

Research Proposal & Bibliography

Haley M. Kinsler & Brody McCurdy

CRD 798: Intro to Digital Humanities

Dr. Paul Fyfe

March 24, 2025

Research Proposal & Bibliography

Research Proposal & Questions

For our project, we will apply computational methods to the materials from the digital Civil Rights archive of the North Carolina Digital Collections (NCDC) to explore what patterns such methodologies unearth in the data. We will examine three types of materials: letters to the governor ($n = 71$), memoranda ($n = 19$), and photographs depicting episodes from the Civil Rights movement in the state ($n = 21$). Using geospatial mapping and social network analysis, we aim to spatially situate the items in the collection and highlight their interrelationships. Then, using text analysis, we will identify rhetorical strategies used to both resist and advocate for racial equity in the correspondences and explore how such strategies are echoed in contemporary discourse, adding to a growing body of scholarship exploring this throughline (e.g., Erickson, 2011; Wiltz, 2024). We will incorporate the resulting digital exhibit into the Fourth Ward Oral History Project, an initiative which recovers the history of a historically Black neighborhood in Raleigh destroyed by urban renewal (see Carmen, 2023; Mattson, 1988), to better contextualize the city's redevelopment policies. More generally, however, this project aims to explore the affordances digital humanities methodologies make available to archival work and community engaged scholarship. Below we discuss our primary methodological approaches and research questions:

Text Analysis

This portion of the project will seek to explore the rhetorical and discursive content within letters between government officials and North Carolina residents regarding desegregation, with a focus on identifying any linguistic or discursive patterns that differentiate between actors who are both sending and receiving these letters. To do so, we will use packages for corpus linguistic analysis

in R to identify patterns across letters once they have been automatically transcribed and corrected. We will select particularly representative excerpts and letters for close reading and analysis.

Mapping

We will create an interactive map using ArcGIS—a software increasingly used by historians to analyze and layer multimodal data (e.g., Knowles, 2008)—using the collection’s photographs, visualizing them alongside relevant historical information relating to protests and events in Raleigh. We are particularly interested in what such digital public history methods could reveal for website users when these records are linked to their creation and circulation in and across space. The creation of this map, then, seeks to make spatial visualization of these records accessible to the public as part of a digital exhibit on civil rights history in North Carolina.

Social Network Analysis

We will use social and text network analytic methods to reveal interrelationships among letter writers quantitatively based on word patterning and topic similarity. Following previous scholarship applying social network analytic methods to historical text corpora to unearth the relationships between texts and social actors (e.g., Ahnert & Ahnert, 2015; Gavin, 2016), we aim to investigate how these methods might help us to: (a) identify underlying groupings among letter writers using community detection algorithms, (b) map the relationship among letter writers and texts spatially, and (c) model the likelihood of tie-formation within the text network using statistical modeling.

References

Project Frameworks & Orientations

African American Public History & Oral History

- Augusto, G., Hogan, W., & Mason-Hogans, D. (2022). Adapting critical oral history methodology to freedom movement studies. *The Oral History Review*, 49(2), 251-282.
- Berry, D. (2021). The house archives built. *up//root*.
- Dagbovie, P. G. (2007). *The early Black history movement, Carter G. Woodson, and Lorenzo Johnston Greene*. University of Illinois Press.
- Givens, J. (2021). *Fugitive pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the art of Black teaching*. Harvard University Press.
- High, S. (2010). Telling Stories: A reflection on oral history and new media. *Oral History*, 38(1), 101-112.
- Ortiz, P. (2021). Oral history, democracy, and the power of memory. In J. U'Mofe & P. Ortiz (Eds.), *African American studies: 50 years at the University of Florida*. University of Florida Press.
- Pettijohn, B. (2022). Applying Black feminist technopractice in digital storytelling at cultural sites. In *Interactive Storytelling* (pp. 206-213). Springer.
- Roberts, A., & Butler, M. L. (2022). Contending with the palimpsest: Reading the land through Black women's emotional geographies. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers*, 112(3), 828-837.
- Sutherland, T. (2017). Archival amnesty: In search of Black American transitional and restorative justice. *Journal of Critical Library and Information Studies*, 1(2), 1-23.

Raleigh & North Carolinian History

- Carmen, C. (2023). *Historic Black neighborhoods of Raleigh*. The History Press.
- Dixon, D. (2024). *No Longer Divided: Analyzing the Racial Integration of Schools in North Carolina* [PhD Dissertation, NC State University]. NC State University Libraries.
- Krislov, S. (1959). Constituency Versus Constitutionalism: The Desegregation Issue and Tensions and Aspirations of Southern Attorneys General. *Midwest Journal of Political Science*, 3(1), 75–92.
- Larson, K. E. (1983). *A separate reality: The development of racial segregation in Raleigh, North Carolina, 1865-1915*. [Master's thesis, North Carolina State University.]
- Mattson, R. (1988). The evolution of Raleigh's African-American neighborhoods in the 19th and 20th Centuries. [Master's thesis, North Carolina State University.]

Orientations to Research

- D'Ignazio, C. & Klein, L. F. (2020). On rational, scientific, objective viewpoints from mythical, imaginary, impossible standpoints. In *Data Feminism* (pp. 73-96). MIT Press.
- Smagorinsky, P. (2008). The method section as conceptual epicenter in constructing social science research reports. *Written Communication*, 25(3), 389-411.

Digital Humanities Methods

Mapping

- Gregory, I. N., & Ell, P. S. (2007). *Historical GIS: Technologies, methodologies, and scholarship*. Cambridge University Press.
- Knowles, A. K. (2008). GIS and history. In A. K. Knowles & A. Hillier (Eds.), *Placing history: How maps, spatial data, and GIS are changing historical scholarship*. ESRI Press.
- MacEachran, A. (1994). *Some truth with maps: A primer on symbolization and design*. Association of American Geographers.

Tufte, E. (2001). Graphical Excellence. In *The visual display of quantitative information* (pp. 13-52). Graphics Press.

Zephyr, F. (2015). Between humanities and the digital. In P. Svensson & D. T. Goldberg (Eds.), *Spatial history as scholarly practice* (pp. 411-428). The MIT Press.

Social network analysis

Ahnert, R. & Ahnert, S.E. (2015). Protestant Letter Networks in the Reign of Mary I: A Quantitative Approach. *ELH*, 82(1), pp. 1-33.

Allen, R.B., Trigg, R.H., & Weiser, M. (1986). TEXTNET: a network-based approach to text handling. *ACM Transactions on Information Systems*, 4(1), pp. 1-23.

Fiscarelli, A. (2022). Social network analysis for digital humanities. In A. Fickers & J. Tatarinov (Ed.), *Digital History and Hermeneutics: Between Theory and Practice* (pp. 23-42). De Gruyter.

Gavin, M. (2016). Historical Text Networks: The Sociology of Early English Criticism. *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 50(1), pp. 53-80.

Granovetter, M. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties. *American Journal of Sociology*, 78(6), pp. 1360-1380.

McDonald, D. (2023). Comparing Text Documents. Tutorials: Quantitative Analysis in R.

<https://stevemcd1.github.io/tutorials/>

Neal, Z. P. (2020). The Spatial Dimensions of Social Networks. In R. Light & J. Moody (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Networks* (pp. 1-19). Oxford University Press.

Schaefer, D. R. & Marcum C. R. (2020). Modeling Network Dynamics. In R. Light & J. Moody (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Social Networks* (pp. 1-19). Oxford University Press.

Textual & Discourse Analysis

- Benwell, B., & Stokoe, E. (2006). *Discourse and Identity*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Bamberg, M., De Fina, A., & Schiffrin, D. (2011). Discourse and identity construction. In S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx, & V. L. Vignoles (Eds.), *Handbook of identity theory and research* (pp. 177–199). Springer Science + Business Media.
- Brückmann, R. (2021). *Massive Resistance and Southern Womanhood: White Women, Class, and Segregation* (Vol. 30). University of Georgia Press.
- De Fina, A. (2009). From space to spatialization in narrative studies. In J. Collins, M. Baynham, & S. Slembrouck (Eds.), *Globalization and language in contact: Scale, migration, and communicative practices* (pp. 109-129). Continuum.
- Erickson, A.T. (2011). The Rhetoric of Choice: Segregation, Desegregation, and Charter Schools. *Dissent*, 58(4), pp. 41-46.
- Hodges, A., & Cipponeri, G. (2021). How the "Law and Order" Trope Individualizes Racism and Inverts Racial Vulnerability. *Colorado Research in Linguistics*, 25.
- Strauss, S., & Parastou, F. (2013). Indexicality, stance, identity, and agency. In *Discourse analysis: Putting our worlds into words* (pp. 265-311). Routledge.
- Wiltz, A. (2024). How Anti-DEI is Re-Igniting Racist Rhetoric of Segregationists. *Momentum [Medium]*.
- Woolard, K. (2021). Language ideology. In J. Stanlaw (Ed.), *The International Encyclopedia of Linguistic Anthropology*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Wortham, S., & Reyes, A. (2015). *Discourse analysis beyond the speech event*. Routledge.