to think about and ways you can start the process.

1. *What are you interested in and what do you want to learn?*

This may seem like a silly question as it's only natural for us to be interested in many different things, but choosing a topic you would like to explore is a great first step towards ethnographic vlogging. Maybe you're interested in learning about the lifestyles of people in a specific field (doctors, exercise trainers, baristas, etc.) or want to study a community on a college campus. Maybe you have the opportunity to travel to and learn about a group of people you find fascinating. These are the types of things that can be explored in an ethnographic vlog.

2. *You've picked your area of focus, now what?*

You've finally decided on what you want to research and what you hope to share with others, next you'll want to consider some things. Ethnographic vlogging can be time-consuming, so you want to make sure you have everything planned out before the camera starts rolling. If you plan on interviewing people, consider what kind of questions you might ask and the style of interview you are aiming for (formal or informal). How will you address those you are interviewing and how will you find people to participate?

Technology is a huge part of vlogging as it would be impossible to put together an ethnographic vlog without a device to record it. Don't worry, you don't need the newest camera or a film crew to get the job done. For this purpose, a phone or any other recording device with good audio and picture quality will suffice. Next, think about what you want to capture in your vlog. There are so many options, so pick what you think fits best with your topic and the point of your project. If your experiences while traveling add to the story you are trying to tell, include it! If the scenery around you is going to give your audience a clear idea of where you are, add it in! Always remember to be respectful of those you are filming and obtain permission before whipping out your camera.

3. *Information, information, and more information*

By the time you wrap up your research, you will most likely be swamped by loads of information and research data, so much that it may be intimidating to even look at everything you have collected. Don't let this stress you out, instead, think of all the data as a pool of information you can pick from to help you put together your awesome project!

The first thing you should do is organize everything you've gathered in a way you think works best. How this is done depends on the person completing the task. One option is to separate audio and footage taken from interviews, events, conversations, and self-recordings. Again, how you organize your material will depend on what you have captured. Another option is to pick out key ideas or statements, especially if they are reoccurring and if they answer or address your questions. These things will have to be done at some point, but the order you do them in is up to you.

4. *The finale*

While the research you have done is the most important thing about your vlog, don't forget about the small details. Consider adding things like music, visual effects or text which can all bring life to your vlog. And last but not least, be proud of your hard work!

5. *Bonus! Even more advice from Dr. Khan*

- Vlogging can be super awkward. Try vlogging in public to help you be more comfortable and if possible, experiment with vlogging in your field site.
- Have a vision. Think about how you want to use the data you have or will collect. How do you want your project to look?
- Video editing experience is a plus. However, if you're new to editing a few searches on YouTube will provide you with tons of tutorials!
- Honor anthropological research ethics. Remember, your research participants are actual people! Your research should not harm your participants in any way. Always obtain permission from those who are included in your vlog, protect the identity of your participants and be respectful.

Congratulations! You're on your way to creating your own ethnographic vlog!

About the Author

Cheyenne Cruz is a senior majoring in Anthropology and English writing. She hopes to become a writer and use her skills to connect with others who have similar interests. This is her first year working for the *Collegiate Anthropologist*.

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SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Anthropological research papers, personal reflections or journals on internships and study abroad programs, photo essays, and generally anything pertinent to the study and experience of anthropology is welcomed for submission. Papers should be submitted in electronic form (.doc or .docx) to collegiateanthropologist@yahoo.com.

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*SUNY Potsdam students at the Camp Union Archaeology Fieldschool
(Photograph by Jason Hunter).*