Volume 57

ARTICLES

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Thank you for your invaluable contribution and unwavering dedication to the 97th Virginia Social Science Association (VSSA) Conference. Without your tireless efforts and commitment to excellence, this gathering of esteemed scholars and researchers would not have been possible. The culmination of the Virginia Social Science Association's endeavors is a testament to your steadfast determination and passion for effective change in our society. Each year, we convene to support one another's research, engage in meaningful discussions, and address the emerging social challenges that shape our world.

Even amidst the tumultuous backdrop of political upheaval and power struggles among global superpowers, we remain steadfast in our commitment to VSSA's legacy of excellence and intellectual inquiry. It is in these moments of uncertainty and change that our collective pursuit of knowledge and advocacy for positive change shines brightest! Through the sharing of discoveries, innovative research, and thoughtful policy recommendations, we continue to uphold the principles of scholarship and progress that define the association.

As my presidential tenure draws to a close, I do so with a deep sense of gratitude and optimism for the future of VSSA. With the establishment of an advisory board this year, I eagerly anticipate passing the baton to capable hands that will safeguard and nurture the growth of our esteemed organization. To every one of you, I extend my heartfelt appreciation for your unwavering support and dedication. I invite you to continue immersing yourself in the scholarly work presented at our annual conference and consider your research for publication in our esteemed journal. Together, let us continue to push the boundaries of knowledge and drive positive change for generations to come.

Last but certainly not least, I extend my deepest appreciation to the editorial team, Dr. Ayana Conway, editor-in-chief, Dr. Beverly Colwell Adams, and Dr. Judi Anne Caron Shepperd for their exceptional efforts in producing another outstanding issue of the journal (issue 57).

Sincerely,

Nadjhia Normil-Skakavac

Dr. Nadjhia Normil-Skakavac
President, Virginia Social Science Association
+++++++++++++++++++++++++++
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice
Virginia State University
Email: nnormil@vsu.edu

Elected and Appointed Officers of the Board

Alma Barlow: Grassroots Leadership and the Rise of the Richmond Tenants Organization

Rutledge M. Dennis

Department of Sociology and Anthropology
George Mason University

Kimya Nuru Dennis

Independent Scholar

Abstract

This sociological essay examines the important role Alma Barlow played in the creation of the Richmond Tenants Organization (RTO). Her role in this endeavor is crucial as it highlights other issues forced into the public arenas at the same time. The first concerned housing, specifically, public housing, made more urgent during the era of housing discrimination, and the call by many for the U.S. government, and states and local communities to enact a comprehensive public housing policy. Second, the rise of Alma Barlow and the fight for equity in public housing and many other areas of Black life, as revealed in her political activism in the city of Richmond and the state of Virginia, replicated the political activism of other Black women activists on the national stage —women like Fannie Lou Hamer, Septima Clark, and Ella Baker. Third, Alma Barlow's housing activism was occurring simultaneously with two other issues of national importance being acted out in Richmond and vicinity: Brown vs Board of Education and issues of school integration and desegregation, and the legal and political issues associated with the Richmond–Chesterfield Annexation Dispute. Fourth, this article discusses the issues which precipitated the rise of the RTO, the process in the creation of RTO, the confrontations with the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA), and the many issues involved in this confrontation, and the role Alma Barlow played in this process. Finally, Alma Barlow's organizational role outside of RTO is analyzed to illustrate her widening social, economic, and political role in the city, the region, and the state.

Keywords: public housing, tenants, racial politics, political community, social and political advocacy, grassroots leaders, grassroots organizing, social and political commitment

Alma Barlow: Grassroots leadership and the rise of the Richmond Tenants Organization

Introduction

To understand the significance of Alma Barlow and her role as a grassroots leader in the formation of the Richmond Tenants Organization, one must know the important role of housing in the health and well-being in the lives of Americans, especially Black Americans. Racial discrimination in housing has been pervasive in American society, both as practiced individually and as national public policy (Franklin & Moss, Jr., 1988). Probably unknown to many, the segregationist policy of the American government as stated in the Federal Housing Administration mandate required that "…properties shall be continued to be occupied by the same social and racial classes" (Ibid). This national policy was both promoted and enacted by local and regional governments, north and south, as millions of Blacks uprooted themselves from their rural communities and moved to small, medium, and large cities in the south, north, and west (Freer, 2004, pp. 614-618). The post-Depression housing shortage and the heavy in-migration to medium and large American cities prompted the emergence of the Public Works Administration and the creation of public housing projects to replace deteriorating urban housing blight (Barnett & Hefner, 1976, pp. 60-61). The first of six low-income housing projects built in Richmond, Virginia, was Gilpin Court, whose construction began in 1941 and was completed in 1943. Subsequent courts in the city were Hillside, Creighton, Fairfield, Whitcomb, and Mosby, the last court, completed in 1962.

Public housing projects throughout the United States were built in areas of cities which reflected the racial and class populations in those areas and districts. For this reason, it was virtually impossible for them to be built in predominately middle- class areas and districts. Likewise, predominately Black units were in predominately Black areas, while white units were in

predominately white areas. The urban housing crisis which precipitated the construction of the six housing projects in Richmond should be viewed in connection to the rapid racial population shifts occurring in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. But Alma Barlow's role must be viewed from the perspective of what was the traditional relationship between housing development administrators and public housing residents. In this relationship residents had little to no voice in the decision-making processes which affected them. Hence, this traditional relationship set the stage for the emergence of Alma Barlow and RTO. In addition, we cannot discount the impact of external events and activities which may have had direct, or indirect, influence. One was the Black Power Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. The other was the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The latter struck down southern-manufactured pre-requisites to voting which had long prevented Blacks from voting: the white-only primary; poll taxes; literacy clauses; and the grandfather clause. Both the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act opened the doors for activists such as Alma Barlow. In Richmond, Alma Barlow and others channeled their energy into the register to vote drive initiated by the Richmond Crusade for Voters and the local chapter of the NAACP. The other crises in the Richmond area were the already mentioned annexation conflict and the aftermath of the on-going school desegregation issue made prominent by the Byrd Machine and its Massive Resistance strategy against the Brown School Decision. While these many issues were being argued and debated, Alma Barlow was laying the foundation for a new, and for many, a radical perspective, that would entail growing power to public housing residents and a new orientation to power from below – power to the oppressed, the outsider, and the marginal. In a sense, the creation of RTO would not only empower the powerless, but it also gave the formerly powerless a new perspective of who they were and their importance on the local, regional, and national scenes. RTO's creation, therefore, has sociological as well as psychological significance.

Grassroots Organizations

Grassroots organizations and politics have always been a feature of Black organizational life. On a national level the NAACP and the Urban League are known to many. What is not known are the many grassroots organizations, locally created to deal with local problems with which Black citizens had to deal as they confronted whites in their local communities over issues of employment, wages, and legal and social inequalities and injustice. Though many men created and were active in grassroots organizations, this study of the emergence of RTO, and the predominance of Black women in the leadership role prompts a review of women-led grassroots organizations and the women who were grassroots organizers and leaders. Under the sub-title of "Grassroots Politics," Eric Arnesen (2003, pp. 18-29) describes the emergence of Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), and the competitive politics with which it engaged both the NAACP and The Messenger, the magazine published by Black socialists in Harlem. Important in this segment on "Grassroots Politics" was the author's discussion of Black women organizations, such as "Mother's Clubs," Republic Clubs, and Laundry Workers Union.

Women grassroots leaders have always existed and will continue to exist, for each local crisis, or problem, and will elicit the attention and response from that special person who will see and understand the local problem in ways not seen by others. In addition, their motivation to attack the problem will seem to be greater than those around them. That is the very definition of leadership and being a leader.

One of the grassroots leaders important to highlight and celebrate is Septima Clark. Septima Clark was a teacher in Charleston, South Carolina and along with Esau Jenkins, created and worked with The Progressive Club on Johns Island, S.C., to educate, provide funds, and medical care for the poor during the Jim Crow years of rigid segregation. The first author of this

paper remembers Mrs. Clark well, as she taught fourth grade at Henry P. Archer Elementary School in Charleston, S.C. while he was a student there. She was later fired for belonging to the local chapter of the NAACP and for refusing to withdraw her membership. The Charleston city and county officials then viewed the NAACP as a communist organization. Cynthia Stokes Brown (1990) and Katherine Mellen Charron (2012) have written extensive biographies of Mrs. Clark.

Another grassroot organizational leadership model is Fannie Lou Hamer. Her grassroots legacy is very different from that of Septima Clark as she was born and reared in extreme poverty. Her emergence as a fearless local grassroots leader is one of assertion, conviction, and determination. This determination was capped by her co-founding of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and its challenge to the all-white Democratic Party delegates in 1964 at the National Democratic Party Convention. Many books have been written about Mrs. Hamer, but two by Earnest N. Bracey (2011) and Meagen Parker Brooks (2014) are noteworthy.

If Alma Barlow were in search of grassroots leaders to emulate, she could find no greater models than generations of Black women such as Septima Clark, Ella Baker, and Fannie Lou Hamer. Researchers studying the racial politics of Richmond, Moeser and Dennis (1982, 2020), Silver and Moeser (1995), and B. Campbell (2011) have cited the important role of a Richmond grassroot leader, Curtis Holt, Sr., and his role in the Richmond annexation dispute.

Alma Marie Barlow and the 1960s

Alma Barlow was a significant advocate for the poor, the dispossessed, and the outsider. As she, the daughter of a Lunenburg County, Virginia farmer, was evolving from her teen years in Victoria, Virginia, as a basketball player, tennis player, cheerleader, usher in her church, and church choir member, to eventually reside in Fairfield Court in 1961. She would remain there for more than thirty years. Public housing issues were exploding throughout the nation, especially in

Harlem (Franklin & Moss, Jr., Ibid). It was here that Jesse Gray placed housing and housing inequities on the national agenda when he led a Harlem rent strike to highlight the deteriorating conditions of Harlem's low-rent public housing. The strike provided the foundation for the creation of the National Tenants Organization that became the umbrella group for the local Richmond Tenants Organization, a group in which Alma Barlow served as president for fifteen years. However, throughout the 1960s, Barlow was getting her activist teeth sharpened by her involvement in other regional issues. For example, when she was fired from her job as a housekeeper during a leadership session at John Marshall Hotel in Richmond, she was immediately hired in the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth where she became a leading advocate for poor women in the city of Richmond. Also, during the 1960s, she returned periodically to Lunenburg, County, where she was born, to convince cafeteria workers to unionize. Dr. King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) sought to convince the workers to unionize. Barlow had little success in this venture, though her efforts to get residents to support the larger programs and platforms of Martin Luther King, Jr. were more successful (Barlow, recorded interview, Summer, 1982).

In a sense, Alma Barlow's role in Richmond, Virginia, especially her role in the formation of RTO and her general role as advocates of the poor and dispossessed, can be encapsulated within the framework of grassroots politics and economics. Throughout the nation, Black Americans were exercising their political, social, cultural, and economic options to carve out new areas by which to define themselves and create new agendas. The idea of grassroots and grassroots leadership denotes an orientation to the unorganized, those not already connected to large societal political, social, and economic networks and large-scale organizations. Above all, grassroots movements such as the movements around the works of Jesse Gray and the National Tenants Organization in

New York, the Richmond Tenants Organization, Fannie Lou Hamer's work with sharecroppers in Mississippi, and the grassroots work of Esau Jenkins and Septima Clark with the Progressive Club on Johns Island, near Charleston, South Carolina, are all examples which illustrate the emergence of grassroots movements and activities as frameworks for insurgent organizations (Rachal, 1998; Levine, 2004; Jenkins & Perrow, 1977; Clark & Twining, 1980). Insurgent organizations and groups have their origins in grassroots soil and are rooted in long standing local and regional problems that those in power have refused to either address, or change. For this reason, grassroots leaders, representing local constituents must inevitably confront and challenge powerful individuals, organizations, and groups. To do this, insurgent groups, from the weakened though skillful positions, must make use of physical confrontations, protests, sit-ins, and boycotts to force powerful institutions and organizations to not only address unresolved issues, but also to learn how to listen to the powerless, now not so powerless, and to make political, economic, and other socio-political amends.

The Beginning of a Social Movement-Organizing the Unorganized

The Richmond Tenants Organization began as a group called The Council of Presidents, and Barlow was president of one of the local councils in 1971. In 1975 she was elected President of the Council of Presidents. In 1977 the Council of Presidents was renamed The Richmond Tenants Organization. RTO immediately applied for and was given membership and affiliation with the National Tenants Organization. This, in effect, shifted Barlow from the presidency of the Council of Presidents to the presidency of the newly named Richmond Tenants Organization. In July 1978, there was an additional structural change in RTO, and Barlow became the Executive President of the Richmond Tenants Organization. As she told a Richmond-Times Dispatch reporter during an interview on August 1, 1978: "The primary concerns of the tenants are to have some say

in the running of the projects and to eliminate what they [the tenants] call harassment and lack of interest by housing officials for low-income tenants."

The immediate issue which created a crisis for RTO and the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority was heating in residents' homes. For many months, residents in all the courts had been contacting Mrs. Barlow about inadequate heating in their homes, and she visited other housing projects in other states to find out how they dealt with such problems. Though heating was the most immediate issue, the RRHA's new lease agreement with tenants, a government requirement, was approaching, and RTO wanted to make sure it would have a seat at the table and have a decisive voice in the deliberations.

To prepare for the encounter with RRHA, as stated earlier, Mrs. Barlow visited public housing advocates in other cities in Virginia, and in other states. Though the heating problem was the most immediate problem, the issues expanded as she met with other public housing advocates. She developed a strategy and an outline for addressing the problems she and RTO had to address:

1. She reviewed the leases presented to tenants by other housing authorities to observe what was covered or excluded. How was the rent collected, and by whom? How much were late payment fees, and when were the deadlines, when were they due? Who determined when rent increases would occur, and the percentage rates determining such increases? Mrs. Barlow and the RTO Council wanted assurances that the tenant rights were recognized and protected in tenant-RRHA relations and interactions. Above all, she wanted to make sure that a federally funded housing program, designed to help those most in need of public housing assistance, was doing so.

2. After a careful review of the leases from the housing authorities contacted, Mrs. Barlow and the RTO Council read hundreds of pages of federal guidelines and regulations regarding public housing leases.

3. Meetings were held with tenants in all the Richmond public housing projects in which tenants were asked to express their views of the RRHA and what they wished to include in any revamped leases.

4. After receiving comments from residents, RTO proceeded to draft its own version of the provisions for a revised RRHA–Tenants lease. A revised RRHA–Tenants lease was approved by those attending the lease discussion meeting, and this was in addition, approved by the RTO Council.

5. RTO then hired an attorney to review what the Council had approved and the format in which this would be presented to the Executive Director of RRHA.

6. Mrs. Barlow met with women from all the housing projects to organize and train them on issues related to public housing policies and procedures. It should be noted that men were not intentionally excluded. It is the reality, however, that women have, from the very beginning of RTO, been in the forefront of the leadership of RTO as well as comprised most of the more active participants in housing authority activities.

In late July 1987, Mrs. Barlow met with Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority officials and presented a list of non-negotiable demands. A failure of RRHA to meet the demands would result in a rent strike. The following table illustrates Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority Policies and Requirements and Richmond Tenants Organization (RTO) Counter Policies and Demands.

1   **RRHA existing rent and lease policy and requirement**: Provide "reasonable" amounts of heat and hot water.

       RTO counter policy and demand: Provide adequate amount of heat and hot water.

2   **RRHA existing rent and lease policy and requirement**: In the lease, RRHA should be referred to as "management," not "authority."

       RTO in agreement: RRHA is the "management."

3   **RRHA existing rent and lease policy and requirement**: Rent is raised when tenants' income increases (federal requirement).

       RTO counter policy and demand: Rent should increase annually.

4   **RRHA existing rent and lease policy and requirement**: Changes in lease and management policy can only be made by officials of RRHA.

       RTO counter policy and demand: All changes in lease and management policies must be made with RTO as the official body representing all tenants in public housing.

5   **RRHA existing rent and lease policy and requirement**: All repairs to repair requests will be handled within a reasonable time period.

       RTO counter policy and demand: All repairs to requests must be done in 24 hours: tenants may refuse to pay rent until repairs are made.

6   **RRHA existing rent and lease policy and requirement**: All tenants are responsible for providing their own means to transport themselves to pay rent at designated places.

       RTO counter policy and demand: RRHA should provide transportation to the handicapped and elderly to enable them to pay rent at designated locations.

7   **RRHA existing rent and lease policy and requirement**: The RRHA does not provide stoves or refrigerators. Standard locks are provided for entrances.

       RTO counter policy and demand: RRHA must provide stoves, refrigerators, window locks and deadbolt locks for all entrances.

8   **RRHA existing rent and lease policy and requirement**: Rent deposits are required, as will late charges be required for late rent.

       RTO counter policy and demand: No deposits should be required, nor should late charges be required.

9   **RRHA existing rent and lease policy and requirement**: Tenants must list all residents in their apartment.
RTO counter policy and demand: This should be required.

10   **RRHA existing rent and lease policy and requirement**: Suspected drug users and dealers could be evicted from public housing without a hearing.
RTO counter policy and demand: The Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment must be preserved. No eviction should occur without a hearing of the charges.

First, RRHA required "provide 'reasonable' amounts of heat and hot water" for which RTO demanded "provide adequate amount of heat and hot water." Second, RRHA required "in the lease, RRHA should be referred to as 'management,' not 'authority'" for which RTO agreed "RRHA is the 'management.' Third, RRHA required "rent is raised when tenants' income increases (federal requirement)" for which RTO demanded "rent should increase annually," and not more often. Fourth, RRHA required "changes in lease and management policy can only be made by officials of RRHA" for which RTO demanded "all changes in lease and management policies must be made with RTO as the official body representing all tenants in public housing." Fifth, RRHA required "all repairs to repair requests will be handled within a reasonable time period" for which RTO demanded "all repairs to requests must be done in 24 hours: tenants may refuse to pay rent until repairs are made." Sixth, RRHA required "all tenants are responsible for providing their own means to transport themselves to pay rent at designated places" for which RTO demanded "RRHA should provide transportation to the handicapped and elderly to enable them to pay rent at designated locations." Seventh, RRHA required "the RRHA does not provide stoves or refrigerators. Standard locks are provided for entrances" for which RTO demanded "RRHA must provide stoves, refrigerators, window locks and deadbolt locks for all entrances." Eighth, RRHA required "rent deposits are required, as will late charges be required for late rent" for which RTO

demanded "no deposits should be required, nor should late charges be required." Ninth, RRHA required "tenants must list all residents in their apartment" for which RTO agreed "this should be required." Tenth, and lastly, RRHA required "suspected drug users and dealers could be evicted from public housing without a hearing" for which RTO demanded "the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment must be preserved. No eviction should occur without a hearing of the charges" (1987).

Many of the issues raised were resolved through intense negotiations and compromises. Mrs. Barlow complained to the Central Virginia Legal Aid Society regarding the federal government's National Public Housing Forfeiture Project; the Richmond Tenants Organization and the National Tenants Organization petitioned for an injunction. Judge Richard L. Williams of Richmond stopped the scheduled eviction (The Indianapolis Recorder, March 14, 1992, p. D8). The paper also quoted Barlow (Ibid): "It [the eviction] was discriminating against people who have just about lost all self-respect because of where they live. To say you're going to search and seize someone's home without any hearing is stretching it a little bit." She insisted that the central issue between RTO and RRHA, when all was said and done was, who would control whom in RTO-RRHA relations: "…the real issue is power. The real issue, power, is even more important than the particular problems of tenants…."

The above quote says much about the experience of Alma Barlow while she served as president of RTO. She understood that the power inequality between RTO and RRHA reflected the existing power inequities between the poor and the non-poor, and blacks and whites, and that this power inequality was both long standing and deeply etched into multiple layers of the American socio-political, economic culture. Thus, Richmond only gave us a microscopic view of that reality. As Mrs. Barlow's RTO role enabled her to interact with a wider array of individuals

and organizations her role as a grassroots activist on the Richmond stage began to expand and she began to move into the larger socio-political world in Richmond. For example, simultaneously with her role as RTO president she became involved in many projects whose intent and objectives were not far removed from the issues and problems affecting those living in public housing. A close review of the list of her involvements will illustrate how closely associated they are with the issues and problems with which she dealt as RTO president. It is also significant to note that in these organizations, like her RTO role as grassroots advocate leader, her leadership role was also reflected in her advocacy role in a host of other advocacy organizations.

Non-RTO Affiliations

Alma Barlow's face flashed a wide smile as she described her work in other organizations throughout Richmond and regional communities. She made it clear that she was an involved advocate for Black people and the poor, and she voiced a deep commitment to programs assisting her people and others in need. This need and urgency explain her involvement as president of both the Richmond Food Stamps Advising Committee and the Virginia Anti-Hunger Committee. For the former, she explained the provisions of the Food Stamps applications and helped those who qualified to fill out the appropriate application forms. The Virginia Anti-Hunger Committee was a state-wide program which entailed visiting rural and urban areas where it was known that pockets of poverty existed. There was a connection between the two programs, in as much as the anti-hunger program would lead directly to assistance for the poor for food stamps entitlements. In addition, her work as chair and board member of the Coalition for the Homeless, likewise, fed into both the anti-hunger committee and the Food Stamps program. Thus, there existed a unifying theme, and a common goal and objective, between these three organizations. But there was also

social activism as Barlow's Anti-Hunger Coalition went to Washington, along with other groups, to protest cuts in the Comprehensive Education and Training Act (Hayter, 2017, p. 198).

There was a degree of synergy between Barlow's role as a precinct leader for the Democratic Party: her role on the board of directors for the Voter Registration Project Coordinator, her role as a member of the 3rd Congressional District for the Virginia Congressional Black Caucus, and her membership in the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. These three activities and affiliations can be seen as integral to the politics of the city of Richmond, and germane to the crucial role of the Richmond Crusade for Voters as a galvanizing force in Richmond's changing racial political landscape. Although her logic was grounded in the political, and she demonstrated her political astuteness in her dealings with RRHA, Barlow threw her hat in the political water once when in 1984, she challenged Henry Marsh in the 7th District for a seat on city council. Though she lost, and didn't expect to win, she ran against Marsh:

> …to bring attention to the deepening problem of East End poverty…a reclamation of poor people's humanity…to remind elected that they had done very little to stem the tide of growing poverty in Richmond. She was Richmond's reminder that high-profile politics and affirmative-action construction contracts seemed to benefit only a small handful of well-connected African Americans (Hayter, 2017, pp. 224-225).

Conclusion

Alma Barlow was a grassroots advocate for the outsider, the dispossessed, the marginal, and the disinherited. She lived in the Fairfield Court housing project thirty-one years before she was able to acquire a loan from the Virginia Housing Development Authority's Urban Ownership Opportunity Program in 1992. Under a special financial loan program, her monthly mortgage was lower than what she had been paying for rent as a public housing tenant. Sadly, she died the very

next year on August 15, 1993. However, many in the Richmond community recognized her many contributions before she died. She was the recipient of the Outstanding Women Award presented by the Richmond YWCA in 1980, and a member of the leadership class of Richmond's Leadership Metro. In his book on racial politics and voting rights, the historian Maxwell Hayter (2017, p. 18) paid tribute to Alma Barlow and former Richmond city council member, Willie Dell, a former professor of Social Work at Virginia commonwealth University, as social activists who spent the early 1980's "intentionally politicizing the fight against crime and poverty and openly promoted the need for more pointed social welfare programs."

Alma Barlow was a bold and tenacious advocate for the powerless and voiceless public housing tenants in Richmond's public housing units. She stepped up to the plate at a time when nation-wide and world-wide, the powerless and the voiceless were demanding a seat at the decision-making table. She became one of many women in the 1960s and 1970s who did not believe that the role of women was a consignment on the sidelines. Instead, she became a visible model of leadership for many women who may have been hesitant to move from being a bystander to the position of leader. And as was pointed out in this paper, her public advocacy did not end with the successes of her encounters with the housing authority. Rather, we saw her advocacy branching out into many other areas of community life in the Richmond metropolitan area, such as voting, food stamps allocations, and other programs for the poor. She was a representative of those who saw a need to address long-standing problems that had been ignored. She was a tenacious advocate for women, the vote-less, and the poor. Her contributions will not be forgotten. Her story is an exemplary case of how one person's actions can revolutionize a situation that has persisted for so long. She has been a model for many others who are advocates for changes in public housing, voting, and issues concerning the poor and disinherited.

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Getting the Ick is Giving Me *the Ick*: An Examination of How the Trendy Joke Went Viral and is Impacting Gen Z Dating Culture

Jennifer G. Rosier, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
James Madison University
540-568-8111
osierjg@jmu.edu

Abstract

The current study aims to reveal how *getting the ick* became sanctioned by Generation Z and, in turn, became a normative practice in their dating culture. Using a social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) lens to analyze TikTok videos on social media (where significant parts of Gen Z's reality is socially constructed), this study explains how certain cultural shifts including an emergence of more dismissive attachment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1979) have fueled the acceptance of this dating trend. The current analysis revealed two main groups of messages communicated in the videos and comments: (1) *the ick* is real and legitimate, and (2) *the ick* ridiculous and invalid. This analysis adds more to our understanding of how the rise in dismissive attachment outlooks (Konrath et al., 2014) is impacting this generation of emerging adults. It is unclear if this stance on *getting the ick* is a mask that Gen Z women are reluctantly wearing because of social pressure, a result of strong, independent women finally feeling like they have control of their dating lives, or if it is helping women get out of relationships when they subconsciously feel like they might be losing their independence or getting too serious.

Keywords: Generation Z, TikTok, Social Construction, Dating

Getting *the ick* is giving me *the ick*: An examination of

how the trendy joke went viral and is impacting Gen Z dating culture

While wearing socks with sandals, laughing too loud in public, or having a messy car might have gotten you a dirty look or a snide comment in the past, in recent years, it could actually end your romantic relationship. *Getting the ick*, a term made popular in 2017 by Olivia Attwood, a contestant on the reality dating show *Love Island U.K.*, is when one partner (traditionally female; Rosier, 2024) perceives the communication or behavior of the other partner as embarrassing, awkward, or humiliating. Instead of seeing past this less-than-desirable action or talking about it with their partner, many Gen Zers will irrationally, abruptly, and potentially prematurely end their relationship (Rosier, 2024). Little research has looked at the process or impact of these kinds of arbitrary breakups. Regardless of the reasoning behind the breakup or the length of the dating relationship prior to the breakup, experiencing the dissolution of a relationship is associated with an increase in psychological distress and a decline in life satisfaction (Norona & Olmstead, 2017; Rhoades et al., 2011). Critically questioning dating practices that can cause harm is an important research endeavor, especially since relationships play such a large role in our daily lives and, ultimately, the future population of society.

The current study aims to reveal how *getting the ick* became sanctioned by Generation Z and, in turn, became a normative practice in their dating culture. Using a social construction (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) lens to analyze TikTok videos on social media (where significant parts of Gen Z's reality is socially constructed; Stahl & Literat, 2022), this study explains how certain cultural shifts including an emergence of more dismissive attachment (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1979) have fueled the acceptance of this dating trend and

how *getting the ick* has encouraged millions of women to end their romantic relationships on a whim.

Literature Review

The reality of each society, and more specifically of each generation, is constructed by the individuals within that group and is heavily influenced by cultural values, institutions, and routine reproduction (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Starr, 1982). Humans not only co-create their reality via communication but also accept it as it is because of the history of others creating it prior to them and of the sheer number of individuals involved in the reality creating (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Berger and Luckmann (1967) theorized that social construction works in three stages (i.e. externalization, objectification, and internalization) which are part of a continuous cyclical process where shard meaning is cultivated. First, *externalization* involves messages being communicated to the masses. Second, *objectification* occurs when the subjective knowledge evolves into established, institutionalized knowledge. Third, *internalization* includes individuals projecting their interpretations back into reality. Thus, human beings take in information from others, institutions, and the media, process it through a unique filter of their own knowledge, past experiences, and biases, and then communicate their interpretations to others in society. As a result, people, culture, and reality are interdependent and constantly changing over time. Berger and Luckmann's (1967) conceptualization of the social construction of reality frames the following discussion exploring how *getting the ick* evolved from a single comment on a popular television show to a viral, trendy joke on social media to an acceptable reason for ending relationships.

Socially Constructing *The Ick*

Generation Z, which includes individuals born between 1996 and 2009, is different from prior generations in many ways. They are the most ethnically and racially diverse (Fry & Parker,

2018; Parker & Igielnik, 2020) and projected to also be the most educated generation to date (Hamblin & Totten, 2020; McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2014). They have been significantly shaped by a global pandemic that dramatically and abruptly disheveled their educational, familial, and social routines, a politically polarized government and general population, and a racially charged movement full of impressive advocacy and extreme violence (Parker & Igielnik, 2020). They have also grown up with more exposure to and acceptance for shifting gender norms and different family structures like single-parent, same-sex parent, and mutigenerational families (Seemiller & Grace, 2018). All of these societal changes collectively primed Gen Z to co-construct a new set of dating trends.

Gen Z has altered their courting rituals and changed dating culture as a whole into something that is sometimes unrecognizable to previous generations. For example, social media use for dating purposes is rapidly expanding (Schade et al., 2013), couples are waiting longer to get married (Stepp, 2007), pre-marital cohabitation is on the rise (Hsueh et al., 2009), and the acceptance and frequency of casual relationships is said to be increasing (Isaf, 2020). Further, Rosier (2024) discovered that Gen Zers are purposefully minimizing their romantic relationship intentions in a variety of ways to avoid appearing too forward. They are wearing a mask of hyper independence, while secretly wanting intimate interdependence (Rosier, 2024). Several of these dating trend changes can be traced back to the dramatic shift in attachment outlooks taking place over the last couple of decades.

The attachment viewpoint of Gen Z has significantly become more insecure (Konrath et al., 2014). While previous studies estimated that around 35-45% of adults had insecure attachment (Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Mickelson et al., 1997), studies of younger generations have found that over 60% have insecure attachment (Konrath et al., 2014). Specifically, in their meta-analysis of

94 studies between 1988 and 2011 reporting American college student attachment styles, Konrath et al. (2014) discovered a 15 percent decrease in secure attachment, along with a 56 percent increase in dismissive attachment and a nearly 18 percent increase in disorganized attachment. Dismissive attachment, which has had the largest increase (Konrath et al., 2014), is characterized by negative views of others, low levels of trust, fear of losing independence, focusing on imperfections in a partner, and issues with emotional intimacy (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). In an analysis of popular Gen Z dating trends, Rosier (2024) found that the majority of dating practices (e.g., situationships, the talking phase, snap chatting) were extremely dismissive in nature. Since attachment is often described as a central component of human development that impacts humans throughout the lifespan (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1979) and especially how individuals view themselves, others, and the value of relationships (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Pietromonaco & Barrett, 2000), this shift towards more insecure attachment outlooks should be considered when analyzing the social construction of *getting the ick*.

Another aspect of Gen Z's existence that cannot be overlooked, and is especially relevant for this study, is their dependence on and fluency with technology (Katz et al., 2022). Never living without the Internet, Gen Zers experience a robust and complex digital network of connections with whoever they want, whenever they want (Parker & Igielnik, 2020). They use technology, and specifically social media, to manage their multiple identities. These identities can be in person or online, with some researchers even claiming that Gen Zers are comfortable negotiating multiple online identities (Kadan & Aral, 2021). As Katz et al. (2022) explains, Gen Zers systematically accept and reject different labels that their families and society has given them. "Because [their] finely grained identities are so important to them, they care deeply about communicating these identities to others authentically and honestly" (Katz et al., 2022, p. 69-70). In an examination of

Gen Z social media use, Stahl and Literat (2002) discovered that "Gen Z portrays itself as a generation of contrasts: powerful and self-assured, yet vulnerable and damaged" (p. 925). It is not surprising, then, that they socially construct significant portions of their reality online and specifically with the social media platform, TikTok.

TikTok is a relatively new social media platform based on the creation and sharing of short user-generated videos. Launched in 2016, TikTok is one of the fastest growing apps in the United States (Statista, 2021) and it exploded in popularity during the COVID-19 pandemic (Kennedy, 2020). In fact, as of November 2023, TikTok has over 1.1 billion active users and is available in over 160 countries around the world (Wallaroo Media, 2023). Much of TikTok's success is due to Generation Z and their love for the application (Muliadi, 2020). In fact, the majority (over 60%) of users are born after 1995 (Muliadi, 2020; Wallaroo Media, 2023). Users spend most of their time on TikTok (an average of 90 minutes a day; Wallaroo Media, 2023) watching videos that other users have created and about 83% of them have created their own videos (Wallaroo Media, 2023). When specifically examining Gen Z discourse on TikTok, Stahl and Literat (2023) found that they are "marked by a strong sense of generational identity, which is manifested both externally, via playful opposition to other generations, and internally, through references to a shared sociocultural, political, and emotional heritage" (p. 931). TikTok is a prime mode of expression for Gen Zers to engage in the persistently developing processes of externalization, objectification, and internalization.

Interestingly, the first mention of *the ick* was not on TikTok. Instead, it originated from a 1999 episode of a popular television show *Ally McBeal*. The actress who plays Ally, Callista Flockhart, used the term several times in the episode to describe her unexplained lack of attraction for a coworker. While it was first mentioned back in the 90s, it did not become a consistent part of dating culture vocabulary until 18 years later when a contestant on the reality dating show *Love*

Island, Olivia Attwood said, "[a]t the end of the day, if you're seeing a boy and you get the ick, it doesn't go. It's caught you, and it's taken over your body. It's just ick. I can't shake it off." During that 2017 season, and every season since, contestants on *Love Island* continued to use the term to describe their sudden repulsion with a love interest. As Millie, from *Love Island Australia* in 2018, stated, "[o]nce a guy does something wrong, they are dead to me. I get the ick really easily." Likewise, Leanne, from a 2020 season of *Love Island*, stated when talking about a male contestant, "I don't want him to be around, I feel like I've got the ick—I don't want him to kiss me." Other contestants across the *Love Island* franchise regularly used the term over the next few years as *Love Island* viewership peaked to about 3.5 million people tuning in each night between 2017 and 2019. The popularity of the show initiated the externalization process of social construction. This was the beginning of *getting the ick* being accepted as a normative dating practice.

Getting the ick has the ability to seriously impact the future of any relationship at any stage, but especially during the early stages of interacting. Individuals *get the ick* when they are suddenly disgusted by a person they were once attracted to. Things like unappealing mannerisms, odd communication practices, questionable behaviors, or even problematic clothing choices can cause someone to *get the ick*. Traditionally experienced by females, *getting the ick* is known to be logically trivial, an over exaggeration of disgust, and a feeling that results in the ending of relational contact (Rosier, 2024). While the scholarly research on *getting the ick* is sparce, popular news outlets have covered this phenomenon extensively. As Hendy (2023) of *The Independent* explains, "Icks are not [legitimate]. The essential truth of The Ick is that it is irrational. Tiny. Pathetic. The Ick is so unreasonable [and] so deeply unjustifiable." Singh-Kurtz (2023) of *The Cut* explains that the ick happens when "all of a sudden, and all at once, you are repulsed by them — any power they held over your imagination evaporates on the spot."

The group that took this new expression from *Love Island* and repeatedly reproduced it online until it became a common and sanctioned dating practice is Generation Z. The primary vessel used by Gen Z to advance the acceptance of this new practice was the social media platform, TikTok. In the three years prior to November 2023, more than 96,000 videos were created on TikTok with the hashtag #Icks (TikTok Creative Center). These videos were viewed over 2 billion times and 79% of those viewers were Gen Z viewers (TikTok Creative Center). With over 2 billion views of videos with just this one specific hashtag, this information was clearly routinely reproduced via sharing, which enabled the messages to be externalized to a worldwide audience. This viral distributing caused *the ick* to become established knowledge, especially among Gen Zers. The creation of more videos reveals that others began accepting this knowledge as valid and projecting their own interpretations of the concept and of the state of modern dating. Other popular hashtags that generated even more videos and views about *getting the ick* included #TheIck (13,000 videos with 558 million views) and #TheIckIsReal (2,000 videos with 55 million views). While it is unclear which video about *the ick* was posted first, it is clear that *getting the ick* took TikTok by storm, reaching billions of Gen Zers around the world.

Method

To create a dataset for analysis, TikTok hashtags, which are searchable, were used in the last section: #Icks, #TheIck, and #TheIckIsReal. When searching hashtags, TikTok does not order the results in chronological or even in reverse chronological order. Instead, the algorithm orders the search results by taking into account the number of views, shares, and engagement of each video (TikTok Creative Center). In order to be used for this study, the TikTok videos searched via the three aforementioned hashtags had to meet a set of criteria. Specifically, each video had to (a) be clearly about *getting the ick* in some way (some TikTok creators will use popular hashtags simply to increase

views regardless of the video's actual content), (b) be about *getting the ick* with a potential, current, or past romantic partner (some videos were about best friend icks or fashion icks or food icks, which were excluded from analysis), (c) have more than 100,000 views, and (d) not be included in the dataset already. Once 50 videos from one hashtag search were deemed acceptable to be included in the dataset, the researcher moved on to the next hashtag. With 50 videos from each hashtag included in this analysis, the final dataset included 150 TikTok videos. The researcher saved all 150 videos in their TikTok account so that they could be reviewed again later.

Given that the focus of the study was to explore the social construction of *getting the ick* on TikTok, the comment section of each video was also of interest. It was important to include the opinions of viewers in the analysis to get a fuller understanding of the externalization, objectification, and internalization processes. As some videos had thousands of comments and since the TikTok algorithm automatically orders comments based on relevancy and engagement, it was decided that the top 30 comments on each video would be a sufficient representation of the viewers' reactions. These comments were thus included in the analysis and treated as secondary data.

The videos and top comments on each video were analyzed for common themes using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis approach to qualitative data analysis. By becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and then producing a report (Braun & Clarke, 2006), a summary of the main findings was created. Specifically, the purpose, message, imagery, and tone of each video was documented. Throughout this process, direct quotes from the videos and comments were flagged for possible use in the report. Once a clear set of findings were articulated, the videos were reviewed a final time and passages related to the discovered themes were further collected.

Findings

Beginning as a way for a woman on television to express her feelings about a man she was dating, *getting the ick* quickly went viral on TikTok and was social constructed by a generation of young people into an acceptable dating practice. The current analysis revealed two main groups of messages communicated in the videos and comments: (1) *the ick* is real and legitimate and (2) *the ick* is ridiculous and invalid. TikTok creators and commenters alike were providing evidence and making arguments for and against the practice. Within each of the two large groups, two themes emerged as evidence to support each argument.

The Ick is Real and Legitimate

The most popular theme identified in support of *the ick* is the argument that *getting the ick* is an unbelievably relatable feeling that women have always had and now finally have language to articulate that feeling. TikTok creator @carolinakowanz posted a video where she explains *the ick* to someone. She says, "[t]he ick is this feeling you have when someone does something cringy or eww and then you don't like that person anymore because of that. It can be something disgusting or something very simple that makes you feel eww, no." After her explanation, the other girl in the video says, "Oh! I get it now. I've felt that." With over 1.3 million views, over 101 thousand likes, and 187 comments, this video had a significant amount of engagement. Individuals agreed with this explanation by remarking, "I've had the ick" (@bwrd.kiwi) and "it's a common feeling" (@xddlsrfh1u7), revealing that they not only understood the description, but also that they have experienced it before. Comments like these add to the externalization process as the commenters are "project[ing] their own meanings into reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 104). These comments additionally encourage others to reflect on their dating experiences to determine if they too have *gotten the ick*; which is part of both the internalization (i.e. when individuals learn society's norms,

evaluate those norms against their own experiences, and potentially accept the norms as their own viewpoint) and objectification (when socially constructed reality is regarded as fact) processes.

Most videos within this first theme involved a listing of *icks* and the users in the comment section wholeheartedly agreeing. In a video by @alexaaie, for example, a man is filmed treading water while pointing his toes. The lyrics, "you look so dumb right now" are the video's audio and the text on the video reads "new ick unlocked." Individuals watching this video clearly cringed and agreed with comments like "how do yall not know how to tread water" (@fl11rtatious), "like you got a life vest RELAX" (@thattgirllcee), and "now we all got the ick" (@jessimo601). This TikTok trend, with the lyrics "you look so dumb right now" as the audio and the words "new ick unlocked" displayed on the video, was extremely common in the data set. Videos of men struggling to surf (@mblickk), walking down a hill while their backsides jiggled (@shaznaybond), driving with their hand oddly placed on a female's knee (@keely1123), walking in shoes that are too big and their heel slipping out (@lifewdrea), drinking a glass of beer with too much of their mouth open (@iissssabella), walking on the beach in scuba flippers (@stephaniepena__), sitting sideways in the back seat of a car because he does not fit (@chloe_acra), pouring beer from a pitcher into a glass without considering the foam (@scarew1116), and scrunching down to look into a tourist viewing scope (@lukeandsassyscott) were only some of the *ick* examples displayed via this TikTok trend. Individuals publicly indicated their agreement with comments like, "most of time I feel like the icks are just normal things but I fully agree with this one" (@sonny.side), "The seat grip bye" (@jiannasspam), "yeah I'd have to break things off" (@bebalancedbymicaela), and "This would give me the ick so fast" (@geojoescurlypube). When video commenters agree with the video content, and especially when they promote the termination of the relationship because of *the ick*, viewers of

these messages internalize the notion that *getting the ick* is an acceptable dating practice and feel validated if and when they end their own relationships.

The second theme that emerged in the data claims that *getting the ick* is simply a woman's intuition or a subconscious gut feeling that is telling women that the relationship with this person will not work. It is framed as a normal psychological response that is healthy and informative. As TikTok creator @wanderlusqt explained:

> The ick is basically your gut intuition saying that this person is no longer a good option. An alarm bell goes off in your body, in your mind, in your heart, in your gut that says this person is not the fit. Like, just abort the mission.

Other TikTokers approved of her definition with comments like, "one of the best definitions Ive seen" (@thegmarquis) and "your gut instinct is very powerful!" (@natalielouise). @Therapybern similarly claims that *the ick* is "actually a highly intuitive and spiritual practice. [It's] your inner voice telling you that something is off. Your inner voice is suddenly nudging you in a different direction. When you get the ick, pay attention." Viewers approved of @therapybern's explanation with comments like "If something feels off, trust yourself!! Don't wait for concrete evidence" (@brittnayb636) and "When something feels deeply off about a person/their behavior—it's DEEPER—when I've ignored it, I've ended up being proven right" (@sedonajedidiah). Both of these descriptions reveal a more intimate understanding of *getting the ick*. This argument appeals to an individual's desire to control their life. It implies that negative consequences will likely ensue if one's intuition is ignored. It acknowledges and validates the feeling that women claim to experience; which further propels the dating practice of *getting the ick* into the shared consciousness of Gen Z.

Within this second theme, *getting the ick* is viewed as a red flag or a deal breaker. Women are encouraged to distance themselves from their partners or even end relationships when this feeling

takes over. In one TikTok video, user @hannahfreeman_ shows a woman getting a text from her partner about his mom falling down the stairs. The words written on the screen reads, "My attitude as soon as I've got the ick." She reads the text and replies with a look of disgust on her face, "Pick her up then. What the fuck you telling me for?" Commenters support this feeling with statements like, "[c]urrently living with the ick and this is so true" (@dhysvj4), "me today" (@jessmitchenson), and "currently experiencing the worst ick and the attitude that comes along with it is unlike anything I've experienced" (@abby6085). The externalization continues with the original video creator (@hannahfreeman_) respectively responding to each of these comments with "get out quick," "🙉 🙉," and "[i]t's because you can smell their weakness."

Regardless of the true intentions behind the making of these videos (some might argue that they are created in jest), the comments that accompany each video coupled with the massive number of videos and number of views for each video cause the TikTok user (the individuals who are also contributing to the social construction of this dating trend's validity) to recognize *getting the ick* as established, institutionalized knowledge about how people date.

The Ick is Ridiculous and Invalid

When reviewing and evaluating the videos included in the dataset, there was a clear opposing viewpoint on *getting the ick*. Instead of confirming the accuracy *the ick* or using it as an acceptable explanation for behavior, there was an entirely different kind of content maintaining that *getting the ick* is ridiculous and invalid. Both themes used as evidence to support the argument that *the ick* is ridiculous and invalid focused on evaluating women. Negative messages about women were communicated in the videos created and in the comments about each video.

The first theme mocks women for having *icks* and especially for acting on them. Women are framed as overly judgmental, foolishly erratic, and outright absurd. A popular TikTok trend within

this theme involves using a video made by another creator where an *ick* is being talked about or shown. It is typically an objectively outrageous *ick* like a man breathing (which humans must do to stay alive) or a man being nice (which is desirable to most humans). After the shocking *ick* is illustrated, the video creator swipes out of watching the other person's video and opens their notes app on their phone where there is a long list of behaviors that has seemingly been gathered from these kinds of videos. The creator scrolls down this long list (usually over 100 items are on the list) and then writes the new behavior that should be avoided. For example, @wyszkay shows an interview of a woman saying that her biggest *ick* is when a man flies. She says, "[y]ou know, picture them with their hands behind their back and their hair is, like… you know what I mean?" Then @wyszkay is recorded going to the notes app and scrolling down the already created long list and writing, "161. don't fly?" In another @wyszkay video, a woman says that her biggest *ick* is when a man wakes up from sleeping and is confused about where they are, claiming that this behavior is "womanly." @Wyszkay scrolls down the behavior list in their notes app and writes, "147. don't wake up confused." Commenters agree with the sentiment of these sarcastic videos with statements like, "we can fly??" (@bradclarke951) and "not even superman is safe bro" (@dwaynejohns0njr) after viewing the aforementioned video about men flying and "NEVER WAKING UP AGAIN" (@consideratelyunalivingme) and "THIS LIST IS GETTING OUT OF HAND" (@stunnaredd) after viewing the aforementioned "don't wake up confused" video. Overall, the opinion of the video creators and commenters within this trend is that women who have *icks* should be ridiculed.

Another popular trend making fun of women's *icks* involves a man reading and providing commentary for a list of *icks* either given to him by a female friend or found on the internet. As @jakecraig states, "my friend showed me the ick list that her and her friends made and wow—it's insane." He then proceeds to read each *ick* and give his opinion, which is usually sarcastic and

insulting towards the women who created the list. After reading a few from the list including "uses an ipad, has over 1,000 followers on insta, doesn't have insta or facebook, says smile for me, has a lion tattoo," he says, "listen babes, I don't want to hear anything about this whole loneliness shit! This is why guys don't talk to you!" The comment section is filled with women standing up for their *icks* "[t]his list is 100% valid" (@maarls_) and with people making fun of women like, "people need to teach the difference between quirks and red flags quirks aren't always super cute but doesn't mean that persons terrible automatically" (@jaydotornado1) and "[t]his is just beyond excessive" (@mirjanaunfiltered). @Roryparsons_ also contributed to this trend while reading a long list of *icks* created by a woman on the internet. After reading "uses bar soap" from the list, he says, "Fuck off. I'm not using body wash. Leave me alone. You're dumb." He then reads "plays cricket" from the list and says, "It's just a sport! Who cares? What's wrong with ya'll?" The viewers of this video left comments like, "these are all so normal I'm confused" (@jxsmzneg) and "dumb" (@sturgdog). The comment sections of the videos in this trend are filled with dozens of judgments centering around the belief that women are simply ludicrous for having these feelings.

A video that perfectly encapsulates this point of view is from TikTok creator @Lavend3rmusic. A man is interviewing women in a public place when he asks, "biggest ick in a guy?" Several different women in the video respond with things like "when they're not respectful," "when they wear flip flops or crocs without socks," and "when they jump in the pool and hold their nose." Then the interviewer asks a man, "icks in a girl?" The man responds, "when they're fucking stupid." Commenters completely agree with the overall message of this video by saying things like, "the last one is facts" (@stvn.loz), "an ick in a girl is when she says 'ick'" (@funnyfunnymanhaha), "bro got straight to it" (@notelliott), and "facts bro" (@joker_of.all_trades). Although the taunting of women persuades the audience to not take *icks* seriously and to internalize that they are not

significant reasons to end relationships, it still reveals that the practice occurs and that it is widespread. Even if groups of Gen Zers do not agree with the dating trend, they do not deny its existence. And the far-reaching nature of TikTok has enabled The mocking of these women simply adds to the social commentary about how women are viewed as silly, ridiculous, and not to be taken seriously. This kind of rhetoric contributes to the reality-maintenance of this generation's dating experience.

The second theme argues that women's standards for men are too high. In an explanation of *the ick*, TikToker @hoe_math states:

> In our normal, everyday lives, we have things that we like and things that we don't like. The human body is pretty gross if you think about it, but the sex drive turns that disgust response into a good response. In normal conditions, women have always seen high-quality and low-quality men and it sets their standards for what they think is good and bad. But now because of technology, they can look at and talk to these high-quality men all day every day and that sets their standards so high that everybody else starts to look like low-quality men even if you barely did anything.

Viewers add their own interpretations of this idea with comments like, "I'm back in the dating game, I try to give as many ick vibes as possible up front. Helps me filter out the time wasters" (@mattmegabit), "women that use the word 'ick' need help and should be avoided" (@user6730224133955), and "the ick is just a juvenile attempt to explain the feeling of losing interest, which women are inclined to do often" (@kirwi713). Women are seen as excessively judgmental and argued to be making unreasonable claims about the dating potential of men.

Some TikTokers have emphasized the lack of trivial *icks* that men have for women. This direct juxtaposition of men having limited or no *icks*, while women are argued to have various

superficial, outlandish *icks* further illustrates the standards of women being too high. @Alexdrags created a video discussing this comparison. He says, "[i]f I brought a girl home, she could shit on my floor and I'd be like 'Okay. She is pretty hot though. I guess she's quirky.'" Viewers responded to this video with solidarity: "That's cause guys are capable of real love while girls love is conditional" (@christopher_hxcklin) and "Gave my last girlfriend the ick just by being in the same state and wanting to occasionally be in the same room as her" (lazy_jay55). Women are portrayed as having perfectionist tendencies when it comes to finding and creating a relationship with another person. They are viewed as judgmental and flighty. Conversely, men are depicted as more tolerant and accepting of a woman's potentially *ick*-inducing behaviors.

The Ick is Dismissive

While analyzing the 150 TikTok videos included in this study, it became clear that *getting the ick* is a phenomenon with deep connections to dismissive attachment. This is not surprising, as Konrath et al. (2014) have reported significant shifts towards more dismissive attachment among Gen Zers. Furthermore, Rosier (2024) has argued that many of Gen Z's dating trends are dismissive in nature.

Dismissively attached adults are characterized as having high opinions of themselves and low opinions of others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). They are known to sometimes create lengthy relationship partner requirement lists along with lengthy red flag lists; which enable them to be extremely selective when choosing a potential mate. They often have a difficult time with closeness and are able to easily disassociate from uncomfortable feelings or people (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Dismissives will pull away emotionally or physically from a partner when the conversation or relationship gets too serious. And when a relationship, situation, or partner triggers them, they often focus on imperfections in order to deescalate or even end the relationship. All of

these feelings and behaviors are fueled by their deep fear of losing independence and becoming too reliant on another person (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). *Getting the ick* is the epitome of a dismissive attachment behavior.

Even though all Gen Zers do not identify as dismissively attached (the majority of young people are still secure), the relatable, intuitive, and empowering messages that accompany the promotion of *getting the ick* make it appealing to a generation of women who have been bred to be strong, opinionated, and independent. *The ick* represents a way for these women to end a relationship if it does not feel right for almost any reason. The notion that a woman can fixate on a single behavior, suddenly lose interest, and then disconnect from her positive feelings about a partner is illustrative of dismissive attachment. As @wanderlusqt explained, when a woman gets the *ick* about a seemingly trivial behavior, it is likely because of something much deeper:

> You pick something really stupid that really doesn't matter that much… when you decide that that thing is the reason why you have the ick, you have to realize it's probably something deeper.…it's not just the fact that they don't wear clothes that you like. It could be because they've done multiple other things that have been stacking up and now all of the sudden you're really getting frustrated. And this was kind of the icing on top….so you pick the stupidest, randomest thing to get out of the relationship.

Getting the ick allows women to get out of uncomfortable situations or relationships. It empowers women to pay attention to their instincts, raise their standards, and not settle for less than they are worth. It also prevents women from looking inward, reflecting on their own triggers, becoming curious about why they are turned off so easily, and having difficult conversations. It allows women to avoid emotional intimacy with themselves and others.

Discussion

"Gen Z constructs, narrates, and projects itself in real-time on TikTok" (Stahl & Literat, 2022, p. 925). Watching short, fun videos for over an hour each day (Wallaroo Media, 2023), Gen Zers view, comment, like, and share videos that they find introspective, relatable, and appealing. This continuous cyclical process of absorbing messages, interpreting value, and sharing meaning socially constructs a reality of acceptable behaviors, norms, and ideals for an entire generation. *Getting the ick* is one small part of this generation's dating reality. This analysis revealed that *getting the ick* is viewed as hilariously idiotic, yet reasonably necessary, as outrageously pretentious, yet intuitively genuine, and as crudely abrupt, yet predictably normal. Furthermore, the popularity of this socially constructed dating practice adds more to our understanding of how the rise in dismissive attachment outlooks (Konrath et al., 2014) is impacting this generation of emerging adults. On the surface, *getting the ick* appears to validate Gen Z's desires for resilient independence and relationship perfection. Looking beneath the surface, however, shows us that *getting the ick* pulls at a generation's dismissive heartstrings; enabling them to avoid intimacy and the hard work that healthy relationships require.

Examining the ways in which humans socially construct reality is a rich field of study that can help us better understand our society, the origins of our values and beliefs, and how these things combine to influence our decisions about acceptable dating practices. When millions of people view TikTok videos about *getting the ick*, regardless of the stance that the video takes, they internalize, acknowledge, and validate the practice as acceptable. The dismissive nature of this dating trend reveals an evolution of attachment outlooks and potentially an insightful glance at the character of the current dominant ideology. Thus, studying the social construction of *getting the ick* on TikTok helps contextualize our understanding of Gen Z romantic relationship decision making, which is filling an important gap in the literature.

There are possible limitations of the current study design. First, only public TikTok videos were used for this analysis. It is unclear if private videos send a different message about *getting the ick*. As explained by Schellewald (2021), studying TikTok is challenging as it is a fluid research site, constantly changing by users adding and deleting content. Second, without interviewing the creators of each video, it is unclear if some of the videos used in this analysis were made as pranks (many creators stage videos for increased views and likes). This was considered several times during data analysis and videos that were thought to be hoaxes were removed. Unfortunately, there was no way to definitively know whether the researcher was swindled. Lastly, thematic analysis may have some limitations regarding consistency. Although it is a rigorous methodology, its subjective nature could impact the consistency of interpretations made (Braun & Clarke, 2003). Significant saturation within this dataset helped balance out this possible limitation.

To advance this field of inquiry, future research should assess the persuasiveness of the arguments for and against the practice of *getting the ick*, the positive outcomes and negative consequences associated with acting on *the ick*, and the effectiveness of alternative methods for communicating and/or coping with a sudden disdain for a partner. Educational programs for young people to learn more about the expectations and innerworkings of mature, sacrificial romantic relationships could also be developed and evaluated for effectiveness. Lastly, this area of study would seriously benefit from more scholarly research that not only reaches academic audiences but also extends into the mainstream media.

Conclusion

Gen Zers want serious, long-term, monogamous relationships, but feel pressured by dismissive dating norms to adopt more casual practices (Rosier, 2024). One of these dismissive dating practices is *getting the ick*; which the current analysis of TikTok videos revealed is either

described as real and legitimate or ridiculous and invalid. Generation Z has a love-hate relationship with this dating trend, but the allure is strong, especially for women. *Getting the ick* is framed as an instinctual feeling that should not be ignored. Even when women are publicly ridiculed for having these feelings, they still stand firm in their convictions. It is unclear if this stance on *getting the ick* is a mask that Gen Z women are reluctantly wearing because of social pressure, a result of strong, independent women finally feeling like they have control of their dating lives, or if it is helping women get out of relationships when they subconsciously feel like they might be losing their independence or getting too serious. What is clear is that *getting the ick* is giving me, a married elder Millennial, *the ick*.

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The Impact of Adolescent Attachment on Subjective Well-Being and Peer Experiences in School

Susan Antaramian, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Psychology
Christopher Newport University

Katherine Paulikonis, B.S.W.
Graduate Student (Advanced Year)
University of Pennsylvania School of Social
Policy & Practice

Author Note

Correspondence regarding this manuscript should be addressed to Susan Antaramian, 1 Avenue of the Arts, Newport News, VA 23606. Email: susan.antaramian@cnu.edu. Phone: 757-594-7105.
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Abstract

Adolescence is a unique developmental stage characterized by substantial emotional and physical development that occurs during the transition from childhood to adulthood. Attachment theory provides a theoretical framework to examine important relationships and interactions in an adolescent's life, such as familial or peer relationships. The current study explores the connections between adolescents' attachment to their parents, encompassing both maternal and paternal bonds, and their interactions with peers as well as their subjective well-being. This study investigated both positive and negative peer experiences, along with the emotional and cognitive aspects of subjective well-being to understand the impact of familial relationships on these outcomes. Five-hundred sixty-five middle school students completed surveys reporting on their mother and father attachment, peer experiences, and subjective well-being. Participants were classified into four attachment groups based on whether they had a high attachment with both mother and father, mother only, father only, or low attachment with both parents. Group differences in subjective well-being and peer interactions were examined. Results indicated that adolescents who displayed strong attachment to both parents reported the most favorable outcomes, while those with low attachment to both parents experienced the least favorable outcomes. Adolescents who were attached solely to their mothers or fathers fell in between the other two groups. As a result, students who did not have an attachment to either parent are at the greatest risk of diminished subjective well-being and detrimental peer relationships. Those with attachment to at least one parent experienced some advantages in their well-being and interactions with peers. These findings highlight the importance of parental and peer relationships within an adolescent's life. Practical implications and suggestions for future research are discussed.

Keywords: Adolescent attachment, subjective well-being, life satisfaction, peer relationships, prosocial receipt

The impact of adolescent attachment on subjective well-being and

peer experiences in school

Adolescence is a unique developmental stage, characterized as the transitional period between childhood and adulthood. Adolescents face diverse challenges, including rapid physical development, dramatic hormonal changes, and significant fluctuation in emotions. This stage is also marked by changing social relationships, as adolescents gradually seek more independence from their parents while also increasing their time spent with peers. Moreover, adolescents are challenged with the complex task of identity development, as they strive to establish a sense of who they are and what they value (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011). Problems are also prevalent at this stage, with recent data suggesting high rates of depression, anxiety, and substance use among adolescents (Knopf, Park, & Mulye, 2008). Thus, understanding the factors that facilitate well-being and positive adjustment at this stage is an important goal.

Despite this period of increasing separation from parents, the family continues to be one of the most significant influences on adolescents' lives. Family climate, quality of relationships with parents, and satisfaction with family have been found to be important factors related to adolescent well-being (Guevara, Moral-Garcia, Urchaga, & Lopez-Garcia, 2021; Phillips, 2012). In fact, throughout the adolescent stage, youths' perceptions of the quality of their family relationships is a stronger predictor of their overall well-being than their ratings of their experiences with peers, at school, or in the community (Dew & Huebner, 1994; Huebner, 1991). Furthermore, adolescence may even be marked by improvements in the quality of parent-child relationships. For example, research shows that family conflict often decreases, family affection remains stable, and communication and family cohesion often increase from early to late adolescence (Parra, Oliva, & del Carmen Reina, 2015).

One aspect of the parent-child relationship that is important throughout childhood and adolescence is attachment. Attachment is a characteristic of the parent-child relationship that centers on a closeness that allows the child to feel protected and secure (Benoit, 2004). Although the adolescent stage is characterized by increasing self-reliance and decreasing emotional investment in parental relationships (Scharf & Mayseless, 2007), evidence suggests attachment can have a significant influence on well-being and success during the adolescent years. More secure attachment with parents is associated with improved interactions with peers, increased life satisfaction, and decreased internalizing and deviant behaviors during the adolescent years (Allen, Moore, Kuperminc, & Bell, 1998; Ma & Huebner, 2008). Parental attachment is also linked to increased academic engagement and higher grades in school among adolescents (Chen, 2017; LeCroy & Krysik, 2008). Thus, the parent-child relationship continues to be an extremely important context for adolescent development.

Subjective Well-Being in Adolescence

One important aspect of adolescent adjustment is their subjective well-being, which refers to how individuals perceive and evaluate their lives. Subjective well-being is generally thought to have three components: life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect. Life satisfaction is considered to be the cognitive component of subjective well-being, and it involves a thoughtful judgment of one's life quality. Positive and negative affect, in contrast, are emotional components of subjective well-being and reflect a person's overall frequency of positive and negative emotions. The combination of these three components determines a person's subjective well-being, with high subjective well-being consisting of a positive judgment of life quality, frequent positive emotions, and infrequent negative emotions (Diener, Lucas, & Oishi, 2021).

In adolescents, subjective well-being has been linked to many beneficial attributes and behaviors. Outcomes associated with subjective well-being during adolescence include increased student engagement and higher academic achievement, improved motivation and self-regulation, higher self-efficacy and self-esteem, better social relationships, fewer aggressive and delinquent behaviors, decreased symptoms of anxiety and depression, and better perceived physical health (Antaramian, Huebner, Hills, & Valois, 2010; Bucker, Nuraydin, Simonsmeier, Schneider, & Luhmann, 2018; Huebner, 2004; Suldo & Shaffer, 2008). Subjective well-being can even facilitate resilience in adolescents following stressful life events. Youth with low subjective well-being often tend to exhibit behavior problems after stressful life experiences, but those with high subjective well-being are less likely to demonstrate these externalizing behaviors following significant life stress (Suldo & Huebner, 2004). Thus, subjective well-being can be viewed as both a marker of positive adjustment and a facilitator of optimal functioning (Park, 2004).

Peer Interactions in Adolescence

As adolescents spend increasing amounts of time with their peers, they often experience both positive and negative interactions. Victimization is one form of negative peer interaction, characterized as being the target of aggressive actions by peers (Crick & Gropeter, 1996). There are various types of victimization, including overt and relational victimization. Overt victimization refers to students being harmed by other peers or being threatened by other peers. Relational victimization includes students trying to damage another person's peer relationships (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996).

Victimization can be especially harmful during adolescence due to the psychological and physical changes posed by puberty. Victimization has the capacity to impact multiple aspects of

psychosocial development and may continue to have negative ramifications on adolescents into adulthood (McDougall & Vaillancourt, 2015). Overall, findings suggest that children who experience chronic victimization at an early age are less happy in school (McDougall & Vaillancourt, 2015). During the intermediate years, victimization is associated with poor academic performance (i.e., low grade point average, national test scores, teacher reports), challenges adapting to school, and negative views about the school environment. Preliminary evidence also suggests that victimization can have a detrimental impact on physical health (McDougall & Vaillancourt, 2015). Additionally, victimization has profound implications for social relationships in adolescence, since higher levels of peer victimization have been linked to increases in peer rejection, which can cause an individual to feel isolated throughout their time in school (McDougall & Vaillancourt, 2015). Victimization impacts self-perception as well, with adolescents who have been victimized experiencing lower self-esteem and poor social self-efficacy for up to several years following their victimization (McDougall & Vaillancourt, 2015).

In contrast, adolescents may also experience positive interactions with their peers. For example, prosocial actions reflect behaviors that are intended to benefit another person (Schroeder & Graziano, 2015). Receipt of prosocial acts reflects students being the recipient of positive supportive behaviors from peers, and can be viewed as the opposite of peer victimization (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996). While there are a number of positive characteristics observed in adolescents who exhibit prosocial behavior, being a recipient of prosocial interactions from peers is also linked to beneficial adjustment. Specifically, adolescents who receive more prosocial actions from peers tend to report less loneliness, depression, and social anxiety and greater feelings of belongingness than those who experience fewer prosocial interactions (Alvis, Douglas, Shook, & Oosterhoff, 2023; Crick & Gropeter, 1996). These findings suggest that receiving positive and considerate

responses from peers may have a significant impact on adolescents' social adjustment as well as their overall mental health.

The Current Study

The current study investigates adolescents' parental attachment, including attachment to both mothers and fathers, in relation to their experiences with peers and their subjective well-being. We investigated both positive and negative peer experiences and the emotional and cognitive components of subjective well-being to understand the impact of family relationships on these important outcomes.

Method

Participants

All students at five public middle schools within a rural school district in the southeastern United States received a letter describing the study and inviting them to participate. Those students who returned a signed parental consent form and then completed a student assent form were included in the study. The final participants consisted of 565 6th-, 7th-, and 8th-grade students from these five middle schools. The age of participants ranged from 11 to 16 years, with an average of 13 years. Approximately 40% of the participants were male, and 60% were female. Additionally, 44% of the participants were African American, 43% were White, 3% were Asian, 2% were Indian, 1% were Hispanic, and 6% of the participants identified as "other." Overall, 51% of the participants received free or reduced-price lunch at school, indicating lower socioeconomic status. Regarding family composition, 49% of participants lived with both their mother and their father, 25% lived in a single-parent household, 18% lived in a stepparent family, and 8% lived with other adults.

Measures

Parent Attachment

Attachment with mothers and fathers was measured using the Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA; Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment is a self-report questionnaire that assesses adolescents' perceptions, beliefs, and feelings in their relationships with their parents and friends. Abbreviated versions of the Mother Attachment and Father Attachment subscales were used in the current study, as has been used in previous research (Laible, Carlo, & Roesch, 2004; Ma & Huebner, 2008). Each subscale included 12 items that reflect closeness and connection to each parent (e.g., "My father respects my feelings," and "I tell my mother about my problems and troubles"). Response options range from "never" to "always" on a 5-point Likert scale (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Internal consistency of the Mother Attachment and Father Attachment subscales is high, with alpha coefficients of .72 to .88 in prior research (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Ma & Huebner, 2008). The alpha coefficient was .82 for both mother attachment and father attachment in the present sample. Validity of the measure has been demonstrated through correlations with other similar measures of family environment and social self-concept (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987).

Life Satisfaction

Adolescents' life satisfaction was measured using the Multidimensional Students' Life Satisfaction Scale (MSLSS; Huebner, 1994). This scale includes 40 items that assess respondents' satisfaction in various life domains, including family, friends, self, school, and living environment. Each item reflects a statement about one's life (e.g., "My friends are nice to me," "I look forward to going to school"), and respondents rate their agreement on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." (Huebner, Laughlin, Ash, & Gilman, 1998). A total score

for the entire scale provides an indication of adolescents' general life satisfaction (Antaramian, Huebner, & Valois, 2008). The MSLSS has good internal consistency, with an alpha coefficient of .92 both in prior research (Huebner, 1994) and in the present sample. Validity of the scale is supported through strong correlations with other self-reported measures of well-being as well as parental reports (Gilman, Huebner, & Laughlin, 2000; Huebner, 1994).

Positive and Negative Affect

The Positive and Negative Affect Schedule for Children (PANAS-C; Laurent et al., 1999) was used to measure the participants' affect. The PANAS-C includes 27 items, 12 measuring positive affect and 15 measuring negative affect. Each item includes an emotion (e.g., excited, proud, nervous), and respondents rate how much they have felt that was during the past few weeks on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "very little or not at all" to "extremely or all of the time." Both subscales of the PANAS-C have strong internal consistency, with alpha coefficients ranging between .87 to .94 in prior research (Laurent et al., 1999). In the present sample, alpha coefficients were .87 for positive affect and .89 for negative affect. Validity of the PANAS has been demonstrated through correlations with similar measures of depression and anxiety in youth (Laurent et al., 1999).

Peer Experiences

Adolescents' peer experiences, including victimization and prosocial interaction, were measured using the Children's Social Experiences Questionnaire – Self Report (CSEQ-SR: Crick & Grotpeter, 1996). The CSEQ-SR consists of three 5-item subscales that represent different types of experiences with peers. The overt victimization subscale includes items that describe being physically harmed or threatened by peers (e.g., "How often do you get hit by another kid at school?"). The relational victimization subscale is comprised of items that describe social

relationships being deliberately harmed by peers (e.g., "How often do other kids leave you out on purpose when it is time to play or do an activity?"). The receipt of prosocial acts subscale includes items that reflect being the recipient of positive or supportive actions by peers (e.g., "How often do other kids let you know they care about you?"). Respondents rate how frequently they experience each event on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "never" to "almost all the time" (Crick & Grotpeter, 1996). The subscales have sufficient reliability, with alpha coefficients ranging from .77 to .80 in prior research (Crick & Gropeter, 1996). In the present sample, alpha coefficients were .82, .79, and .81 for overt victimization, relational victimization, and receipt of prosocial acts, respectively. Validity of the scale is supported by correlations with other measures of peer interactions and social adjustment (Crick & Gropeter, 1996).

Procedure

A pencil-and-paper survey including the measures listed above was administered to students in large classrooms or cafeterias at each school. The students were divided into groups of 20 to 100 students. Graduate research assistants read the student assent form aloud and gave verbal directions on completing the measures. The students were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time and that their responses would remain confidential. The research assistants were available to address questions throughout survey administration.

Results

Missing data were addressed through a mean substitution procedure. Individual scale items with missing values were replaced with the mean value for that variable across the entire sample. The percentage of participants requiring this data substitution was small, ranging from 0.2% to 4.6% across all of the scale items.

Participants' scores on mother and father attachment were dichotomized using the mean as a decision point. Students who scored above the mean were classified as having high attachment on that dimension, and students scoring below the mean were classified as having low attachment on that dimension. The two dichotomized scores were then used to divide the participants into four attachment groups. The high attachment group included participants who had high levels of attachment to both their mothers and their fathers. The low attachment group consisted of participants who had low levels of attachment to both parents. The father-only group had high attachment to their fathers but low attachment to their mothers, and the mother-only group had high attachment to their mothers only. The distribution of participants across the four attachment groups is shown in Table 1.

A series of chi-square tests were used to examine the relationship between the attachment groups and demographic characteristics. Results of the chi-square tests showed that attachment group was significantly associated with grade level, χ^2 (6, $N = 561$) = 29.70, $p < .001$ and with family composition, χ^2 (15, $N = 561$) = 48.19, $p < .001$. Specifically, the high attachment group was overrepresented by 6th graders and students living with both biological parents. The mother-only attachment group was overrepresented by students living with mothers only or mothers and stepfathers. The low attachment group was overrepresented by 8th grade students and students living with older adults (i.e., neither mother nor father). Attachment group was not significantly associated with gender, race, or free and reduced lunch status.

The dependent variables selected for analysis were those that reflected the outcomes under investigation, including subjective well-being and peer experiences in school. Life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect were selected as the outcomes comprising subjective well-being. Overt victimization, relational victimization, and receipt of prosocial acts were selected as

the outcomes comprising peer experiences at school. A series of multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) were then used to determine whether the attachment groups differed in subjective well-being and peer experiences at school. MANOVA assumptions were tested and found to be within acceptable ranges. Correlations among dependent variables were all under $r = .70$, confirming the absence of multicollinearity (Tabahcnick & Fidell, 2012). The assumption of multivariate normality was confirmed through visual inspection of the QQ plots, which indicated no significant deviations from a normal distribution. The assumption of homogeneity of variance was confirmed through Box's test of equality of covariance matrices, which indicated $p > .001$ for both MANOVA analyses.

The first multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine whether the attachment groups differed in the three dimensions of subjective well-being. Results demonstrated an overall main effect of attachment group on subjective well-being, Wilks' Lambda = .72, $F(9, 1360.61) = 21.87$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$. Subsequent univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) indicated that attachment group had a significant effect on life satisfaction, $F(3, 561) = 64.95$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .26$; positive affect, $F(3, 561) = 36.33$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .16$; and negative affect, $F(3, 561) = 15.17$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$. The means and standard deviations for each attachment group and results of post hoc analyses using Tukey's HSD test are shown in Table 2. Overall, the adolescents with high attachment had the most favorable subjective well-being, while the adolescents in the low-attachment group had the least favorable subjective well-being. The adolescents with attachment to mothers only or fathers only scored in between the other two groups.

The second MANOVA was used to assess group differences in peer experiences at school, including overt victimization, relational victimization, and receipt of prosocial acts. Results indicated an overall main effect of attachment group on peer experiences, Wilks' Lambda = .93,

$F(9, 1360.61) = 4.56$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Follow-up univariate ANOVAs demonstrated that the overall main effect was driven by group differences in prosocial interactions, $F(3, 561) = 11.29$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .06$. The groups did not differ significantly in overt victimization, $F(3, 561) = 3.41$, $p = .02$, $\eta^2 = .02$ or relational victimization, $F(3, 561) = 2.86$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for each group and the results of post hoc analyses using Tukey's HSD. Post hoc test results indicated that the adolescents in the high-attachment, mother-only, and father-only groups had significantly more prosocial interactions than those in the low-attachment group.

Discussion

The current study investigated various patterns of parental attachment and their connection to subjective well-being and peer experiences among adolescents. Generally, adolescents with high attachment to both parents reported the most favorable outcomes, while adolescents with low attachment to both parents indicated the least favorable outcomes, and those with attachment to mothers only or fathers only fell in between the other two groups. Thus, students without attachment to either parent are at the greatest risk for decreased subjective well-being and detrimental peer relationships. Those with attachment to at least one parent experienced some benefit in their well-being and peer interactions.

The exact pattern of group differences, however, varied across the different outcomes. All four attachment groups were significantly different in life satisfaction, with the mother-only group reporting higher levels of satisfaction than the father-only group. Likewise, the mother-only group reported similar levels of negative affect as the high-attachment group, while the adolescents with attachment to fathers-only reported similar levels of negative affect as the low-attachment group. This pattern suggests that attachment to mothers, more so than attachment to fathers, may be a

protective factor associated with better perceived life quality and reduced negative emotions among these adolescents. Regarding peer interactions, there were no significant group differences in overt or relational victimization, suggesting that attachment as classified in the present study is not associated with risk of being the target of aggressive responses from peers. In contrast, the adolescents with low attachment to both parents did report significantly lower levels of prosocial receipt than the other three groups. This finding suggests that having at least one parental attachment relationship may be sufficient in promoting positive interactions with peers during the adolescent years.

The present study has several limitations. First, the study relied on a convenience sample that was not demographically representative of the U.S. population. Thus, the generalizability of the results is limited, and additional research is necessary to determine whether these findings are relevant for other populations of adolescents. This study also relied on self-report, which is dependent on participants' introspective ability to respond accurately and can result in issues with shared method variance. Furthermore, the current study examined attachment with mothers and fathers only. The attachment measure and subsequent analyses relied on a traditional conceptualization of family that includes a mother and a father. This definition does not account for less traditional families, such as those with same-sex parents, families with multiple stepparents, or families with both biological and adoptive parents. More research is needed to investigate the complex range of attachment relationships that adolescents may experience with their adult caregivers or guardians. The current study also does not address cultural norms, such as considering attachment relationships within a multi-generational household. Future research is needed to explore the influence of cultural context in impacting adolescents' relationships and associated outcomes. Lastly, using the mean as a decision point may pose a limitation to the study,

and different results may be obtained if a different decision point were used when categorizing the participants into attachment groups.

This study has important practical implications. The results suggest that adolescents without attachment to a parental figure are at the greatest risk for problematic peer relationships. Therefore, these adolescents are most in need of support from educators and clinicians. Practitioners working with youth can help to enhance adolescents' well-being by assessing the nature of their family relationships and by making efforts to enhance the quality of parental relationships who may be lacking these close bonds. Specific policy and practice recommendations that may support adolescent-parent attachment can include programs implemented in the workplace, school, or broader community. For example, family-friendly workplaces that offer flexible work schedules, telecommuting options, and broad leave policies can allow parents to spend more time with their children and be more involved in their daily lives. School programs that involve parents in their adolescents' school activities can also help to strengthen parent-adolescent attachment and improve academic outcomes. Additionally, community programs that provide parenting education can help to ensure that parents have the knowledge and skills needed to build attachment with their adolescent, and programs that increase accessibility to mental health services can provide adolescents and their families with support to address issues that arise and prevent disruptions to their attachment bonds.

However, it is important to note that not all adolescents without attachment to a parental figure will fail to thrive, and attachment to other adult figures (e.g., extended family, teachers, community members) can be extremely beneficial. Thus, mentorship programs that provide opportunities for adolescents to develop strong relationships with adults in their community or school-based support networks that connect adolescents with teachers, counselors, or coaches at

school can also provide adolescents with valuable social support. Helping adolescents to form a positive relationship with at least one parent or another adult figure can have a significant positive impact on their experiences with peers.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of strong parental attachment relationships for promoting optimal well-being and peer relationships among adolescents. Having high attachment to both mother and father was associated with the highest life satisfaction and positive affect, and having strong attachment to at least one parent was linked to greater receipt of prosocial actions from peers. Thus, even in this stage of increasing independence and separation, having a warm and caring relationship with parents continues to be an important factor in adolescents' well-being.

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Table 1

Distribution of Participants Across Attachment Groups

Father Attachment	Mother Attachment	
	High	Low
High	*High Attachment* *N = 244* 43%	*Father Only* *N = 74* 13%
Low	*Mother Only* *N = 101* 18%	*Low Attachment* *N = 146* 26%

Table 2

Levels of Subjective Well-Being and Peer Experiences by Attachment Group

	Attachment Group							
	High Attachment		Mother Only		Father Only		Low Attachment	
	M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
Life Satisfaction	5.06_a	0.55	4.77_b	0.61	4.50_c	0.67	4.19_d	0.67
Positive Affect	4.20_a	0.67	3.82_b	0.80	3.67_b	0.91	3.37_c	0.86
Negative Affect	1.75_a	0.69	$1.92_{a,b}$	0.70	$2.11_{b,c}$	0.78	2.24_c	0.76
Overt Victimization	1.61	0.77	1.63	0.80	1.72	0.81	1.87	0.84
Relational Victimization	1.78	0.84	1.85	0.83	2.00	0.96	2.02	0.88
Receipt of Prosocial Acts	3.80_a	0.90	3.57_a	0.88	3.60_a	0.94	3.26_b	0.81

Note. Means having the same subscript letters are not significantly different.

The School to Juvenile Court Pipeline: An Examination of Legal and Extra-Legal Factors

PJ Verrecchia

York College of Pennsylvania

Sophie Grace Verrecchia

Elon University

PJ Verrecchia is a Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice at York College of Pennsylvania. His research interests include terrorism, gun rights, juvenile justice, and free speech on college campuses.

Sophie Grace Verrecchia is an undergraduate student at Elon University in North Carolina. A psychology major with minors in neuroscience and dance, her research interests include juvenile delinquency, gender identity, and the psychology of political thought.

Communication can be sent to pverrecc@ycp.edu

Abstract

Data were obtained in Pennsylvania to examine school-based incidents in the Commonwealth for the 2021-2022 school year. These include any felony, misdemeanor of summary offenses that occur on school property. This study looked at the school-based incidents that were referred to juvenile court to see what legal and extra-legal factors influenced the case being dismissed or handled informally, or formally adjudicated in juvenile court. Having a prior juvenile court referral and committing a more serious offense were among the legal predictors of a case being handled formally, and race and gender were two extra-legal factors that predicted a case being handled formally. Implications for policy and research are discussed.

Keywords: Delinquency, school-to-prison pipeline, legal and extra-legal factors, recidivism.

The school to juvenile court pipeline

Much has been written about the school-to-prison pipeline. While there is not one definition of the phenomenon, it refers to education and public safety policies and practices that "place youth at an increased risk" of interrupting their schooling and "increasing their likelihood of correctional contact" (Muniz, 2021, p. 736). Mallett (2016) describes it as "a confluence of two child- and adolescent-caring systems-schools and juvenile courts-that simultaneously shifted over the past generation from rehabilitation to punitive paradigms" (p. 15). Owens says that the school-to-prison pipeline is, "a social phenomenon where students become formally involved with the criminal justice system as a result of school policies that use law enforcement, rather than discipline, to address behavioral problems" (2017, p. 11).

The school-to-prison pipeline states that by placing school resource officers (police officers) in schools, children are being referred to the juvenile court for things like running in the hallway (disorderly conduct), yelling at or disrespecting teachers (harassment or terroristic threats), or getting into fights on school property (simple or aggravated assault). Thirty or forty years ago these behaviors would have been dealt with by teachers and school administrators, but the presence of police officers in schools makes them delinquent acts or, depending on the act or age of the child, crimes. Not only does labeling these children delinquent send them on a path to criminality, but they then have to miss school to attend court hearings or meet with probation officers, which harms their education. Also, sometimes the discipline involves out of school suspension, further hurting their education. Thus, the school-to-prison pipeline "describes the relationship between school disciplinary practices and increased risk of juvenile justice contact" (Skiba et al., 2014, p. 546).

However not everyone sees this in such a straightforward manner. Elliot et al.'s (1979) integrated theoretical perspective argues that being suspended from school has the potential to increase delinquency, but the relationship is complex. Being suspended from school may decrease commitment to school because of strain. Also, not being in school may introduce a suspended child to other suspended children and possible delinquency. And while research has found a relationship between out of school suspensions and being expelled from school and juvenile court contact (Monahan et al., 2014; Mowen & Brent, 2014; Wolf & Kupchik, 2017), there is "considerable discussion about the temporal sequence of school disengagement and school discipline and juvenile justice involvement" (McCarter et al., 2020, p. 380). For example, do students withdraw from school as a result of disciplinary infractions, or do they earn poor grades, feel less confident in the classroom, and then start to disconnect from their education (Henry et al., 2012)?

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania school-based incidents are reported to the local or state police. These incidents include summary offenses (speeding in the school parking lot), misdemeanors (simple assault), and felonies (aggravated assault). The purpose of this paper is to examine all of the school-based incidents that occurred in Pennsylvania schools during the 2021-2022 school year to see (1) out of those referred to juvenile court how many were either dismissed or handled informally or handled formally, and (2) of those who were handled formally, what legal and extra-legal factors influenced that decision.

Historical and Political Background

Strict discipline in schools became more of an issue following deindustrialization and the students' rights movement (Crawley & Hirschfield, 2018). Arum (2005) contends that the 1960s and 1970s students' rights movement empowered students to defy administrators and teachers openly. Since unruly and defiant students can undermine the authority and discipline in a school,

and in turn hamper learning, schools across the country toughened their disciplinary policies and limited administrator's discretion to (hopefully) prevent accusations of bias (Soyjoyner, 2013). Administrators' discretion was taken away by policies that allowed for no exceptions (zero-tolerance), in an attempt to regain control of schools.

Between 1965 and 1980, the overall juvenile index for violent crime and homicide rates doubled, followed by a second upsurge between 1986 and 1994 (Appleby Jr., 1999; Feld, 1999a; Snyder, 1999). During this second upsurge the juvenile crime arrest rate increased by 75 percent (Sickmund et al., 1997). The number of youths arrested for murder increased 89.9 percent, and the number arrested for violent crimes (rape, robbery, aggravated assault) increased 67.3 percent (Merlo et al., 1997). The substantial rise in homicide rates (Snyder, 1999) and the increasing number of younger juveniles being arrested for committing violent offenses increased the public's fears about youth crime (Blumstein, 1995), and began to define the public's image of the crime problem and the political debate over anticrime policy (Sheley & Wright, 1993). What this amounted to was a prevalent fear of juvenile offenders (Myers, 2001), and talk of violent juvenile super-predators (DiIulio, 1995). Fear and anxiety about chronic and violent juvenile offenders drove the political narrative about strategies to "crack down" on youth crime (Feld, 1999b). Concomitantly, there was increasing school discipline as a response to a rise in school violence in the 1990s (Burns & Crawford, 1999).

The Safe Schools Act of 1994 nationalized zero-tolerance policies in schools by providing incentives (financial) for schools that adopted zero-tolerance policies and procedures for removing problem students from class (Crawley & Hirschfield, 2018; Mallett, 2016). Zero-tolerance policies "mandate the application of predetermined consequences, often severe and punitive regardless of the behavior…Such an approach is intended to deter future transgressions" (Skiba et al., 2006, p.

26). The Safe Schools Act of 1994 imposed requirements that made delinquent acts on school grounds mandatory to state intervention (Simon, 2007). The Act "acted as a seal of approval to promoting zero-tolerance policies in school districts" (Mallett, 2016, p. 18). One year later (1995), Pennsylvania passed Act 33, legislation designed to increase the number of juvenile offenders who could be sent to criminal court through direct file (Myers, 2001; Verrecchia, 2003, 2011). The get tough on the so called violent juvenile predators had permeated the zeitgeist.

The Safe Schools Act of 1994 and a 1998 Amendment were both Amendments to the Omnibus Crime Control Act of 1968, and they provided funding for in-school police officers known as school resources officers (SROs). The Safe Schools Act and the 1998 Amendment were a reaction to widely publicized school shootings in Arkansas and were intended to improve student safety as well as provide for cooperation between schools and law enforcement (Rich-Shae & Fox, 2014). However, police officers in schools goes back to the 1950s and were a way to maintain community order, prevent crime from escalating, and to promote trust between young people and the police (Gowri, 2003; Owens, 2017). Most crimes that occur in school are not reported to the police by teachers or school administrators (Owens, 2017), and more young people are victimized in school than in the community (Jacob & Lefgren, 2003; Robers et al., 2014). SROs could be what is needed to make young people feel safe. Research that examined the effect of SROs found that students view them favorably, especially when compared to police officers in the community (Brown & Benedict, 2005; Jackson, 2002).

The connection between the juvenile justice system and education strengthened with the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB), which was implemented to hold schools accountable for how well students performed. NCLB linked educational failure and juvenile delinquency as serious issues that the American educational system can address (Crawley &

Hirschfield, 2018). The Act contains a "dangerous schools" provision that schools used to make delinquent acts on school property known. It, perhaps unintentionally, "exacerbated the school-to-prison pipeline" (Mallett, 2016, p. 19). However, the National School Safety and Security Services (2016) reported that some schools did not treat disciplinary infractions as delinquent acts in order to not come to the attention of state regulators. Serious crimes are committed on school grounds, such as drug possession and possession of weapons, which require referrals to the police. By adding police into the schools, acts of student misconduct that are not delinquent acts are being redefined as criminal acts as well (Arum, 2003; Fabelo et al., 2011; Marsh, 2014; Teske et al., 2013; Tyner, 2020).

The first time the phrase school-to prison pipeline was seen in print was at a 2003 Northeastern University Conference, the purpose of which was to explore how school policies might be impacting students entering into the criminal justice system (Crawley & Hirschfield, 2018). A study by Wald and Losen (2003) that was presented at the conference helped shape the research and conversation around the topic (Soyhoyner, 2013). However, there are some who find the metaphor lacking as it inflates the issue. There are many students who violate school rules who are never referred to the police, rather, they are disciplined through things like in school detention or suspensions (in or out of school) (Fabelo et al., 2011). Even when school-based police referrals occur, having a police officer (or officers) in schools does not guarantee juvenile or criminal court involvement (Kupchik, 2014).

Review of the Literature

Novak (2019) conducted a study to explore the school-to-prison pipeline, specifically, if being suspended from school at 12 years of age effects, directly or indirectly, juvenile court involvement. Utilizing LONGSCAN, a publicly available database that includes data from five

locations: Baltimore, MD, San Diego, CA, Seattle, WA, Chicago, IL, and the state of North Carolina, Novak (2019) examined a sample of 837 adolescents on whom data was collected at ages 4, 6, 8 12, 14, 16 and 18. The study's dependent variable was juvenile court involvement by age 18, and the "primary independent variable" was out of school suspension by age 12 (Novak, 2019, p. 1170). Novak utilized Structural Equation Modeling to control for a number of intervening variables like association with deviant peers, school commitment, and demographic variables like sex and race (2019). What Novak discovered is that when controlling for a host of factors (such as location, free/reduced lunch eligibility), the children in the study who had been suspended from school at least once by the time they were 12 years old had "approximately 1.65 times the odds" of juvenile court involvement by age 18 than children who had not been suspended at least once by age 12 (Novak, 2019, p. 1173).

In 2014 Skiba and colleagues examined the literature regarding the school-to-prison pipeline to answer four questions. First, is the use of exclusionary school discipline widespread? Second, does exclusionary school discipline have differential effects? Third, does increased suspension and expulsion from school create a risk for juvenile court contact? And, fourth, do school disciplinary practices put students at risk for "a range of negative developmental outcomes, including juvenile justice involvement" (Skiba at el, 2014, p. 555)? Skiba and colleagues conducted an extensive review of "empirical research on discipline disparities" to assess the claims made about the school-to-prison pipeline in the aforementioned four areas (2014, p. 547).

For the first research question Skiba et al. (2014) found that the use of out of school suspension was not restricted to serious infractions but rather was used for a range of "minor to moderate infractions, such as disobedience and disrespect" (p. 550). The use of expulsion from school was reserved for seriously disruptive or even violent behavior. There was evidence that

school suspensions and exclusions disproportionality effected black females and non-heterosexual youth (Skiba et al., 2014). For the third research question Skiba and colleagues found that school suspension and exclusion reduced academic engagement and increased the risk of dropping out of school, which, in turn, increased the chances of juvenile court contact (2014). Finally, there was not enough evidence in the literature to conclude that school discipline "accelerates the movement of some students, or some group of students, towards the juvenile justice system" (Skiba et al., 2014, p. 556).

To test the school-to-prison pipeline, Owens (2017) examined the effect that school resource officers (SROs) have on school crime and arrests. Owens examined SROs that were funded by the Department of Justice's Community Oriented Policing (COPS) Cops in Schools (CIS) program, which was the funding mechanism for police departments to hire SROs (2017). SROs have the authority to issue citations and make arrests in schools, independently of school administrators. Owens examined data on SROs funded by the COPS office between 1994 and 2007 and only examined the cases of youth arrested on school grounds and were handled formally (2017).

Owens found that SROs made more arrests in school over this time, an increase of 21 percent, compared to arrests of young people in the community (2017). Most of the increase was due to arrests of children under the age of 15. However there is a question as to whether this increase was driven by having police in schools or an underreporting of crime in schools before the police got there. In other words, the higher arrest rates were "not because misbehavior is being criminalized" (Owens, 2017, p. 15). Students who trusted the SROs were more likely to report criminal behavior in the schools to the SRO than to a teacher, principal or assistant principal.

Using data from a school district in the southeastern United States, McCarter et al. (2020) examined the effect of legal and extra-legal variables on felony bookings for students between

2006-2012. With a sample size of over 7,000 (n=7,349), they looked at legal factors like felony bookings, out of school suspensions and unexcused absences as well as extra-legal factors like race, gender, and disability status. McCarter and colleagues found the African-American students were more likely to have as high a number of felonies as white students, and males were more likely to have a higher count of felonies than females (2020). No other extra-legal factors had a significant effect on felony bookings, nor did any of the other legal factors.

Due to a combination of zero-tolerance policies and SROs, Teske et al (2013) found that in one county in Georgia between the mid-1990s and 2004, when police were placed in middle and high schools, the number of referrals to the juvenile court increased by over 1,000 percent. Over 90 percent of these referrals were for misdemeanor offenses (disorderly conduct, fights in school, etc…), that normally would have been dealt with by school personnel. Teske and colleagues also discovered that over this time as out of school suspensions and police referrals increased, graduation rates decreased (2013). This particular county decided to implement the School Referral Reduction Protocol, which was a panel of professionals that included social workers, mental health professionals, counselors and juvenile court officers to discuss alternative discipline to school infractions (Teske et al., 2013). The result was a decrease in the number of referrals to juvenile court for school-based offenses by over 40 percent.

Monahan et al. (2014) examined how out of school suspensions, expulsions, and truancy effect risk of contact with the juvenile court. Using a sample size of over 1,000 (n=1,354), they compared the likelihood of arrest for months when students were not in school to the likelihood of arrest for when students were in school. Control variables included demographic factors (race, sex, age, and history of problem behaviors) and "time varying contextual factors (peer delinquency, parental monitoring, and commitment to school)" (Monahan et al., 2014, p. 1110). They found a

difference between arrest rates for students who were and truant and students who were out of school for disciplinary reasons and that being suspended out of school or expelled from school increased the likelihood of juvenile court involvement (Monahan et al., 2014).

In 2022 Novak and Fagan explored the relationship between school exclusion (out of school suspensions and expulsions) and recidivism for youth who were involved with the juvenile justice system or experienced past contact with the juvenile court. They also examined the relationship between school exclusion and recidivism in light of age of first out of school suspension and age of expulsion. Novak and Fagan utilized data from the Pathways to Desistance study, a "longitudinal study of factors affecting desistance among serious adolescent offenders" (2014, p. 10). The Pathways study included over 1,000 young offenders who were involved with the juvenile court or judicially waived from juvenile court to adult court from 2000 to 2003 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and Phoenix, Arizona. While controlling for demographic variables like race, sex, SES, etc…, Novak and Fagan found that recidivism was more likely for youth who were suspended more than ten times than for youth who were suspended 0-2 times and youth who were suspended 3-9 times (2022). There was no difference in recidivism rates for youth suspended 0-2 times and youth suspended 3-9 times. Previous level of delinquency, having delinquent peers and being male were all associated with increased recidivism. Additionally, youth who were expelled had higher recidivism rates than youth who were not expelled (Novak & Fagan, 2022).

The purpose of the current study is to address a "gaping hole" in the school-to-pipeline research (Crawley & Hirschfield, 2018), the impact of school-based arrests and referrals to juvenile court. In other words, what happens to youth charged in school once they are in the pipeline? This study examines how school-based incidents in Pennsylvania are handled post referral to determine what legal and extra-legal factors influence the case being handled formally (a juvenile court

petition is filed), or informally or withdrawn (no petition is filed in juvenile court). Being officially labeled a delinquent in juvenile court can increase the juvenile court's response to future delinquency (Brunson, 2007) and is associated with lower rates of employment (Brayne, 2014).

Method

Materials

Data on school-based incidents in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania were obtained for the 2021-2022 school year. Pennsylvania is a county based juvenile justice system which means that it is administered at the local level and not from the state capitol. Therefore the disposition of these incidents is left up to the county in which they occurred. In 2021-2022 there were 13,061 school-based incidents that were reported to the police. However, due to missing and incomplete information over half (7,081) were excluded from our analysis, which left a sample size of 5,980 (n=5,980).

Analytic Plan

The dependent variable in this study is whether the referral to the juvenile court was withdrawn or handled informally, or handled formally. If the school-based incident resulted in the case being withdrawn, dismissed, or was handled through informal adjustment it was considered withdrawn or handled informally and coded as 1. However, if the school-based incident resulted in a consent decree, formal probation, the juvenile in question being placed in a residential treatment facility (each of which requires that a petition is filed in juvenile court), or was referred to criminal court, the school-based incident was considered handled formally and coded as 2. Out of the 5,980 school-based incidents that were referred to the juvenile court, over half (58.38%) were handled formally. The dependent variable was dichotomized in order to run a logistic regression model. The goal of this study is to determine whether there are differences in the

handling of a school-based incident based on a number of factors, and the dichotomized index predicts the probability of membership in terms of informal or formal case outcomes. Our purpose is to learn what combination of our independent variables would predict the probability of case outcome in the juvenile court. Logistic regression does not require stringent assumptions about the distribution of the predictor variables, and it predicts and explains relationships between a binary dependent variable and one or more variable measured at any level (Heiman, 2014; Tabachnick & Fiddell, 2007; Weisburd, 1998).

Independent Variables

The current study examines the effect of legal and extra-legal factors on case disposition. Legal factors include seriousness of the offense. More serious offenses tend to be dealt with formally while less serious offenses tend to be dealt with informally. The grades of the alleged charge were summary (17.3% of the sample and coded as 1), misdemeanor (56.7% of the sample, coded as 2), and felony (26.0% of the sample, coded as 3). The second legal factor was whether a weapon was used in the school-based incident. No weapon use (80.7% of the sample) was coded as 1, and if a weapon was used (19.3% of the sample) it was coded as 2. Prior juvenile court contact was split almost exactly in half, and 49.9% of the sample had no prior juvenile court contact (coded as 1) and 50.1% of the sample had a prior juvenile court referral (coded as 2). The last legal variable was the youth's risk assessment score. Every county in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania uses a screening tool to estimate a juvenile offender's level of risk called The Youth Level of Service Case Management Inventory 2.0 (YLS/CMI). There are eight risk/needs domains and items within each domain that are assessed. Higher scores on the YLS/CMI indicate more risk, while lower scores indicate less risk. The majority of the sample were considered low risk (47.6%, coded as 1)

and moderate risk (41.6%, coded as 2), while the rest were high risk (10.2%, coded as 3) and very

high risk (.6%, coded as 4). The legal factors can be found in table 1.

Table 1

Legal Variables (N =5,980)

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Offense Level		
Summary	1035	17.3
Misdemeanor	3391	56.7
Felony	1554	26.0
Weapon Use		
No	4826	80.7
Yes	1154	19.3
Priors		
Yes	2996	50.1
No	2984	49.9
YLS Score		
Low Risk	2846	47.6
Medium Risk	2488	41.6
High Risk	508	10.2
Very High Risk	138	0.6

The current study also examined extra-legal factors and what effect, if any, they had on

juvenile court processing of school-based incidents. Race was included as an extra-legal variable.

Almost half the sample (48.3%) was white and slightly fewer were black (46.4%). The remaining

races were multi-racial (3.8%), Asian (.4%), and other (1.1%). Race was dichotomized into white

(coded as 1) and non-white (coded as 2), which represented 51.7% of the sample. Gender was

another extra-legal variable. Males (coded as 1) made up 77.4% of the sample, and females (coded

as 2) represented 22.6% of the sample. Data was also available on parental status, and most of the

sample (45.7%) had parents who were never married (coded as 2). All other categories for this

variable were combined into the variable other (coded as 1), which made up 54.3% of the sample.

The last extra-legal variable was living arrangement. Most of the sample (44.3%) was living with their mother (coded as 1) at the time of the incident, and the other categories were combined (making up 55.7% of the sample) into the variable other (coded as 2). The extra-legal variables can be found in table 2.

Table 2

Extra-Legal Variables (N =5,980)

Demographic	Frequency	Percent
Race		
White	2,888	48.3
Black	2,775	46.4
Multi-Racial	227	3.8
Asian	24	0.4
Other	66	1.1
Sex		
Male	4,629	77.4
Female	1,351	22.6
Parental Status		
Never Married	2,733	45.7
Separated	275	4.6
Both Deceased	6	.1
Divorced	371	6.2
Married	711	11.9
One Deceased	245	4.1
Other	1639	27.4
Living Arrangement		
With Mother Only	2,661	44.5
With Mother and Step-Father	227	3.8
With Father Only	478	8.0
With Father and Step-Mother	66	1.1
With Both Parents	825	13.8
Relative	460	7.7

Other	1,263	21.1

Results

The logistic regression model determined which independent variables (legal and extra-legal) were predictors of whether the school-based incident would be withdrawn or handled informally, or handled formally in juvenile court. Regression results for the model indicate that the overall model was statistically reliable (Model $\chi^2(8)=453.833$, $p < .001$) and correctly predicted 62.6 percent of the case outcomes. All four of the legal variables were significant in the model. Having had a prior referral to juvenile court increased the likelihood of a case being handled formally by over 180 percent (Exp(B)=1.807). Also, committing a more serious offense (Exp(B)=1.259), a higher YLS/CMI score (Exp(B)=1.074), and using a weapon (Exp(B)=.787) all increased the likelihood of a juvenile's case being handled formally. The only extra-legal variable that was not significant in the model was parental status (β=.003, p>.05). Non-white juveniles who committed a school-based incident were over 120 percent more likely to have their case handled formally in juvenile court than white juveniles (Exp(B)=1.209), while living with a mother only (Exp(B)=.968) and being a male (Exp(B)=.771) also were predictors of having a school-based incident handled formally in juvenile court. The results of the logistic regression model can be found in Table 3.

Table 3

Logistic Regression Results for Case Handling

Variable	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Prior Referral***	.592	.089	44.462	1	.001	1.807
Charge Grade***	.230	.055	17.505	1	.001	1.259
Weapon Use**	.240	.092	6.753	1	.009	.787
YLS/CMI***	.072	.005	221.20	1	.001	1.074
Gender***	-.260	.060	19.101	1	.001	.771
Parental Status	.003	.019	.021	1	.885	1.209

Living Arrangement**	-.032	.011	8.406	1	.005	.968
Race***	.190	.058	10.686	1	.001	1.209
Constant	-.345	.192	3.231	1	.072	.708
Model Chi-Square	453.833					
Negelkerke R^2 .098						

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

Discussion

Discretion is a very important part of the criminal justice system and, obviously, not every case referred to the juvenile court has to be, or should be, handled the same way. At first glance it appears that the system is working as it should as far as the legal variables are concerned. More serious cases involving a weapon should be handled formally, as should juveniles who had a prior referral to juvenile court and are deemed to be more of a risk. However in the current study over half of the school-based incidents referred to the juvenile court were handled formally when the majority were not felony offenses (74%), did not involve a weapon (80.7%), and involved juveniles who were considered low or moderate risks (89.2%). These are not legal factors that usually call for a juvenile to be labeled a delinquent, but that is what happened. Na and Gottfredson (2013) found that schools with SROs have higher rates of delinquency, and Thurae and Wald (2010) stated that having SROs dramatically increases arrest rates in schools, but neither explains why the juvenile courts responded the way that they did. The effects of being officially labeled a delinquent have been well established and include being less likely to complete high school (Hjalmarsson, 2008), and ineligibility for certain federal student loans (Lovenheim & Owens, 2014). It seems like it would be prudent that unless necessary, this label should be avoided.

The significance of the extra-legal factors is in line with previous research. Males were more likely candidates for formal juvenile court involvement than females, which aligns with findings by Novak (2019) and Leban and Gibson (2020), although the odds of juvenile court

involvement were less in the present study. Non-white juveniles were more likely to have their case handled formally than white juveniles, which is similar to previous research (Kovera, 2019; Leiber & Fix, 2019). In the current study being a non-white juvenile impacted the likelihood of having a case handled formally in juvenile court just about as much as the seriousness of the offense. Finally, being raised by a single mother was a significant predictor of formal juvenile court involvement compared to all of the other parental living situations, which is not an uncommon theme in the literature (Demuth & Brown, 2004; Verrecchia & Arp, 2015; Verrecchia & Wood, 2017).

Implications for Policy

It is important that researchers continue to assess the effects of SROs. There have been positive outcomes like increased feelings of safety in school, but some negative outcomes as well, such as more referrals to juvenile court and more labeling of juveniles. Whether the positives outweigh the negatives is uncertain.

The current study found that almost 20 percent (17.3) of the school-based incidents that were referred to juvenile court were for summary offenses. In Pennsylvania only misdemeanors and felonies are referred to juvenile court, while summary offenses are handled at the district justice level[1]. Perhaps there could be a policy that says if a misdemeanor occurs on school grounds it will not be referred to juvenile court and handled as if it occurred outside of school. This would reduce the workload of juvenile courts and possibly the number of juveniles labeled delinquent.

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[1] There are exceptions to this, such as large monetary damage from retail theft or if a juvenile commits more than one summary offense.

The fact that just about half of the juveniles in the current study were not labeled a delinquent is encouraging.

Another policy change could be replacing SROs with school social workers, or having school social workers work hand in hand with SROs. Currently police officers are working with mental health professionals in Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT), and research has found beneficial effects, like that they help prevent the arrest of people with mental illness (Franz & Borum, 2010). Perhaps there could be School Intervention Teams (SIT) where a police officer intervenes in a dangerous situation to make the school safer, and then the school social worker explores options that do not include a referral to juvenile court and would still get the student any help that they need and bring justice for the victim. The school social worker could even explore alternatives to school discipline that do not include out of school suspension or expulsion (see Teasley & Miller, 2011).

Another policy suggestion is to implement restorative justice practices in schools. Restorative justice has been used in the criminal justice system as it tries to restore the needs of the victim while holding offenders accountable for their actions and building on the competencies of the offender (Verrecchia & Hutzell, 2010). These practices have been implemented in some middle and high schools in order to create a safe learning environment (Gregory & Evans, 2020). Restorative justice has been used for years in indigenous communities, and is now being used in criminal justice systems in the United States as it "meets the needs of victims, repair[s] the harm, and restore[s] the relationships of all people affected by the crime" (Morgan, 2021, p. 164). At a restorative justice conference a victim and offender meet face to face to discuss the situation and what needs to be done for a successful resolution (Morgan, 2021). However there are some limitations to using restorative justice in schools. First, there is a serious lack of research on the

effectiveness of this approach to school-based-incidents (Morgan, 2021). Secondly, there is a narrow range of cases for which this approach can be used (Hansen, 2016). If the facts of the case are in dispute then a formal mechanism must be used before any conference can take place. Also, since restorative justice requires a face to face meeting between the victim and offender, it is not recommended for violent crimes.

Implications for Research

This is an exploratory study with methodological limitations. The data was retrieved from one state and even though it is statewide data, generalizability is severely limited. Also, by looking at one year of data the current study cannot project any future effects. Future research should be longitudinal and include nationally representative data. Another limitation is the lack of data on school disengagement. While all of the juveniles in the current study were involved in a school-based incident we do not know how committed they were to school in the first place and if that had an effect on their behavior. Also, there are other legal and extra-legal factors that would have been helpful in trying to understand this relationship. For example, there were no data regarding socio-economic status, and while whether the juvenile in question had a prior referral to juvenile court was known, the number of prior referrals would be been helpful in the analysis.

Conclusion

In the school year 2021-2022 in Pennsylvania there were 48,682, referrals made to juvenile courts. Just under a third of these (27.9%) were for school-based incidents. The purpose of this study was to fill a gaping hole (Crawley & Hirschfield, 2018) in the school-to-prison pipeline research, specifically, what happens to juveniles who commit a school-based incident after they are referred to juvenile court. This research found that both legal and extra-legal factors influence whether a case is handled formally or withdrawn or handled informally after it reaches the juvenile

court. If there were another method of handling these school-based incidents it would reduce the burden of juvenile courts, and perhaps lessen the effects of the school-to-prison pipeline.

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Unnoticed Burdens for Students of Color and Unearned White Privileges of White Homogeneity at a PWI

Abigail B. Reiter

Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice
UNC Pembroke

E. Miranda Reiter

Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice
UNC Pembroke

Abstract

In this qualitative study, the experiences of students of color at a predominantly white university in North Carolina are used to expose the ways in which white homogeneity and white normativity work to maintain hidden white privileges in various campus settings. Through the counternarratives obtained during nine focus group meetings with a total of thirty-one self-identified students of color, these students are able to expose and describe a host of unnoticed burdens associated with being Brown and Black in white campus settings. They experience racial othering, extreme visibility, and stereotypes associated with their race and gender, and they explain ways they have devised to navigate through the university in the face of daily and routine manifestations of racism. Their voices effectively counter the ideologies of majoritarian stories that consistently deny the existence and effects of racism, to reveal some of the ways in which college life is in an unequal, racialized experience. The paper concludes by acknowledging limitations of this research as well as by discussing implications for the use of experiential knowledge through counterstories of those affected by injustice to help oppose false ideologies that work to promote racialized college experiences and outcomes.

Keywords: students of color, white privilege, white normativity, predominantly white institution

Unnoticed burdens for students of color and unearned white privileges of white

homogeneity at a PWI

Advantaged groups tend to adhere to ideologies that reinforce their dominant status, and they often perceive the social system as being fair, rationalizing their own domination and power (Selvanathan, Lickel, & Dasgupta, 2020). An example of this type of ideology is the white as normative perspective. According to this perspective, whites in the U.S. perceive themselves as racially neutral because they have not been subjected to race-based oppression, and they have never seen themselves as racially marked or as having any racial identity (Lorde, 1984; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017). In fact, racial identity for whites is often based on a reflection of their views of those who are not white, or the "other," and this ideology is the result of the seeming naturalness, normalcy, and dominance of whiteness (Matias & Boucher, 2023). Whites have the distinct privilege to ignore their own racial identity, allowing them a particular social advantage beyond that which they receive from overt racial discrimination (hooks, 1989; Helms, 2017). And many whites fail to recognize that they contribute to this unfair system. They view race as a characteristic that belongs to others, not themselves, and racism as a problem of people of color (Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1994; Jayakumar & Adamian, 2017).

Many whites do not see whiteness as a privilege, and they do not recognize the advantages of living virtually void of race, resulting in a myriad of difficult (and hidden) considerations facing people of color in white spaces. The implications of being a person of color in white settings, including U.S. institutions, are diverse and extensive. This is especially true of students of color at predominantly white institutions of education (PWIs) (Robinson-Perez, Marzell, & Han, 2020). In fact, many PWIs state that racial inclusion and equity are vital and even include them in their

mission statements, although a culture of whiteness and white supremacy continue to pervade these institutions (Evatt-Young & Bryson, 2021).

Despite strides by universities to make campuses more inclusive and accepting, students of color are still affected by discriminatory acts and racist campus climates. This likely contributes to the lower retention and graduation rates of students of color at PWIs (McClain & Perry, 2017). In fact, white students are more than twice as likely as Black students to graduate in four years from their first institution attended (Ginder, Kelly-Reid, & Mann, 2017). Further, recent political decisions like the Supreme Court decision to make affirmative action in hiring and student admissions in higher education unlawful may cause students of color to feel even less accepted, less wanted, and less included at PWIs. At a time when racialized violence and civil unrest are pervasive and almost routine, it is especially important to explore and expose the many manifestations of continual racial injustice in U.S. higher education.

In this paper, the researchers rely on the invaluable lived experiences of self-identified students of color expressed through counternarratives offered during multiple focus group meetings at a PWI in the U.S. South. These conversations expose ways in which white homogeneity and white normativity create often unnoticed burdens for these students, as well as the strategies they must devise to navigate through unwelcoming campus settings. These students' conversations function as counterstories to oppose the majoritarian stories that typically perpetuate the false ideology of the U.S. education as a meritorious institution, and that effectively blame targets of racism.

Literature Review

Racializing Blackness and Brownness

College students of color attending mostly white institutions are forced to navigate through academic and social spaces and interactions as *students of color.* This means, for one, that they are viewed as a type of student- a racialized student, a student of color. Meanwhile, white students are simply *students*. According to Critical Race Theory education scholar Gloria Ladson-Billings, the distinction between white and *other* has endured for years. As she states, "While the creation of the category does not reveal what constitutes within it, it does create for us a sense of polar opposites that posits a cultural ranking designed to tell us who is white or, perhaps more pointedly, who is not white!" (Ladson-Billings, 2010, pp. 8).

The racialized outsider and othered status of students of color insists that they must prove that they belong, even as they are excessively watched and evaluated based on racialized and racist expectations of others. They must also contend with commonplace racist remarks, behaviors, and other expressions of racism that are seldom perceived by others, making them an especially frustrating component of navigating through white spaces in a white institution (Reiter & Reiter, 2020).

Daily encounters of racist expressions accumulate to an overall different college experience for students of color, affecting their social, academic, and emotional lives. For instance, one major effect of discrimination on campuses is a reduced sense of belonging, which is related to perceptions of hostile campus climates (Lewis et al. 2019) and negative cross-racial relationships, perceptions of lowered faculty interest in students, and less supportive residence halls (Harwood et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2007; Maestas et al., 2007; Nuñez, 2009).

White Privilege Ideologies

The U.S. education system was founded on, and continues to run on, considerations of white (male) Americans, and is largely perceived as a white hegemonic institution (Atkins & Kalel,

2023). Embedded in U.S. culture are assumptions of white academic superiority and normativity, the historical and continual cultural conceptualization of race as whites and *others*, as well as false beliefs that education is merit-based system in which racism and other oppressions no longer affect students experience and outcomes. These false ideologies are effective in creating challenges for students of color face challenges associated with racism, on top and confounded by, those already inherent in life as a college student, making college life a racialized experience (Garrison, Rice, & Liu, 2021).

White Ascendancy

Like all other U.S. institutions, the university is a hegemonically white institution (Atkins, 2020). This is reflected in the theme of *white ascendancy*, which Gusa (2010) describes as the notion that whites are seen as the only truly intelligent and academically capable group. White ascendency also includes a sense of superiority and entitlement felt by Whites, White domination over racial discourse, and White victimization (Gusa, 2010). These ideas create a hostile classroom and campus environment for Black students at PWIs. Many times, assumptions of academic superiority are expressed through racial microaggressions. Racial microaggressions are commonplace, and usually implicit and unintentional manifestations of prejudice that reveal racist assumptions of how the target is or will be. These "mini assaults" are verbal or nonverbal acts of discrimination that are usually unintentional (Wong et al., 2014) and are often unnoticed or dismissed because of their subtle nature.

The False Meritocracy

There is a ubiquitous American ideology that asserts that the U.S. is a land of limitless opportunities, and that those who work hard and have the right attitude and character are those who succeed. This represents the myth of meritocracy. While it is a myth, this false belief has

consistently been effective in promoting unearned advantages for white, male, able-bodied, heterosexual, Christian, and other dominant group Americans since the nation was founded. This process largely works by denying the realities of various forms of inequality and processes of oppression that are embedded in American interactions, institutions, and social structures (McNamee, 2023).

The false belief of meritocracy has devastating effects in U.S. education, which is an institution that is seem as an equally accessible and fair mechanism of mobility for all Americans. Because of the salient otherness and related visibility of students of color at PWIs, along with the perception of institutional inclusion and equity, racial and other discrimination can go overlooked and denied. In this way, students of color attending these universities often function to enhance the false perception of fairness within the institution. That is, by superficially presenting Brown and Black students as included and equal members, a harmful façade of meritocracy and equality is created and protected (Garrison, Rice, & Liu, 2021). This works to reinforce the perception of a diverse and equitable college campus, making claims of racism seem false (Collins, 2009; Winkle-Wagner, 2009).

Internalized Racism

Because racism is endemic to the U.S., and is built into interactions and institutions, everyone is susceptible to internalizing racist ideas. This is especially devastating when marginalized racial groups who are socialized to believe they are lesser than, to be feared, and inadequate internalize these self-deprecating beliefs (David, Schroeder, & Fernandez, 2019). Just as racial privilege systematically advantages whites, this internalized racial oppression, or internalized racism, systematically stifles Americans of color in their own oppression (Bailey, Yeh, & Madu, 2022). Many times, messages of racial inferiority are conveyed through daily and

sometimes unnoticed microaggressions, making internalizing these damaging beliefs difficult to avoid and to recognize (Nadal et al., 2019). What's more, the effects of internalized racism are diverse and dangerous, as it is linked to various psychosocial effects, like depression, anxiety, lower self-esteem, trauma-related symptoms, and even self-harm behaviors (Sue et al., 2019).

There are many racist agents of socialization that contribute to internalized oppression. For one, the cultural association of U.S. education with whiteness and white ascendancy places students of color at a distinct and inherent disadvantage by sending them the message that they do not belong. And this is especially true for those who attend predominantly white colleges and universities (PWIs). In fact, students of color with little or no other classmates or teachers of color are more likely to internalize these racist beliefs at conscious, subconscious and unconscious levels (Nadal et al., 2019).

These students must navigate through white spaces in which they face excessive surveillance, which lets them know they are obvious outsiders, people who do not belong in those spaces (Reiter & Reiter, 2020). Excessive watching is one of the many types of microaggressions (Wong et al., 2014) that can cause these students to suffer internalized oppression. Because many of these micro attacks are routine and subtle, targets can fail to recognize their own victimization, and can internalize these racist messages. This internalized racism threatens the social, academic, and emotional wellbeing of many students of color at PWIs (Nadal et al., 2019; Reiter & Reiter, 2020). Further, because solidarity and shared experiences with discrimination among marginalized racial group members can help protect against racism's harmful effects, Brown and Black students in PWIS lack the social support that would be crucial in dealing with these effects (Franklin, 2019).

Method

Research Design

To explore the nuances of living and learning as a minoritized student at a predominantly white university, this research relies on conversations that unfolded during a total of nine focus group meetings at a PWI in North Carolina. A major benefit of focus group research not found in individual interviews, in general, is that they allow for a useful dynamic synergy to develop among participants (George, 2013), in that their interactional nature exposes the group to a variety of perspectives and can cause a host of emotions to develop by listening to the other participants' experiences. Participants are encouraged to talk and converse with one another, discussing their thoughts and counter-opinions or experiences (Lauri, 2019). This allows them to process their thoughts aloud (Lauri 2019), helping them to explore and examine their own experiences and knowledge, as compared and contrasted to those of similar others (Kitzinger, 1995). This dynamic can help create cohesion and sense of safety among participants (Leddick, 2011), making it less intimidating to participate in the conversation.

Participants

This research includes a total of thirty-one participants, with an average of five participants at each meeting. Twenty of the participants identified as cisgender females, and 11 as cisgender males. All of the participants were of typical college student age, between the ages of 19-24, with a few outliers (25, 27, 27, 29, 38, and 49- years old).

All participants self-identified as a "student of color." Of course, the term "student of color" is broad and ambiguous and can be interpreted in various ways. Recruitment materials indicated that they study was seeking "students of color," showing that those who participated, regardless of their racial identity, self-identified as "students of color," broadly, then provided a more specific racial identity on their demographics sheet. This broad racial descriptor was used in order to explore the ways in which whiteness and its privileges affect the college experience of

students who are not white, with the understanding that there are important intragroup differences in the ways that students of color experience college. The overwhelming majority of the 31 total participants (with an average of five per session) self-identified as Black (52%) or multi-racial (29%). Among the multi-racial participants were four Black and white; one Black and Hispanic; two Hispanic and white; and two "mixed" students. Thirteen percent of participants self-identified as Hispanic, with two Mexicans, one Colombian, and one identified as "Hispanic." Only two participants were Native American.

Research Procedure

Before data collection began, IRB approval was obtained, and participants recruitment began. This consisted of fliers posted around campus, email blasts to the student body, and announcements made by professors during class, which advertised a request for "students of color" who would be open to discussing their experiences with race on campus. Once focus group meetings began, snowball sampling (Naderifar, Goli, & Ghaljaie, 2017) was used to acquire more participants.

These meetings, which lasted about an hour to an hour and a half each, took place in a conference room of the university, and food and drinks were provided to participants during the meetings. Before the start of each focus group session, the researcher read the informed consent form to the participants and asked if they had any questions. A semi-structured focus group design was chosen because it allowed the participants' words and conversations to become the primary source of data, empowering this group to largely control the direction and content of the discussions.

Focus group conversations were largely guided by the students, and began with the researcher asking a general question: "is race visible on (school name) campus?" The vagueness

of this question was intentional, as it allowed the students to discuss race in whatever way that made sense to them. In this, the participants' words were able to counter any extant dominant group narratives that attempt speak for them, to silence them, and/or to minimize the lived realities of racism for students of color at PWIs.

When the researcher found interesting themes during these conversations, they asked probing questions to encourage participants to expound more on these themes. If the conversations got off track, the researcher guided the participants back towards a more relevant conversation of race on campus.

The conversations were audio recorded and pseudonyms were used to protect the anonymity of the participants. Transcripts were produced from the audio recordings, and all audio recorders and jump drives containing transcripts were secured in the researcher's locked office filing cabinet. Transcripts were analyzed using the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Using the constant comparative method, more specifically, the researcher also took notes about other details, such as participant body language, facial expressions, and interactional dynamics among participants. This method allowed the development of thematic categories by comparing main themes that consistently emerged from the participants' narratives and conversations (Glaser, 1969). As themes, sub-themes, and patterns emerged from the data, member checking was used as needed to ensure the accuracy of the data coding.

Data collection concluded when the researcher felt that they had collected sufficient data in order to answer research questions adequately and when data produced during the meetings were repetitive of data from previous meetings, meaning theoretical and data saturation were reached (Charmaz, 2006). Once all data had been collected, several participants were randomly selected for a monetary gift card.

Research Setting

During the time of data collection, the majority (78%) of the students at the university were white. Of the remaining 22 percent of students, 6 percent were Black, 7 percent were Hispanic, 1 percent were American Indian, 4 percent were of two or more races, 2 percent were Asian, and less than a one percent were Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. The racial classification of the remaining students is unknown (DATAUSA 2021).

This city's past is characterized by especially turbulent race relations, including violence, mobs, torture, lynchings, and forced relocation of Blacks by whites. It is infamous for the racist atrocities of 1898, and racist acts by whites have since been rationalized and glorified. Black residents in the community have been systematically and effectively controlled and stereotyped in ways that continue to affect race relations today. And as in seen in larger society, historical white denial of accountability and lack of significant reparations in this town have allowed an enduring reliance on meritocratic explanations for white privilege in this town (Hossfeld 2005).

Not only are most of the students and faculty of this particular university white, but the college is situated in a majority white, economically and racially segregated city in North Carolina. During the time of initial data analysis, the county in which the university's town is located was predominantly white (80.3%), which is about ten percent higher than the percentage of state entire state that was white (71.1%). Of the remaining county's residents, 14.6% were Black, 0.6% were American Indian or Alaska Native, 1.5% were Asian, 5.5% were Hispanic or Latino, were Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. The remaining 5.6% of the county's population was comprised of individuals of mixed races (US Census Bureau 2014).

While some universities are known as party schools, preppy schools, and so on, this school is commonly referred to, and joked about, as a white school. It is known for its social, cultural, and

demographic whiteness, with a typically negative connotation. Some believe that whites opt for this university *because* of its whiteness, while these students of color chose to attend the university *in spite of* its whiteness. Some of the effects of navigating through mostly white campus settings as a student of color are discussed in this section.

Results

A few major themes emerged through the counterstories provided by the students during the focus group meetings. These themes relate to obvious white homogeneity of campus settings, and the white privileges that result from it. The themes are: 1) othering and hypervisibility of Brown and Black students; 2) the susceptibility to and avoidance of racist stereotypes; 3) the internalization of racial oppression; and 4) the strategy of self-segregation. Each of these major themes are discussed below.

Racial Othering and Hypervisibility

As noted previously, each focus group meeting began with the question, "Is race visible on (university name) campus?" Almost always, the first response to this question was that there is an extreme and obvious lack of racial diversity at this university. Karyn (mixed white/Black/Dominican female) expresses this below:

> It's very noticeable that there are not many students of color, or there's not any diversity on campus at all. When I do see a person of color, they may be the only one in the room, if it's not me if I'm in the classroom.

Here, the concern was not only that the university is overwhelmingly white, of course, but that the students desired more racial diversity for various reasons. And many other members of the focus group nodded in agreement with Karyn's statement. While much research finds that students of color tend to feel invisible and neglected at predominantly white institutions (Boatright-

Horowitz et al., 2013; Torres-Harding, Torres, & Yeo, 2020;), this was not the case for participants in this study. Instead, one of the most common and frustrating consequences of being a person of color navigating through a white institution is the feeling that they are extra visible, that they are noticed more than whites are noticed, just because they are not white. This feeling of being hypervisible is common in literature on how students of color experience life at PWIs (Mendenhall et al., 2018; Ogunyemi et al., 2020).

Many of the other focus group members had similar experiences. For instance, Alicia (Black female) remembered below:

I have one instance where I missed a class, and I went to my professor to kind of like talk about what happened that day, and as soon as I went in, she was like, 'Alicia! You weren't in class the other day…..You're my only black student, you know I've got to keep up with you!' And I was like, 'Okay…' Like she's the nicest person in the world, so I know she didn't mean it like that, but it's kind of hard not to notice that one black person in a sea of white people.

Several other students in the focus group reaffirmed this statement. And because Brown and Black students are more visible in white settings, their behaviors are more noticed, and so more easily open to evaluation and scrutinization. While white students have the privilege of existing in campus spaces unnoticed, with much less attention to them and to their behaviors (Foste & Tevis, 2022), excessive visibility places a strain on students of color who are aware that they already face negative expectations from others due to their race, and that they are likely seen as representatives of their race (Ogunyemi et al., 2020; Reiter and Reiter, 2023). So, they must be very careful to represent not only themselves well, but to ensure that they do not reinforce negative stereotypes about their group (Ogunyemi et al., 2020).

Avoiding Reinforcing Stereotypes

There are a host of racist assumptions that the students in the study face in the white institution. Because they are aware that they are seen as representatives of their race by whites who likely lack adequate exposure to people of color and likely rely on racialized stereotypes, they know that their behaviors could be seen as evidence to support racist expectations. Therefore, they devise strategies to avoid fulfilling stereotypes.

Academic Inferiority

Students of color in PWIs encounter many negative cultural stereotypes related to academic potential, concern for their studies, and intellectual abilities (Joshi, McCutcheon, & Sweet 2015). And because these students are more visible, their behaviors, grades, attendance, and other aspects of academic life are more noticed. Following, the participants reported taking calculated measures, not only so that they can be successful individuals, but because they recognize that they carry the weight on representing all students of color. For example, in order to avoid proving racial academic incompetence, they study extra hard, avoid being late to class, and are sure to speak articulately to their professors.

Keisha (Black female) described a strategy she and her Black friend have devised to avoid providing evidence that Black students do not care about academics. She explains:

> There are two African American people in one of my senior-level classes, and it's me and another black girl, but it's the two of us, and we text each other every day to make sure we're going to class. Cause since there's only two of us, neither one of us wants to be missing. Or if we're both missing, we don't want that to be seen. And I don't think that most (white) people think about that.

These concerns are just some of the many unrecognized pressures facing Brown or Black students in white classrooms, and in an institution that historically and continually privileges whiteness.

The Angry Black Woman

Another stereotype facing these students that reflects intersectional oppression, namely gendered racism, is the *angry Black woman* stereotype that pervades American culture. In this, Black women are expected to be hostile, ignorant, ill tempered, overbearing, illogical, and aggressive without provocation (Ashely, 2014). The women in the study report being aware that they must monitor their expressions in ways that their white counterparts do not. They know that they are evaluated through an intersectional lens (of race and gender) that perceive their expressions of passion or concerns, or even slight and legitimate frustrations, as anger. Further, this anger can instill fear in whites, as well as reinforce the cultural notion that Black women are unnecessarily angry.

For some of the respondents, fear of fulfilling this expectation prevents them from typical aspects of college life. Some reported avoiding participating in classroom debates about course topics or giving their opinion when asked by professors how they feel about particular topics in the course. This can be detrimental to their academic success, as some even feel deterred from expressing their very legitimate concerns with faculty or other administrators. For example, Sand (Black female naturalized citizen from Jamaica) recounted that her academic advisor had not been responsive to multiple requests to meet to discuss graduate school, and she felt slighted and that she should advocate for herself by sending her advisor a more assertive email or by reaching out to her advisor's supervisor. But she revealed her fears about this: "..… didn't want him to say,

'well, that's one angry black woman there! Really mad black woman!'" Therefore, she decided to seek information about graduate schools on her own.

The fear of serving as evidence for the "angry Black woman" stereotype also affects how women of color interact with their white classmates and suitemates. Michelle (Black female) explained that she must carefully consider how to discuss unfair allocation of chores with her white suitemates:

> I've been trying my hardest before I speak to think about how I'm going to speak to them, and think about how I'm going to come across to them, and try to be as nice as possible, and it's so hard. How come I have to change who I am and the way I talk or present myself for you to feel more comfortable in your environment? You know? Just for your standards? And just talk to you the way I would just talk to one of my black friends, you know, over the phone or whoever comes over to visit me. You know?

Michelle followed this description with a frustrating declaration that even though her white suitemates yell and argue with each other routinely, they are not considered to be perpetually angry. Instead, they are seen as expressing concern and standing up for themselves. But for Michelle, she is a representative of Black women, and must be mindful of this and of not appearing unreasonably angry or aggressive as she interacts with others.

Studies show that Black women in predominately White arenas, such as higher education institutions in the U.S., find themselves on the defensive when interacting with whites who might stereotype them as *an angry Black woman* (Corbin, Smith, & Garcia, 2018). They emotionally police and minimize their interactions with whites, which can lead to racial battle fatigue (Collins, 2000). Fear of fulfilling this stereotype also forces Black students to self-silence as a form of protection (Jones, 2023), which means that they are less likely to express concerns related to

academic performance, treatment by faculty and students, and other experiences that might impact their ability to succeed at the university.

Dangerous Males of Color

Another intersectional stereotype that many respondents reported feeling forced to avoid fulfilling is the assumption that males of color are dangerous or threatening. The cultural stereotype that Black and Browm men are dangerous and criminal is a long enduring American legacy that began centuries ago.

Men of color are aware of the assumption that they are aggressive and violent, not only because it is embedded in U.S. culture, but also because of how others on campus interact with and react to them. And studies show that this is a common consideration for male students of color at white universities across the U.S. (Robinson-Perez, Marzell, & Han, 2020).

The majority of the Brown and Black males in the meetings explained that they often notice that whites on campus seem to try to avoid them, or approach them with caution, especially in certain settings. For example, they reported that others, especially whites, walk more quickly when they near them out late on campus. Matt (20-year-old, Black athlete) explained that this is something that he is always consciously aware of- he knows that he instills fear in others, just by walking outside late in the day. But Matt and other males in the study revealed that they do not want to make others fearful, so they are strategic about how they maneuver through campus. Some of the strategies they use to make whites comfortable are walking slowly, smiling and greeting others, making sure their backpacks are clearly visible, and avoiding wearing a hoodie. Through these actions, they let others know that they are friendly, non-threatening college students.

These students also recounted that whites seem to be more cautious when they are alone with them. For example, Matt (Black male) described a situation in which his mere presence instilled fear in someone with whom he shared an elevator.

…. there's a white woman on there (an elevator on campus), and she has her purse on this shoulder, on my side, she'll switch it to this side…. some people might be doing it just to spite U.S. for whatever reason, they don't like me, or and some people honestly are scared that I could snatch their purse….

In all, (most commonly) white individuals' responses to the presence of males of color on campus demand that they are very mindful of who is around, how they act, and how they might be perceived. Kyle (20-year-old, black and Puerto-Rican, track athlete, male) shares:

……..Yes, usually when you're walking on campus or something, or if you go like open doors, usually like white people will, say "sorry" for no reason, or if you're like waiting in line. I experience this all the time, like I'll be at Wag (dining hall) to get my cup and fill my drink up, and I'll turn back around, and they'll be like, sorry, but like what are you saying sorry for? They say sorry like I'm going to like push them out my way and like choke then and like snap their neck cause I'm this (black guy)…. Funny.

This aspect of college life is not experienced by all students, of course, but overwhelmingly by males of color. This is another example of how racism impacts everyday college life for students of color, and in ways largely unnoticed, especially by whites. Of course, white students in PWIs do not have to consider avoiding negative race-based academic stereotypes, given that such expressions of white privilege are hidden and overlooked.

Internalized Racial Oppression

Internalized racism was reported as a common aspect of the lives of the participants. For one, they witnessed numerous manifestations of it in the form of other students of color, revealing their assumptions of academic inferiority of Brown and Black students. They noted that this was usually not expressed overtly, but in implicit ways that were often not intended to be racist. A common example provided through the research is expressions of surprise when another Black or Brown student does well in school or earns academic accolades. Ne'Dra (Black female) gave an example of this form of internalized racism:

> Black people. It comes from black people. Like, 'Oh, you're really smart. Wow. You do that?' Or, 'You're a TA?', or, 'You tutor?' like I'm not supposed to do great things. Even my own people somewhat are like surprised that I'm excelling. Like you should be doing the same thing.

Sadly, although the participants recognized that others had internalized racist assumptions about their own group, some of their conversations revealed that they had also internalized other types of racist ideologies. For example, the participants unknowingly expressed their internalization of a less explicit, but very effective racist notion- the notion of whiteness as a non-racialized classification. Also, following they also implicitly revealed their subconscious perception of people of color as *others*, as racialized beings. Keisha (Black female) expresses this perspective below:

> I think that race is obvious to certain people on campus. If you are a minority, you notice it because you are the one that's different. But I feel that, because I have lots of friends that aren't, they don't really see it. It doesn't bother them- they don't see the difference, until you do something that reminds them that you're a minority or you're a little bit different.

Just as in Keisha's quote above, "race" conjures ideas about people of color, and it does not do the same for whites. This is one of the many manifestations of the implicit perspective held by people of all races that whites are non-raced individuals. Because it pervades American culture, no one is immune to internalizing this racist ideology. So, it follows that this taken for granted normalcy and non-raced status of whiteness, was revealed consistently, but implicitly, during the focus group meetings. For instance, John (Black male) revealed his view of white as devoid of race when he explained, "I think that there's a mix of both types of people on campus, like you know the people who see everyone like equally, and those who like, "Oh, I hope I don't see race today."

Here, John used the word "race" to describe people who are not white. This expresses John's subconscious view of whites as normative and devoid of race, and others as representing the concept of race, and is an indication of internalized racial oppression. But of course, Brown and Black individuals are not to blame for this. It is a result of socialization within a culture in which whiteness is the unnoticed norm, and other groups are the often-labeled exception.

Overall, during the focus group meetings, it was clear that their internalized racialized status impacted these students on a routine basis. Not only must they maneuver through campus settings as outsiders, but they are also racialized, and this matters substantially. This means that being a "student of color" entails a host of considerations that are not part of college life for white students (Robinson-Perez, Marzell, & Han, 2020). One of the strategies that students of color use to manage college life as outsiders is to self-segregate. This process, as it was described by the participants, is discussed below.

The Strategy of Self-Segregation

Of course, lack of racial diversity caused these students of color to feel isolated and disconnected, and these students described strategies they devised to deal with their isolation. One of their strategies was to intentionally seek out other students of color, even if they were not members of their specific racial group. In fact, it was not necessarily important that they surrounded themselves with members of their own race, per se, but what was important was that they were with students who were not white. They explained that they did this because they desired to be around others who shared a history of racism and marginalization in the U.S. as they navigated through the very white campus.

Karyn expressed this sentiment below:

It definitely affects me that there isn't diversity, great diversity, on this campus. There is a sense of loneliness. When you meet someone who's a person of color, you can identify with them, their experiences as being a student of color. And, for that commonality not to be there, it's like, "Yeah, you're my friends….".

Just by virtue of their racial privilege associated with their non-racialize status, whites are simply unable to empathize with the experiences of racial oppression of Brown and Black people. On the other hand, when people of color encounter expressions of racism, they are forced to reflect upon their identity as a racialized person and what that signifies to others (Versey, Cogburn, Wilkins, & Joseph, 2019).

As Paulina (Bi-racial Mexican-American female) recalled, students of color regularly encounter whites who are totally unaware of their privilege:

I'm currently running for a position on the RHA exec board, and in my speech, a big thing that I made in my speech was bringing diversity to campus…and when I was done with my speech and people were asking questions to me- one girl was like, "I didn't think

there was a problem (with a lack of diversity)." And I was like, "That's (whites'

obliviousness about issues concerning race relations) the problem!" It was a white girl.

Self-Segregation and Solidarity

Studies consistently show that a sense of belonging is very important for academic

wellbeing (Hussain & Jones, 2021; Walton & Cohen, 2011). But students of color lack this in

white institutions, especially when they perceive racial hostility (Hussain & Jones, 2019; Nuñez,

2009). Further, not only do white students lack awareness of the significance of race in the lives

of their classmates of color, but they are also unprepared to provide support for their classmates

who feel marginalized. Therefore, students of color typically seek out other students of color and

form protective units for support. In this process of self-preservation and attempt to provide social

support for others, these students learn to draw from their cultural resources to navigate through

and deal with racism they experience, just as people of color often learn to do as they navigate

through life in other U.S. institutions (Rankin & Reason, 2005; Villalpando, 2003).

As discussed above, many respondents emphasized that it is not imperative to find other

students of their *own* particular racial identity. Instead, they explained that they are content to be

around and build relationships with others of any racial minority group. In other words, these

students desired to find others who are not white, as the white-other distinction is what matters

most to them. This type of self-segregation brings racially diverse students of color together in a

shared sense of ostracism and resulting solidarity. Darian and Taleyah explained this below:

Darian (Native American/Lumbee female):

…...one of my suite-mates is like Black and white, and me and her, we get along so

well….so like we're the minorities in our suite. So, I feel like we had a bond, like right

off the bat…Like if our suitemates are in the room, and then they say something, or if

we're talking about something and we understand what each other are saying- they don't

know what we're talking about, like, we're like, "they're white- they don't understand

what we're talking about….

Taleya (Black and white female) adds:

…Like, it's harder to talk to other people that's white than it is to someone more similar

to you that's like, minority. Like when I first joined the dorms, like me and Darian

automatically clicked, like we got each other- we just have that connection…..I just mean

in like, just talking, communicating with them (other students of color). Like, it's easier

to come out and just talk to someone that I guess looks more like you than more not like

you. It's like a connection. I don't know. I feel like we just have a connection between-

especially being at a PWI, like I feel like all the minorities all like kind of group together.

The above quotes reveal a learned distinction between whites and others that is also found

in other U.S. institutions and other aspects of U.S. culture. There exists a profound difference

between these groups that influences interpersonal interactions and communication and is

reflective of the ways that each group experiences society and the ways that society experiences

them. This is the endemic delineation of whites as the majority and others as the collective

subordinated minority (Morris, 2016). The historical U.S. white/other distinction hinders the

potential for groups who are differentially affected by the U.S. racial classification system to work

towards a meaningful understanding of how race affects their experiences, which is a significant

step towards racial justice.

Self-Segregation and Fear of Rejection

Students of color also reported self-segregating in an effort to avoid being rejected by white

students. Many of the participants described a feeling of uneasiness around whites who might

judge them based on cultural expectations associated with their race. Violeta (Naturalized female U.S. Citizen from Mexico), described this feeling:

> I would say that, well in my case, it's mostly fear of being rejected by the way you look like, and my accent, or our accent, and being understood, and so that's why we always end up hanging up with other Hispanics, so we understand each other….?

Solidary among individuals who share a fear of rejection is found to be critical for students of color. It directly affects, or enhances, their learning process, their social wellbeing, and their overall satisfaction with their collegiate experience (Milem, 2003).

Whites are not made to feel as if their race is a salient marker of who they are, and they do not come to recognize the significance of their race, so they do not need to find other whites in order to feel safe or welcome. This obliviousness to the importance of race also means that whites fail to recognize that their numerical majority makes the race of "others" more salient and significant. This lack of awareness among whites encourages students of color to draw upon each other more, as the comfort of being among others who recognize the impact of racism in their lives is important to them, and also because the racialized aspect of their identity is enhanced through solidarity of shared experiences when they are with others of color (Basevich, 2022). Violeta (Naturalized female U.S. Citizen from Mexico), described below:

> I've been to mostly white schools throughout, since I've been here, and I always end up with the minority community. And to me, it's more like a comfort, cause that's where I was raised, and I came here knowing nothing, not the language, not the culture, so finding that one person that knew who you were and understood you, it was like, 'yay, finally someone (of color).'

Being ostracized by whites is a very real and justified concern for students of color, as it has been found to impede various aspects of their academic and social health (Banaji, Fiske, & Massey, 2021). This fear often exists before these students enter the dorm, the classroom, the cafeteria, and other settings of a white campus. The emotional distress this causes cannot be quantified or easily explained to those who do not experience it, and it adds to the frustration and dangers associated with being a student of color because they are unable to adequately describe significant aspects of their college life to whites who will never understand the complexities of how racism works to create substantially different college experiences based on race, and who will never really grasp this aspect of their racial privilege.

Self-Segregation as Threatening to Whites

While self-segregation is a protective strategy that serves as an invaluable outlet and safe haven for otherwise marginalized students, it is perceived in a very different way by many whites. In fact, studies show that whites tend to view collectivities of self-segregating students of color as something ominous or menacing (Tatum, 2003; Rankin & Reason, 2005). Because of this, a strategy that was devised to encourage a more positive campus life for ostracized students can create more intolerance and ethnocentrism among whites.

Just as whites have the historical and continual ability to control the narrative and perceptions of processes they do not actually understand, and in which they are not even involved, they can paint a picture of students of color as threatening, mirroring a stereotype of people of color pervasive in the larger society. In fact, there is a tendency for whites to criticize or to draw attention to those, especially Black students, who self-segregate (Reiter, 2016). That is, when Brown and Black students are self-segregate, they risk being accused of being anti-white, or

contributing to racial divisiveness and separatism, but when this do this, which is overwhelmingly common, it is largely unnoticed. Keisha (Black female) described:

> I don't know if anyone else has noticed it, or if it's just me, but it seems that solidarity, or the grouping together when you do find someone of your same race, and you do start to connect, it's taken as hostility…… there's a climate shift when you see a bunch of Black people walking together on (the main campus street), or a bunch of Hispanic people- it's like, "Oh, do we have a Hispanic event going on?" If you see like one, two, if you see three together, then you're ok, but if you see there's maybe like five, then you're like, "What's going on?" Not us, but it seems that if you watch, if you sit on (main street on campus) and you watch, you'll see the climate shift if you see five Black people walking together, then there's a look, like, "Is there an event going on? What are we looking for here?" So it's almost taken as hostility….

Keisha recognizes is as unspoken white sense of ownership of campus grounds and spaces, and a demand to know what is happening in "their" spaces. This sense of entitlement causes whites to become defensive and/or resentful of groupings of people they perceive as threatening their spaces and their control of those spaces. One of the main tenets of Critical Race Theory is *whiteness as property.* This concept refers to whites' implicit belief in their inherent ownership of white settings, such the campus in this study (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023). And what's more, this white assumption of property rights operates at multiple levels, including the right to possess, use, and exclude others from their property. Of course, only whites benefit from this system of ownership, as it inherently leaves people of color excluded from rights to claim or use property. Therefore, it is one of the many unrecognized and unaddressed mechanisms through which white privilege is reinforced and perpetuated (Delgado & Stefancic, 2023).

The emotional and cognitive energy required for students to seek out others is an added burden associated with survival and comfort in white spaces that white students do not face or even consider. They are not forced to contend with this potential distraction from other aspects of college life. Whites in white universities do not enter each classroom on the first day of each semester scanning the room for other students of color to know if they will feel comfortable, or wonder if others around them are fearful of them or perceive them to be inadequate in various ways, due to their race. These are very real emotional distractions the participants face, as students of color, that contribute to an overall experience that differs wildly from that of white students, who are simply *college students*.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this research project was to explore the varied effects of white racial homogeneity among students of color at a predominantly white institution. The findings add to the limited research on colorblind logic and white normativity in college settings, as told through the voices of these students themselves. The focus group participants gave candid examples of the varied and often unnoticed effects of racial homogeneity and its negative effects on their academic performance and feeling of belongingness at the university.

Overall, the participants asserted a desire for more racial diversity in all campus settings, and as in larger U.S. society, the normativity of whiteness at this university, which leads to the racial othering of students of color. This process makes these students more visible, so their behaviors are more likely to stand out and are more open to scrutiny and criticism. Further, because these students are in the numerical minority, they are seen as representatives of their race. This places an additional burden on them to not fulfill any of the negative stereotypes prevalent in U.S. society associated with their group, and many reported employing strategies devised to help in

this. Some of the negative stereotypes they mentioned in particular that they strategized to avoid fulfilling were academic inferiority or responsibility, the "angry Black woman" trope, and the menacing or threatening nature of Black and Brown males.

The racial othering of Black and Brown students on campus was also associated with internalization oppression of some of the participants. For instance, some students even reported othering members of their own group, and making remarks indicating white normativity ideology. Further, racial othering also made some students feel marginalized on account of their race, resulting in a sense of isolation. To deal with this, participants reported strategically self-segregating, which, in effect, promoted bonding and solidarity. Although this was helpful to the students to combat the deleterious effects of racial marginalization, it also helped reinforce to whites the idea that students of color are the "other," and made it them appear threatening, secretive, and menacing.

A major theme throughout this research is that whites use majoritarian stories to invalidate experiences of people of color, to deny racism, to blame victims of oppression, and to further vilify people of color. The threat of being considered angry or dangerous requires Brown and Black students to be more mindful of how they maneuver through campus, interact with whites, and even participate in academic activities, such as classroom debates and important discussions with advisors. The strategy of self-segregation to create comfort and solidarity as a haven from their marginalized life at the university reinforced suspicion, distrust, and lack of trust in whites, which was dialectical to the cultural notion of whiteness as good and pure.

The privilege to just be college students, focusing on academics and carving out an academic and social identity of one's own, participating in social events, and otherwise experiencing a "typical" college life is a (middle-class) white phenomenon. College life varies by

myriad characteristics of the institution and of the students, and this study shows that Black and Brown individuals enroll in college and automatically become college students *of color*. This status demands cognitive, emotional, and mental energy above and beyond the inherent demands of taking college classes. This is a largely overlooked and denied aspect of U.S. PWIs, and that are described in majoritarian stories and typically believed to be meritorious institutions, void of racism (and other forms of inequalities). This assumption allows racism to go unchecked and promotes white power and white privilege. The cultural view that white student success comes from individual hard work and merit, while the academic struggles and failures of students of color result from lack of care about academics or lack of academic ability among them, is upheld. White privilege characteristic of PWIs is reflected in the ways in which whites control the narratives of the experiences of students of color, as well as how they interpret and explain their behaviors. This process demands students of color to carefully work to avoid negative racial stereotypes and to work to maintain invisibility and go unnoticed as they move throughout their college career.

Limitations

As with any qualitative research involving a single site, it must be acknowledged that the findings of the current project are not universally generalizable. The counternarratives provided by the participants of the current study revealed the struggles, considerations, and strategies they faced on a daily and routine basis as students of color attending a predominantly white university. But this is one university, situated in a particular location, and within a specific social, political, and historical context. Of course, race relations and racial dynamics vary across time and space, and this must be considered when interpreting these findings. But, the normativity of whiteness is a largely unacknowledged, endemic aspect of American culture and its institutions, and regardless

of time and place, it is effective in perpetuating unearned privileges to whites and largely unrecognized hindrances for people of color (Omi & Winant, 2020).

Contributions and Implications

This research is invaluable in that it contributes a candid look at how a particular group of students must contend with maneuvering through a white institution which is expressly considered to be meritorious, while facing and actively strategically combating effects of white normativity and their othered statuses. Many times, processes that privilege some over others are explained by and reinforce the power of the oppressor. This unfair ability of whites to control and create knowledge of racism and its effects is one of the main reasons why this research was undertaken. This project provides a voice to marginalized individuals whose experiential knowledge is invaluable in uncovering the actual realities of processes of privilege and oppression. In line with Critical Race Methodology (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), this project uses the counternarratives of students of color to reveal how they live as *othered* beings among whites in a white institution, while strategizing to succeed in the face of routine and insidious manifestations of racism that are largely not recognized or acknowledged. The hope is that the voices of the courageous students who offered their candid experiences to this research will help counter the majoritarian stories that use colorblind logic and the false perception of meritocracy to delegitimize experiences and effects of racism in U.S. colleges.

In addition to the potential to serve as a useful tool in faculty and staff awareness trainings, this research, and others like it, can be used to provide evident to support the need for inclusive curriculum, which would help to alleviate the abundance of white normativity, and to promote the inclusion of students of color and other marginalized groups. And very importantly, many of the research participants explained the distracting emotional toll that this form of racism takes on them

on a daily and cumulative basis. Therefore, these findings suggest the importance of ensuring that there are readily available counselors on university campuses who are knowledgeable about all forms of racism and other oppressions, how they work, and their various effects. These services would help students cope with and learn to navigate through the host of challenges associated with form of racism. Until racism is no longer routine on college campuses, it is imperative to provide these students with this sort of support.

Towards the goal of reducing racism on college campuses, awareness trainings and workshops could be helpful. Most university faculty and staff are ignorant of their participation in perpetuating interactional forms of racism and other oppressions. They often do not understand the intricacies of how systems of oppression, such as racism, work, much less how they contribute to them. This research sheds light on these processes from the perspective of students who are affected by them. It offers invaluable and candid examples of how, although unintentionally, professors actively perpetuate a racist and marginalized learning and social environment for these students.

This research could serve as a useful tool to help professionals recognize the varied and complex ways through microaggressions work, and how they might routinely and unintentionally contribute to differential experiences for college students of color. These, and similar, counterstories could be part of an awareness training or workshop that university faculty and staff complete. For this training to be helpful in reducing microaggressions, training participants must confront their own privileges and they must be receptive to examining the ways in which their own behaviors and interactions might convey their implicit biases in ways that affect the lives of minoritized students.

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Culture, Unity, Family, and Community: A Narrative Approach to the HBCU Experience

Jada E. Brooks
Associate Professor and Coordinator
of Family, Child and Community Services
Virginia State University

Abstract

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have a historical significance to the Black community while also continuing to provide higher education opportunities for students of all backgrounds. While HBCUs can offer greater access to educational opportunities, there are still inequalities within the higher education system, specifically as it relates to funding and support. Further, HBCUs often face challenges with retention and graduation rates, yet much of the scholarly literature focuses on specific initiatives and financial or administrative issues. In order to gain a better understanding of why students chose to attend an HBCU and their experiences while attending an HBCU, the current study collected qualitative data at two public 4-year HBCUs in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The purpose of this study was to examine the student experience. Narrative writing was utilized for data collection allowing participants to express their lived experiences through storytelling. Forty-eight students participated in the study. Findings include the rationale for selecting an HBCU, the expectations and experiences while attending an HBCU, and the impact of an HBCU education on participants' families and communities. Future research in this area of study should include larger scale quantitative or mixed methods studies. Further, longitudinal studies should be considered to get a better understanding of the overall HBCU experience over the duration of student enrollment.

Keywords: HBCU, College Selection, Qualitative methods, Narrative Storytelling, Family

Culture, unity, family, and community: A narrative approach to the HBCU experience

Introduction

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have contributed to the Black community over many decades. HBCUs, also known as predominately Black institutions, were established during the pre-civil war years (Jackson, 2002; LeMelle, 2002; Redd, 1998) during the period of segregation in the United States to provide educational opportunities for African Americans who did not have access to predominantly White institutions (PWI) (Mathews & Hawkins, 2006; Sissoko & Shiau, 2005). While HBCUs can offer greater access to educational opportunities for Black students and continue to assist in establishing the Black middle class, there are still inequalities within the higher education system, specifically as it relates to funding and support of HBCUs.

During early years HBCUs provided training in basic skills and religion to African American youth (Redd, 1998) at a time when African Americans lacked educational advancement and access to higher education institutions. A study comparing samples of HBCUs and PWIs found that "despite challenges such as large numbers of students from lower socioeconomic status, with less academic preparation and fewer institutional resources, HBCUs institutions are competing well in regard to educating African-American students" (Montgomery & Montgomery, 2012, p. 105), demonstrating the ongoing value of these historic institutions.

HBCUs: Contribution to African Americans Higher Education

HBCUs play a significant role in producing African American graduates across diverse career fields (Schexnider, 2008; Sissoko & Shiau, 2005). Despite their small size in relation to other types of higher education institutions, HBCUs have been helpful in increasing the number of young Black professionals. These universities account for about 3% of the accredited

institutions of higher education in the United States, but collectively enroll approximately 14% of the total number of African Americans in higher education (Avery, 2009; Redd, 1998; Stewart, et al., 2008) and graduate about 24% of all African Americans who obtain college degrees annually (Nichols, 2004). Studies have shown that African-American students show significant gain in cognitive and personal development when attending an HBCU (DeSousa & Kuh, 1996) and benefit from increased levels of engagement with peers and faculty, increased support, and faculty diversity (Stewart et al., 2008). Higher grade point-averages and significant academic growth are also reported by African American students attending HBCUs (Dwyer, 2006).

A quantitative analysis of a national longitudinal student data set from the Cooperative Institutional Research Program found a higher (almost 1.5 times) proportion of African-American freshmen (N=941) at HBCUs had worked with faculty on research projects (Kim & Conrad, 2006). Further, African American students who participate in research projects with faculty have higher degree completion rates (Kim & Conrad, 2006). Attending an HBCU has also been directly related to potential earnings. A quantitative study by Price, Spriggs, and Swinton (2011) suggests that HBCU graduates have better labor market outcomes than African Americans attending other institutions. Studies also indicate that African American students attending HBCUs are more involved in campus life, have better mentor relationships with faculty, and have higher levels of participation in campus organizations and activities (Golden, et. al, 2017, Redd, 1998; Stewart et al., 2008).

HBCU's have also become a safe haven for students of color. Williams, Palmer, and Jones (2021) examined the impact of racial climate on Black students choosing to attend an HBCU. Eighty participants identifying as African American/Black were interviewed for the study. Findings indicated that while many participants applied to Predominantly While Institutions

(PWIs), they expressed concern about physical safety and social isolation (Williams, et. al, 2021). Further, participants indicated that attending an HBCU provided the opportunity to learn about Black culture while experiencing Black excellence (Williams et. al, 2021).

Additional studies at HBCUs indicated the value of diversity at HBCUs with Palmer and Williams (2023) finding that the HBCU experience provides opportunities for participants to increase their understanding of within group differences. Participants noted attending an HBCU allowed for interactions with peers from different socioeconomic backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities, religious and political views, among others. (Palmer & Williams, 2023). Further, HBCUs have a history of building connections in African American communities through service learning and community engagement as studied by Smith and colleagues (2017). The study examining BSW (Bachelor of Social Work) senior community-based projects found overall students had a valuable experience completing the project, while connecting and providing a service to the urban community surrounding the participating university.

Although access to higher education has increased, Black college students continue to face a number of academic and social issues that can be problematic while transitioning into a collegiate environment. These issues include lack of knowledge about the college process, social isolation, family relationships, and economic problems (Arnold, 1993; Brooks & Allen, 2014; Brooks, 2015; D'Augelli & Hersberger, 1993), among others. Students often need direction from school personnel to lead and guide them in understanding the process, policies, and campus environment (Holland, 2010).

Examining the HBCU student college selection process, collegiate expectations, and experiences is relevant as HBCUs continue to face challenges with retention and graduation rates, yet much of the scholarly literature on HBCUs focus on specific initiatives and student populations

(Cooper & Newton, 2021; Lee-Paul, 2023; Newton & Cooper, 2021) or financial and administrative needs (Bonner, et. al., 2024; Escobar, et al., 2023; Johnson & Thompson, 2020). The purpose of this study was to contribute to the body of scholarly literature on HBCU student experiences by examining the college selection process of students attending an HBCU and their perceptions of the HBCU experience through storytelling. Further, the study investigated the perceived impact of attending college on participants' family and community, particularly as it relates to the wellbeing and outcomes for family members collectively. The following research questions guided the study: (a) What factors contribute to college students' decision to attend an HBCU? (b) How do students attending an HBCU describe their collegiate expectations and experiences? (c) In what ways, if any, has attending college impacted HBCU student communities and families?

Method

Data Collection Sites

Data was collected at two public four-year HBCUs. The first institution has a student enrollment of approximately 3,500 students. The institution offers nearly 40 undergraduate and graduate academic programs, over 100 co-curricular programs and activities, and an array of student support services. The student population is 75% African-American, 11% Caucasian, 7% multiracial (two or more races), 3% non-resident international, 2% Hispanic/Latino, and 1% Asian (NCES, 2019). Sixty-five percent of students attending the university receive assistance from the Pell grant program, a federal financial aid program based on need (Martinez & Turner, 2015). Fifty five percent of the students at this institution are first generation college students. The six-year graduation rate is 32% (NCES, 2019).

The second institution has approximately 5,000 students across bachelor's, master's and doctoral level programs. The student population is approximately 92% African-American. About 3% of students identify as Caucasian, 2% as multiracial (two or more races), and 1% or less each as international, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Hispanic/Latino, and Asian (NCES, 2019). Seventy percent of students attending the second university receive assistance from the Pell grant program (NCES, 2019). The six-year graduation rate is approximately 34%, (NCES, 2019).

Participants

This study included 48 participants attending two HBCUs. Inclusion in the sample required that participants be enrolled at the participating HBCUs and be at least 18 years of age. There were no further criteria to participate in the study. Snowball sampling, a method where access to additional participants is provided to the researcher by participants in the study (Noy, 2008), was utilized for data collection. For that reason, participants were primarily freshmen but also included a small pool of sophomores, juniors, and seniors. There was representation across a variety of academic majors, with the many of the participants studying business, technology, arts, humanities, and social sciences.

Participants were recruited through a variety of methods, to include correspondence via university email. Further, solicitation for participation was made through online and in person courses in various academic departments and communication with student organizations. Students did not receive any monetary compensation for their participation, however, some professors did offer extra credit for participating in the study. Prior to solicitation of research participants, IRB approval was granted through the participating universities.

Procedure

This study used qualitative methods as a means to examine student perceptions of their experiences while attending an HBCU. A qualitative approach permits researchers to learn about participants and the environment (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Further, a qualitative approach allows for researchers to "seek to make sense of personal stories" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 1). Written narrative format was utilized to collect data, allowing the focus to be on participant storytelling with the opportunity to explain their lived experiences (Rossman & Rallis, 2003).

Data were collected until saturation, that is no new themes or categories were identified from the data (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). Themes were coded and organized based on the frequency of responses by the participants. Narratives were reviewed multiple times and final codes were established with several themes collapsing into one major theme. Themes identified included (a) why participants chose to attend an HBCU (college selection process); (b) participants expectations and experiences attending an HBCU; and (c) building better communities and families.

Findings

Why I Chose to Attend an HBCU

HBCUs have seen an influx on interest over the last several years primarily related to increased visibility. Approximately 56% of participants in this study preferred to attend an HBCU over other higher education institutions such as PWIs and community colleges (Table 1). Participants provided a variety of reasons for wanting to attend an HBCU. Reasons included lack of diversity in their public school experience, previous experiences attending other universities, the perception of a sense of community, and the culture of HBCU campuses. Further, participants noted attending events with family members and community groups that exposed them to HBCUs at early age.

Participants in this study who identified as first time college applicants often described their experiences within public schools and the surrounding communities in which they were raised as impacting their college selection decision. Overwhelmingly, participants noted having few people of color as teachers, counselors, and administrators during their middle and high school experiences. For that reason, some participants were intentional about applying to HBCUs. An African American male participant explained how he grew up in a community lacking diversity, impacting his desire to apply to and attend an HBCU.

> I was raised in a predominately white area. From elementary school to high school I never had a Black teacher. I have had assistant Black coaches, assistant principals and maybe one Black bus driver but never a school teacher. When it was time for me to apply for college, I had already made up my mind that I would be attending an HBCU. My counselor at the time was trying to talk me into other great colleges that were PWIs. I quickly told her the colleges that I had been looking at and how important it was to me to have that experience.

One African American female participant described applying to an HBCU as "embracing my culture" and "being with people on campus just like me." Other participants had similar reasons for preferring to attend an HBCU. One participant who identified as Hispanic explained "I applied to an HBCU because of the support at a HBCU. As a first generation-American and one of the first to go to college in my family I am honored to go to an HBCU." That sentiment was often described in detail by participants in the study, to include participants who were discouraged by educators, community members, and family members on applying to and attending an HBCU. One participant who identified as African American but noted his family migrated from Africa in recent decades provided the following account upon graduation from high school:

I wanted to go somewhere where I could be part of something. I had a high GPA when I graduated from high school, I could have gone to any school…. I remember when I graduated from high school, I received a lot of congratulation cards from people and one of them was from one of my teachers and it said, I quote, whatever you do, do not attend an HBCU, you have so much potential. Attending that school is going to waste your time and you might even fall with the wrong crowd.

Attending an HBCU was described as a "dream" by a male African American participant. He applied only at HBCUs as his perception of HBCUs was "unity, family and love." Participants often described HBCU culture as a key factor in their decision to enroll at an HBCU.

Several participants had previous college experience prior to attending the participating HBCUs for this study. Experiences while attending other universities impacted the decision to attend an HBCU. It worth noting that this was a small portion of the sample and primarily consisted of female participants. One participant, a nontraditional student, returned to college years after leaving a predominantly white institution (PWI). Her previous experience attending a PWI influenced her decision to attend an HBCU.

I didn't experience any hate crimes there or anything. No one called me any slurs to my face but it was just full of people who clearly had no idea how to interact with people of color. Microaggressions and ignorance were a part of everyday life there. I look "ethnically ambiguous." People tend to assume I'm whatever they want me to be, up to and including those who outright ask 'What are you?' I didn't make a lot of friends there, and, frankly, I didn't want to. And to my surprise, it wasn't just the students who behaved poorly. I'll never forget the professor who touched my hair without asking and said, "I've always wanted curly hair- but not as tight as yours, of course." This same instructor once

called my name during attendance, looked me straight in the eye as I assented with a

wave from my regular seat, and still marked me absent- because I had my hair

straightened that day. My experience here (at the participating HBCU) has been a relief

in comparison. Nothing of the sort has happened and I appreciate the importance of

having a learning environment that isn't stressful in that way.

Diversity of the university and family connections were also cited throughout the data for

this study. As one participant stated "attending an HBCU is definitely the definition of race doesn't

matter…this campus is so diverse when it comes to the students and I love that". Another

nontraditional male participant added "The reason I applied to attend an HBCU because those in

my family that continued their education went to HBCUs". The family experience was echoed by

an African American female participant.

My mother and older sister (and several other family members) attended an HBCU.

Table 1

Theme 1 – Applying to an HBCU

Theme 1	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Preferred to attend HBCU	27	56.25 %
No Preference to attend HBCU	13	27.08 %
Did not specify college choice preference	8	16.67 %

The HBCU Experience

The second finding from the data was the overall experience participants had while

attending an HBCU. Participants were asked to reflect on their HBCU experience thus far. The

vast majority of participants had positive university expectations and experiences. A small number of participants (N=3) noted negative experiences, primarily related to lack of social activities and the rural location of one of the participating universities (Table 2). It is worth noting that many of the participants for this study were in their first year of college attendance and therefore had limited HBCU experience. However, their experience holds value to the data as they expressed their experiences and expectations of attending an HBCU in their stories.

Participant descriptions were rich with content about HBCU culture. This included citing events and activities at the universities, interactions with student organization members such as performances by the band and divine nine (fraternities and sororities), and spending time on "the yard" (an expression describing the outdoor open area at an HBCU). Further, several described the importance of an educational experience where faculty, staff, and administrators of color were valued. Participants also reflected upon seeing people that "looked like them" in the classroom and as administrators at the participating universities. Male and female participants equally shared thoughts on a commitment to educate others outside of HBCUs regarding the value of an HBCU education, as well as the significance of HBCUs in Black communities. One African American female described her experience in this way:

Since attending an HBCU I've been educated and more aware of racial injustice, poor education in minority areas, and the overall treatment of black people. As well as how to overcome those boundaries. As of right now I am only 6 credits away from obtaining my degree in social work and I have been putting in applications (for employment). I've noticed that many companies have poor information on HBCUs and do believe that individuals who graduate from there are not fully certified. However, I believe that with

my degree I will be able to impact the black and brown community, and my family, while also promoting higher education at HBCUs.

Lifestyle and life course trajectory were also noted by participants as having been impacted by attending an HBCU, though some participants preferred to attend other universities. Several noted that an HBCU was not their first choice, however, after enrolling they embraced their college experience. One participant originally aspired to attend another local university (PWI). Though she was not accepted into that university, she quickly learned that her HBCU experience was valuable noting "attending an HBCU has changed my life for the better. I thought my life was over when I didn't get in the school I wanted but little did I know it was a blessing in a disguise."

Building a community in which they felt like "home" while attending the university was also important to participants in the study. This included peer and faculty/staff relationships. As one first year male participant stated "The atmosphere of this school felt welcoming and a home away from home." Another first-year participant concurred and elaborated on their experience at an HBCU.

> My first year has been great. I remember calling my dad and saying, 'its crazy, all of my teachers are Black!' and he laughed and said, 'what did you expect?' Sitting in a classroom full of students that looked like me as well as my teacher gave me motivation that I could achieve. I was able to make friends that were in the same major as me and had similar goals as me. Back in high school I am guilty to admit that I was a student that did not ask questions even when I did. That all changed for me in an HBCU classroom.

While the vast majority of participants had an enlightening and positive experience at an HBCU, the stories of triumph and encouragement were endless specifically from participants who did not originally aspire to attend college. Many considered enrolling at an HBCU the turning

point academically as over half of the participants identified as "average" students during their high school years. One male participant who was approaching graduation summed it up in this way:

> These past 4 years attending this HBCU has been the best 4 years of my life. I've been fortunate enough to get a higher education. Never feeling out of place here made me realize how blessed I am to be able to attend a HBCU. A lot of Black students can't say that they walk on their campus and see greatness that looks just like them.

College expectations

Due to snowball sampling, many of the participants in this study were freshmen. First year student status impacted the stories in which participants shared. Many freshmen participants took the approach of their expectations as an HBCU student rather than speaking directly from extensive experience. Nonetheless, their stories were relevant to the findings for this study as most expressed excitement in building a community within the university setting. One participant, expressed the expectation that their HBCU would become their "second home." Further, the vast majority of first year participants expected the pursuit of a college degree from an HBCU to assist in building "a better life" upon graduation.

Table 2

Theme 2 – HBCU Expectations and Experience

Theme 2	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
Primarily positive HBCU Expectations and Experiences	33	68.75%
Primarily negative HBCU Expectations and Experience	3	6.25 %
No definitive stance identified	12	25.00%

Building Better Communities and Families

The last theme that emerged from the data was the value of attending an HBCU and the impact beyond the participant and their collegiate experience. About 90% of participants cited family and/or community in their narrative. Seventy five percent reported that their pursuit of higher education impacts their immediate and extended family, as well as their community (Table 3). Both male and female participants described a sense of responsibility to other members of their family, as well as, to the communities in which they were raised. One participant explained it in this way:

> My degree will impact my community by allowing me to be a teacher in my hometown. After going through this experience myself, I have realized that it is very important for little boys and girls to see the same race as them teaching in their schools.

> Several participants explained how important it is to set an example for their siblings, cousins, and community members. One male participant indicated "people in my community feel college is not for them" but went on to add that "if they see me or others like me go out and be better than the stereotypes then maybe they will consider furthering their education." The data was powerful in the sense that participants not only expressed the importance of pursuing higher education for themselves, but the value in sharing what they have learned and accomplished with others with the expectation of building better communities. One participant described watching her grandparents and mother "struggle" and "never wanting that to happen in her family again". The sentiment was expressed often as participants viewed education as a means to greater outcomes for their families and communities. As one first generation participant explained, she is a "role model" for others in her "small town community."

While data did not suggest family and community members placed expectations on participants regarding financial or educational support, a substantial portion did report a sense of pride in building financial stability within their family system. A female participant explained the value of attending college to her financial future. She went on to explain her intentions to create generation wealth for her children.

> I do think that me attending college will set me up in the long run when I want to start a family. I want to be able to be finically stable for my children and give them generational wealth. I also feel that I can help better provide for my children and can encourage them to attend college or pick up a skill so they can also be successful.

> Overall, participants often expressed how attending college was an effort that goes beyond their wellbeing, but the wellbeing of others. The majority connected their success to the future and success of their family and community. A nontraditional student explained how she wants her son and others to know that "it doesn't matter how old you are, it's never too late to earn a college degree." She went on to add that her return to school would "set up" her family financially. One first generation American was very expressive and the story of his college education having a direct impact on the trajectory of members of his family.

> From the first day I attended college, I have destroyed the long-lasting cycle in my family. I'm the first person in my family in 50 years to enter college. Some people look at me and say my ambitions and inspirations are actually too big for me. I'm not going to accomplish them. Just being in college I have been able to stand for my family and fight for them at their jobs, buying houses and represent them in whatever required readings and comprehension. Earning a college degree will stand as a testimony to my family and

my community. I'm 100% confident in myself that my college degree will help take my

family from poverty to a better life.

Table 3

Theme 3 – Building Community

Theme 3	Number of participants	Percentage of participants
College attendance - Direct Impact on Family or Community	36	75.00%
College Attendance - No direct impact on family or community	7	14.58%
Did not cite family or community	5	10.42%

Discussion of the Findings

HBCUs are valuable to the nation's educational system (Nichols, 2004; Price, Spriggs, &

Swinton, 2011) and to the ongoing growth of the Black middle class in the United States. HBCUs

often provide educational opportunities for students who may not otherwise pursue higher

education. It is relevant to continue to study HBCUs from a scholarly perspective, as HBCU

retention and graduation rates remain stable, however, growth is needed. The purpose of this study

was to contribute to the body of scholarly literature on HBCU student college selection process

and experiences through storytelling. The findings addressed why participants chose to attend an

HBCU, explored participants expectations and experience at an HBCU, and examined how

participants pursuit of higher education impacted their families and communities.

For many participants, social factors to include lack of diversity during their public school

experience, previous experiences attending other universities and the perception of sense of

community and HBCU culture contributed to their decision to attend an HBCU. This finding was similar to previous studies (Williams, et, al, 2021; Palmer & Williams, 2023). Further, several participants had community members and high school educators deter them from applying to HBCUs, however their desire for a specific college experience contributed to their persistence in applying to and attending an HBCU. Another theme that emerged from the data was family connections to HBCUs. Several participants noted early exposure to HBCUs by family members who attended and graduated from HBCUs. This early exposure impacted the decision to apply to an HBCU.

The second finding from the study addressed the overall expectations and experiences participants had while attending an HBCU. The vast majority of participants had positive experiences while attending the participating HBCUs. The welcoming environment as a "home away from home" was noted throughout the data for the study. Participants also described the value of having educators, administrators, and key individuals of color on campus as they navigated the university experience. Further, HBCU culture was described in detail as having impacted participants growth in understanding of others and exposure to diversity of backgrounds within Black communities similar to findings from Palmer and Williams (2023).

Finally, a previous study by Price, Spriggs, and Swinton (2011) suggested that attending an HBCU has been directly related to better labor market outcomes and potential earnings than Black students attending other institutions. Participants in this study confirmed that they considered the impact of an HBCU education not only for the potential financial gain individually, but also the connection to building better opportunities for their families and communities. Several noted giving their children better educational opportunities and financial stability. Others were supporting family members by navigating various daily tasks directly connected to financial gain,

homeownership, and improved understanding of important documents. The current study supports the value of HBCUs in higher education today. As one participant indicated "when you earn a degree from an HBCU, you are not a face. You are family."

Limitations

This study has provided insight to the college selection process and collegiate experiences of students attending an HBCU, however several limitations should be noted. First, only two public historically Black universities were utilized for data collection. Perceptions of college selection and HBCU experiences may have differed from students attending other institutions. Another limitation is the sample utilized for the study. While recruiting occurred throughout the campus communities, freshmen were the predominant population who participated in the study due to the snowball method utilized during the study. Recruiting a more diverse group of students may have impacted the outcome of the study, specifically as it relates to the HBCU experience.

The samples size is also a limitation of this study. While 48 participants is sufficient for a qualitative study, specifically when saturation is met, the study cannot be generalized to a larger population of students. This study was also cross-sectional, meaning data was only collected at one point. For this reason, the study did not investigate if there were differences in the perceptions of participants and their HBCU experiences over several academic years limiting data findings. Finally, because of the narrative storytelling format of data collection, participants were not asked follow up questions that may have provided further insight to their perceptions and experiences.

Implications & Future Research

In order to get a better understanding of why students choose to apply to and attend HBCUs and their overall HBCU experience, the current qualitative study examined student perceptions of HBCUs through narrative storytelling. The findings of the study yielded several

recommendations. First and foremost, participants provided great detail on their rationale for selecting an HBCU as their college choice. HBCUs can utilize this information to further enhance recruitment efforts in select regions of the country, particularly those that lack diversity as that was noted by participants as influencing their desire to attend an HBCU. Further, participants also indicated that a history of HBCU graduates within their families was vital in exposure to HBCU culture at an early age. HBCU graduates tend to have great pride in their institution and were influential in several of the participants from this study choosing to attend an HBCU. This finding indicates a need to have ongoing communication with university alumni to enhance recruitment efforts.

Another finding from the study suggested that HBCU students have great expectations for their collegiate experience. Participants primarily explained their experiences as positive, however, ongoing communication with students through storytelling or other qualitative methods such as focus groups, may provide HBCUs with direct feedback that can assist with retention efforts. The final recommendation is to consider current HBCU students as ambassadors for recruitment as participants in this study expressed the hope to serve as a role model for others in their community to consider college attendance.

Future research in this area of HBCU student experiences could expand by utilizing quantitative and mixed methods to explore student perceptions on their collegiate experiences. Perhaps the use of individual interviews may assist in gaining more robust individual commentary. Further, quantitative questionnaires can aid in reaching more participants. Finally, taking a longitudinal approach, tracking incoming freshmen annually until they graduate, will allow for a greater examination of how HBCU college students' experiences change throughout their time attending a university.

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Leon M. Bazile of Virginia, Defender of State Sovereignty and White Supremacy — From Racial Integrity to Massive Resistance

Peter Wallenstein
Professor of History
Virginia Tech

Abstract

Under the Virginia Constitution of 1902, for a half-century and more, a tiny electorate ruled over a White supremacist regime, one that proved effective at suppressing dissent at home and deflecting intervention from without. Key policies long kept in place in Virginia during that era included the "one-drop" rule of Black racial identity, a ban on marriages deemed "interracial" (one party, and only one, being "White"), and a system of state-supported schools kept categorically segregated. Leon M. Bazile, a representative—in fact leading—figure from this time, promoted all three policies. Over time, he and his counterparts found themselves and those policies increasingly challenged, especially by Black Virginians and federal authority. Much of this article derives from opinions Bazile authored as a local judge on matters of race and law with regard to schools or marriage: (1) in June 1955, after *Brown v. Board of Education*, in a case regarding Hanover County school bonds in a new era of mandated desegregation and (2) in January 1965 after Mildred and Richard Loving challenged the sentences imposed on them in January 1959 for their interracial marriage. Leon Bazile highlights the constellation of ideas and values and institutions and power—the entire Jim Crow complex—that the Black Freedom Struggle in Virginia was up against in the 1950s and 1960s.

Keywords: Leon Bazile, *Brown v. Board of Education*, Caroline County, Hanover County, interracial marriage, *Loving v. Virginia*, Massive Resistance, Racial Integrity Act, school bonds, US Supreme Court, Virginia, Virginia Supreme Court

Leon M. Bazile of Virginia, Defender of State Sovereignty and White Supremacy —

From Racial Integrity to Massive Resistance

Introduction

About the only thing generally known about Leon Bazile, if anything at all, relates to a comment he made in 1965 as a local judge regarding the case of the state of Virginia versus the couple who, having married, claimed to be Mr. and Mrs. Richard Loving. He "white" and she "colored," in June 1958 they had gone to the nation's capital to make their relationship official and then had presumed to bring their new marriage back home to Caroline County. Soon they had, for their effrontery, been arrested, a possible 5-year sentence in the penitentiary looming for each at their trial in January 1959. Instead, Judge Bazile had exiled them, a sentence they later contested on constitutional grounds, so in January 1965 he found himself having to defend the statute he was applying and the approach he had taken. Taking on his task with flair, he ended with the scrawled declaration:

> Almighty God created the races white black yellow and malay [interpolated: red] and he
> placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement
> there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows
> that he did not intend for the races to mix.

Thus the good judge put in a cameo appearance—a cartoon image, one-dimensional, commenting in a curious fashion on a single issue—before dropping into the dustbin of history.

Leon Bazile served the state of Virginia in one public capacity or another—in the executive branch, the legislature, or the judiciary—across most of the half-century between 1916 and 1965. He began work in the office of the state attorney general in 1916, became assistant attorney general in 1921, and held that position until 1930, then returned to private law practice. Elected three times

by the voters of Hanover and King William counties to represent them in the Virginia House of Delegates, he served during the 1936, 1938, and 1940 sessions.

Then, in 1941, he became judge of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit, a district that included Hanover, Caroline, and other counties nearby as well as the city of Fredericksburg. With the death of Willis Dance Miller in 1960, a vacancy occurred on the Virginia Supreme Court, and Bazile hoped to be selected to fill it. The legislature dashed his hopes, however, and elected another circuit court judge, a much younger man, Harry Lee Carrico. Bazile retired from his local judgeship in late 1965 having had substantial—and influential—experience in all three branches of government in Virginia.

This article slots Bazile's cameo appearance of 1965 into a long career in public life—as a mirror to an entire political culture, with all the institutional apparatus to give form and force to that culture. More than that, it demonstrates Bazile's influence at multiple junctures in the law of race in Virginia.

In addition to appellate court rulings and newspaper accounts or commentaries, as well as related books and journal articles, sources for this article include Leon Bazile's papers, located at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, and a draft of his ruling in early 1965 on the Lovings' case, housed at the Central Rappahannock Heritage Center in Fredericksburg, Virginia (and available on microfilm at the Library of Virginia in Richmond).

Leon Brazile: Personal Life

Aside from a tour of duty in France during World War I, Leon Maurice Nelson Bazile (1890–1967) lived his entire life in Hanover County, Virginia, where he had been born. His great-grandfather and grandfather had immigrated from France, living for a time in New Jersey (where Bazile's father was born) before the family moved in the early 1850s to Virginia, where they

practiced farming in general and wine growing in particular, as their forebears had in France. The Baziles of nineteenth-century Virginia spoke and wrote mostly in French, and they attended St. Ann's Catholic Church in Ashland.

Across his long life, Leon Bazile followed an avocation as local historian, with an emphasis on his portion of western Hanover County. He was active in the celebration in 1936 of the 200th anniversary of Patrick Henry's birth in Hanover County, active also in the subsequent restoration of the Hanover Courthouse. The old building remained in use until 1978, well after the judge's death in 1967, since when it has been used mostly for tours and weddings.

His French background and Catholic religion aside, Bazile was a representative figure of elite White Virginians' political culture throughout the half-century era closely associated with Harry F. Byrd Sr., a Virginia governor in the 1920s and then a US senator until 1965.[2] An accomplished professional, Bazile was also an urbane member of Virginia's cultural elite. In April 1928, for example, he read a paper on "Modern French Music" at a gathering of the Ashland Music Club. And he loved opera. At the same time, he embodied the persistence of the dominant political culture of Tidewater Virginia from two centuries earlier. Patrick Henry's portrait continues to hang high on the front wall of the old Hanover County courthouse; Judge Bazile's portrait hangs lower down on the right wall.[3]

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[2] J. Harvey Wilkinson III (1968), *Harry Byrd and the Changing Face of Virginia Politics, 1945–1966* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia); Ronald L. Heinemann (1996), *Harry Byrd of Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia).

[3] For biographical sketches of Bazile, see John Edward Lane III (1982), "Leon Maurice Bazile," in W. Hamilton Bryson, ed., *Legal Education in Virginia, 1779–1979* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia), 82–86, and James Hershman (2020), "Leon Maurice Bazile (1890–1967)," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/bazile-leon-m-1890-1967/.

In a 1948 published review of a new book on Patrick Henry, Bazile displayed his identity as an elite Virginian, member of the legal profession, and knowledgeable resident of his local environment. He disapproved that the author, Jacob Axelrad, had paid little attention to Patrick Henry's prowess as a lawyer. He chastised Axelrad for misstating significant facts regarding Henry's political career. He chided Axelrad as just another in a string of writers who, having never set foot in Hanover County, treated locations as adjacent even when 25 miles apart. And he really fired away at Axelrad's dismissing Henry as a plebeian, "unlearned even uncouth," in contrast to the patrician Thomas Jefferson. After all, according to Bazile, Patrick Henry—"the greatest orator thus far produced in America"—had a genealogy in no way inferior to Jefferson's: "From the standpoint of aristocracy one family stood as high as did the other."[4]

In Defense of the 1890s

Leon Bazile warred against much of the twentieth century. In a piece written in the late 1950s, he looked back to the high-water mark both of American political economy and of American constitutional law as having come in the mid-1890s. After that, the Democratic insurgent politician William Jennings Bryan, according to Bazile, proved himself the "probably greatest single catastrophe ever sustained by the American people." The US Supreme Court got it right it, wrote Bazile, in declaring a federal income tax unconstitutional in the 5–4 decision *Pollock v. Farmers' Loan and Trust* (1895). But then the Sixteenth Amendment (1913) reversed *Pollock* by expressly authorizing a federal income tax.[5]

On another matter of huge significance, the original Constitution had it right, according to

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[4] Leon M. Bazile (1948), review of Jacob Axelrad, *Patrick Henry: The Voice of Freedom* (1947), *William and Mary Quarterly* 5 (July): 417–19.
[5] *Pollock v. Farmers' Loan and Trust*, 158 U.S. 601 (1895).

Bazile, but then the Seventeenth Amendment (also 1913) shifted the selection of US senators from appointment by the state legislature—which could then instruct them as to how to vote in matters that came before Congress—to election by the voters.

The Sixteenth Amendment unleashed the federal government by giving it access to potentially unlimited funds. The Seventeenth Amendment undercut the states, in that the Senate no longer represented them in national lawmaking. The two amendments were of a piece, inflating the power of the national government while at the same time eroding the autonomy of the states.

Especially in that context, race was never a marginal concern for Bazile. For him, the high point in the post–Civil War constitutional law of race came in 1896 with *Plessy v. Ferguson*. *Plessy* gave judicial sanction to the formula that came to be known as "separate but equal." In doing so, it recognized the states—their legislatures and their courts—as the arbiters of social policy, whether that entailed defining people by racial identity or sorting out how those racial definitions played out in such areas as marriage, public schools, and passenger trains. Bazile insisted on the "separate" while recognizing that it must be accompanied by something of the "equal" in view of Section One of the Fourteenth Amendment (and *Plessy*'s gloss on it): "No state shall . . . deny . . . the equal protection of the laws."

Across his long career in state politics and law, Bazile had occasion to speak to segregation—White supremacy, Black subordination, Black exclusion—in both marriage and schools. More than that, he took the lead in shaping public perceptions of policy alternatives, promoting policies that he hoped would characterize the ways the state of Virginia conducted its business.

Bazile's professional actions regarding the law and racial classification went beyond marriage and schools to include the right to vote. For example, as assistant attorney general he

took on the task of defending the constitutionality of Virginia's White Democratic Primary. A law enacted during the 1924 legislative session delegated authority to political parties in Virginia to establish rules restricting voting in primary elections, and the Democratic Party promptly declared that only White voters could participate. Yet the state facilitated the primary process, and the winning candidate for the Democratic nomination usually made his way to an easy victory in the general election. Richmond resident James O. West, excluded like all other Black men and Black women under the new rule, went into federal district court to challenge this denial of his right to vote. In 1929, Judge Lawrence D. Groner rejected Bazile's contention that the Fourteenth Amendment could not reach Virginia's latest attempt to disfranchise Black voters, and the following year the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the lower court. Even in the 1920s, Bazile did not always prevail.[6]

This article emphasizes the decade between 1955 and 1965, but it introduces Bazile as an important actor in the law and politics of race in Virginia far earlier than that. And it positions Bazile as a reminder that the policies the state actually pursued on public schools could be less extreme than those he, for one, championed. Regardless, it highlights several salient features of race policy in Virginia between the 1920s and the 1960s.

Racial Integrity

A cadre of Virginians propelled what became the "Racial Integrity Act" of 1924. One, Walter Ashby Plecker, relentlessly pressed for a way to identify any person who had "one drop of negro blood"—and then to do everything possible so that they "cannot go to white schools and can

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[6] J. Douglas Smith (2002), *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 199–204; Peter Wallenstein (2004), *Blue Laws and Black Codes: Conflict, Courts, and Change in Twentieth-Century Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press), 173–77.

never marry a white person in Virginia."[7] Others were Earnest Sevier Cox (who evangelized what he termed "the cult of Caucasianism") and John Leslie Powell, recent co-founders of the Anglo-Saxon Clubs of America.[8] The law of race, sex, and marriage in Virginia, by no means new in 1924, had a history reaching back to the seventeenth century. A law dating to 1691 spoke of "that abominable mixture" (a nonwhite man and a White woman) "and spurious issue" (any child such a couple might have). Such children might result either "by negroes, mulattoes, and Indians intermarrying with English, or other white women" or "by their unlawfull accompanying with one another." An equal-opportunity measure that crossed gender lines, it directed that any White person, male or female, who married a nonwhite person be exiled from the colony: "Whatsoever English or other white man or women being free shall intermarry with a negroe, mulatto, or Indian man or woman bond or free, shall within three months after such marriage be banished and removed from this dominion forever."[9]

Beginning in 1878, after universal emancipation from racial enslavement, the Virginia General Assembly took a different approach. A prison term of two to five years awaited any person, male or female, who crossed the marital barrier separating "white" from nonwhite, whether

[7] Peter Wallenstein (2014), *Race, Sex, and the Freedom to Marry: Loving v. Virginia* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), 58.

[8] Richard B. Sherman (1988), "The Last Stand': The Fight for Racial Integrity in Virginia in the *Journal of Southern History* 54 (February): 69–92; Pippa Holloway (2006), *Sexuality, Politics, and Social Control in Virginia, 1920–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 21–51; Gregory Michael Dorr (2008), *Segregation's Science: Eugenics and Society in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press), especially 141–52, quotation at 142; Arica L. Coleman (2013), *That the Blood Stay Pure: African Americans, Native Americans, and the Predicament of Race and Identity in Virginia* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 89–-121; Jason Ward (2008), "'A Richmond Institution': Earnest Sevier Cox, Racial Propaganda, and White Resistance to the Civil Rights Movement," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 116 (3): 262–93.

[9] Wallenstein, *Race, Sex, and the Freedom to Marry*, 23–24; Willie Lee Rose (1976), ed., *A Documentary History of Slavery in North America* (New York: Oxford University Press), 21.

marrying unlawfully within Virginia or going out of state to marry and then returning as an ostensibly married couple. That statute continued the definition dating back to the eighteenth century, that a person was "negro" if as much as one-fourth Black. In 1910, the legislature had leapt two generations, from one Black grandparent to one Black great-great grandparent, resetting the boundary so that anyone one-sixteenth Black was Black.[10]

And then in 1924 the Racial Integrity Act moved the boundary again, classifying as "colored" anyone with any "ascertainable" (or even presumed) African ancestry, and it enhanced the bureaucracy associated with enforcing the new line. At the same time, it addressed more recent arrivals to Virginia from Asia, albeit it in minuscule numbers if any at all as yet. To be categorically distinguished from "Caucasian" persons was anyone identified as "Negro, Mongolian, American Indian, Asiatic Indian, Malay, or any mixture thereof, or any other non-Caucasic strains."[11]

Questions related to the Racial Integrity Act of 1924 sometimes came to the office of the attorney general. Some months after the act went into effect, a couple was refused a marriage license in Rockbridge County, whereupon they challenged their racial classifications as one "white," Robert Painter, and one "colored," Atha Sorrells. State registrar of vital statistics Walter Plecker—not only a fervent advocate of the Racial Integrity Act but also in a position to implement it aggressively—attended the November 1924 hearing. He was outraged when the local judge, Henry S. Holt, ruled the evidence from Plecker's fistful of birth certificates insufficient to prove that Atha Sorrells was anything other than White, or at least had any Black ancestry. Holt wrote out a lengthy opinion, in which he worried about the lack of due process under the law as well as the placement of the burden of proof on the applicants for a marriage license.[12]

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[10] Wallenstein, *Race, Sex, and the Freedom to Marry*, 57–58.
[11] *Acts of the General Assembly* (1924), Chapter 371.
[12] Coleman, *That the Blood Stay Pure*, 106–8.

Plecker and Powell both wanted the decision appealed, but guidance from the attorney general's office dissuaded them—better to let this one loss go, for on appeal who knew, the act itself might be declared unconstitutional. This advice came in a letter from assistant attorney general Leon M. Bazile, on 26 November 1924, addressed to "My Dear Mr. Powell": "If you and Dr. Plecker wish the case to go to the Court of Appeals, this office will take it there, but the thought has occurred to me that inasmuch as the law seems to be working all right outside of Judge Holt's circuit, we would run the risk of losing a great deal on the chance of reversing him in one case."[13]

From the perspective of its framers and supporters, the 1924 law mostly seemed, indeed, to be "working all right" into the 1960s. Bazile, meanwhile, as a member of the House of Delegates, sponsored a resolution in 1936 (his first session) asking that Congress fund the voluntary emigration of African Americans to Liberia, in West Africa. The proposal, which passed in both houses of the General Assembly, was entirely consistent with the broad program propounded by many Whites in Virginia (and elsewhere) in the 1920s and 1930s to cordon off African Americans, to reduce the Black presence in mainstream southern life.[14]

Resisting Brown V. Board of Education (I)

School Bonds

The US Supreme Court's May 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, together with the follow-up implementation decision a year later[15]—whatever Bazile mused regarding the

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[13] Wallenstein, *Race, Sex, and the Freedom to Marry*, 66.

[14] Hershman, "Leon Maurice Bazile (1890–1967)," and Hershman (2014), "Leon Bazile—Jim Crow's Jurist," paper presented at the ninth annual Virginia Forum, Fairfax, Va.; see Ethel Wolfskill Hedlin (1974), "Earnest Cox and Colonization: A White Racist's Response to Black Repatriation, 1923–1966" (PhD diss., Duke University), and Ward, "'A Richmond Institution,'" 267–70.

[15] *Brown v. Board of Education,* 347 U.S. 483 (1954); *Brown v. Board of Education*, 349 U.S. 294 (1955).

significance of William Jennings Bryan years earlier—seemed the great catastrophe to befall his Virginia. In July 1953, Hanover County's largely White electorate had approved a $1,000,000 bond issue to construct new schools there: two new high schools for White students, one new elementary school for Black students. After the ruling in *Brown v. Board* came down, opposition to converting that approval of a bond issue into actual spending on schools arose on the grounds that voters approving the bond issue had absolutely understood it to be intended for segregated schools. But now that the Supreme Court had ruled against segregation, the bonds might be used to construct "non-segregated schools," so the bond issue should, they urged, be nullified as in violation of the intent of the voters who approved it.[16]

Bazile himself had personally opposed the bond issue back in summer 1953. "We have plenty of school buildings in the county now," he insisted. The county would be getting $500,000 from the state, surely sufficient, he stated, "to make necessary additions" to the current infrastructure, so no need to treble that amount. At that time, the president of the local PTA had declared that the judge "just doesn't favor school progress at all." Reporting that Bazile had said recently that he favored one-room schools, she went on: "If Hanover County needs one-room schools, the judge needs a horse and buggy instead of his car."[17]

Prominent local lawyer Samuel W. Shelton Sr., who declared himself "utterly opposed to integration," led the challenge to going ahead and investing any proceeds from the bond issue in

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[16] Regarding school bonds in Virginia, see James H. Hershman Jr. (1983), "Public School Bonds and Massive Resistance," *Journal of Negro Education* 52 (Autumn): 398–409. For an early assessment regarding Florida, North Carolina, and Oklahoma, as well as Virginia, see James S. Gilliland (1957), "The Effect of Desegregation on Public School Bonds in the Southern States," *Vanderbilt Law Review* 10 (3): 579–91.
[17] "Hanover Has School Fight" (1953), *Covington Virginian*, 1 July.

new schools.[18] Nearly a clone of Judge Bazile in his personal life, his professional career, and his politics, Shelton was born in Hanover County the same year as Bazile, had served briefly in World War I, subsequently for a term in the House of Delegates, and then as assistant state attorney general. He brought a case in circuit court on which Bazile would be ruling.

Circuit Court judge Leon Bazile ruled in June 1955 in Shelton's favor—improving at the same time on the opportunity to castigate the nation's highest court for making bad law.[19] The only schools that local residents could have been voting to support back before *Brown v. Board of Education* were, he noted, under Virginia law, categorically segregated. After all, Section 140 of the Virginia Constitution of 1902 offered no ambiguity: "White and colored children shall not be taught in the same school."

The US Supreme Court had long validated segregation as in no way violating the Fourteenth Amendment's promise of "equal protection of the laws." Most notable was *Plessy v. Ferguson*, a case regarding segregation in passenger railroad cars ruled on in 1896 by a court, said Bazile, "whose membership consisted of great judges who were educated in constitutional law and who respected the Constitution of the United States." Three decades later, in a case squarely focused on racial classification and segregated schools, *Gong Lum v. Rice* (1927), the Supreme Court saw the question as having "been many times decided to be within the constitutional power of the state legislature to settle without intervention of the federal courts under the federal Constitution."[20] Thus, insisted Bazile, "it had been twice decided by the Supreme Court of the

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[18] "Order against Bond Sale Being Sought" (1955), *Roanoke Times*, 23 March.
[19] "Judge Holds Bond Issue Illegal" (1955), *Roanoke Times*, 3 June. See the Case File, Record No. 4545, at 13–26, https://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/va-supreme-court-records-vol 198/30/.
[20] *Gong Lum v. Rice*, 275 U.S. 78 (1927), at 86. Chinese Mississippian children of the Lum family had been reclassified as "colored" and therefore ineligible to continue attending the local

United States that the separation of the races in the public schools was within the police power of the states unaffected by the XIV Amendment."

Bazile was in no way inclined to shy away from attacking what he perceived as an unpardonable conceit that the federal courts had anything relevant to say about the appropriateness of racial segregation:

> Mr. Chief Justice [William Howard] Taft [author of the ruling in *Lum v. Rice*] was a much greater and abler judge than is any member of the present Court. Wherever lawyers are assembled[,] his opinions are treated with the greatest respect. The same may be said for Mr. Justice [Henry Billings] Brown [author of the ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson*]. He was a great judge[,] and lawyers respect and admire his opinions. But their successors on the Court . . . see fit to overrule their opinions on the authority of the opinions of certain psychologists who have no training in the legal field or knowledge of Constitutional law.

"Unfortunately," according to Bazile, "the present Court has the power—not the right—to re-construe the XIV Amendment and having done so, however erroneous and worthless its opinions may be, the several states are bound by it." That did not mean, he went on to suggest, that the state of Virginia had to persist in running a system of public schools. But if it did so, then those schools would necessarily, before long, be operated in a non-segregated manner. "Whereas on 14 July 1953 [the date of the vote on the bond issue] only segregated schools were authorized in Virginia, to-day if the State remains in the public school business it can in the future operate only non-segregated schools. The inferior Federal courts are bound to enforce whatever decree the Supreme Court may enter in *Brown v. Board of Education* [as it did, in May 1955, shortly after

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"white" school.

Bazile wrote this, but before his ruling's publication in June], . . . and the people of Virginia are helpless."

Bazile knew that the question before him had arisen elsewhere than Virginia, and he brought into his own ruling a view he favored from Florida, handed down the previous November—not the majority position, which had upheld the bond issue in controversy there, but rather a dissenting opinion, by Justice John Elie Mathews:

> The proposed bond issue as submitted to the freeholders was for the purpose of building and improving separate schools for Negro and white children and, as has been noted, is in direct conflict with United States Constitution, as now [though not in the original, Bazile underscored the word "now"] construed by the Supreme Court of the United States in the Brown case. Therefore, the purpose for which the money is to be expended is illegal. The purpose being illegal, it follows that the bonds are illegal. The purpose for which such bonds were to be issued cannot now be changed to build and improve schools where Negro and white children may be permitted or forced to attend the same schools. Such purpose would be in direct conflict with the Constitution of the State of Florida and in violation of the contractual obligations with the freeholders.[21]

Bazile had not yet finished with his analysis or his judgment as to how much was at stake—how much the pre–*Brown* regime contrasted with what seemed about to emerge in Virginia in general, Hanover County in particular. He made a striking reference to a key Supreme Court case on higher education during the run-up to *Brown v. Board*.[22] There the Court in 1950 had rejected as constitutionally impermissible any mandated racial segregation *within* a nominally desegregated

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[21] The version presented here, not quite identical to Bazile's, is from *Board of Public Instruction of Manatee County, Florida v. State of Florida*, 75 So.2d 832 (1954), 848–49.
[22] *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education*, 339 U.S. 637 (1950).

public institution. As the judge put it:

> The underlying position of the Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education . . .* is
> something more than mere nonsegregated education. It goes further than this. From what
> was said in *McLaurin v. Oklahoma State Regent*s, . . . the object is[,] so far as that Court
> can coerce the States, to compel complete socialization of the races. In a graduate school
> it was held that the assigning of a special seat and table in the class room and library and
> a specific table in the cafeteria to a negro student violated the XIV Amendment. Under
> this decision no regulation can be imposed as to where the respective children will sit in
> the class room and the library or what part they will play on the athletic fields and no
> restraint can be placed by the school authorities as to how they will be served in the
> cafeteria or where they shall sit after being served; nor can the school authorities prevent
> or prohibit the "intellectual commingling of the students.

Bazile's decision was seen as having broad reach and therefore relevance in Virginia, far beyond a single county. Even the *New York Times* published much of the ruling. The fate of school bonds, and school construction, in dozens of Virginia counties seemed at stake. The chairman of the school board in Chesterfield County, for example, said school construction plans there had been "shackled" by the uncertainty. Similarly in the city of Radford, where voters had approved a $1.1 million bond issue shortly before the *Brown* decision, authorities fretted about "the legal fetters imposed upon it by the Bazile opinion."[23]

An editorial in the *Roanoke Times* made two key observations about the Bazile ruling. One had to do with "the surprisingly intemperate language with which he denounces the Supreme

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[23] "Excerpts of Judge's Decision on Bonds" (1955), *New York Times*, 3 June; "School Bond Brief Filed" (1955), *Roanoke Times*, 9 November; "Radford Hopes School Plans Will Get Go Ahead" (1955), *Roanoke Times*, 27 November.

Court" in a ruling that "appears unjudicial both in its haste and in its language." The other expressed concern that the matter might go well beyond school bonds to reach state appropriations and local taxes: "If Judge Bazile's interpretation is the legally correct one, it would be a precedent for hamstringing school construction and perhaps even school operation in the segregation states. We hope that school authorities will have the benefit of other [circuit] court rulings and of a State Supreme Court review without delay."[24]

At a meeting of the Virginia State Bar Association that August, Bazile, in presiding, had another prominent opportunity to vent against the Supreme Court's action in *Brown*, as did the Virginia attorney general, J. Lindsay Almond Jr. At about the same time, the Hanover County Board of Supervisors expressed its very strong wish that the judge's ruling stand. In a unanimous vote to urge the School Board not to go through with an appeal to the Virginia Supreme Court, supervisors declared their agreement with a letter by a prominent local resident, sent to both the Board of Supervisors and the School Board, in which he exclaimed: "I would not vote a dime towards integrated schools."[25]

But the School Board went ahead and appealed the ruling. And in June 1956, the state supreme court reversed the circuit court judge. The justices revealed no division in the case, as they unanimously aligned with the majority ruling in the Florida case, not the dissenting opinion there that Bazile had cited. "The record discloses that Hanover County was in desperate need of school improvements," the court observed, "and in order to remedy the situation the bonds in question were voted." What's more, the court had been advised, the School Board intended "to use the funds from the bond issue for substantially the same buildings and facilities as planned at the

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[24] "Judge Bazile Lifts the Lid" (1955), *Roanoke Times*, 5 June.
[25] "Segregation Ruling Hit by Almond and Bazile" (1955), *Roanoke Times*, 6 August; "Action Scored by Supervisors" (1955), *Roanoke Times*, 27 August.

time the bond issue was voted."[26]

The Virginia Supreme Court addressed the key question: "Does the effect" of *Brown* "so change the purposes for which the school bonds were voted . . . as to invalidate such bond issue?" No, declared Justice Kennon C. Whittle Sr. on behalf of his brethren. And no court—whether the lower court over which Bazile presided or the appeals court on which they sat—had authority to interfere with the School Board's going about its proper business, "irrespective of our views regarding the decision" in *Brown*.[27] The county went right ahead as though *Brown* itself had never been decided against the constitutionality of segregated schools. Local authorities remained in compliance, as they promised they would, with "the laws of Virginia."

Also in 1956, the Virginia General Assembly responded to the threat of desegregated schools by enacting "Massive Resistance," a multi-pronged policy that required the governor to close any school that a federal court ordered to be desegregated or—as at least one jurisdiction in Northern Virginia, Arlington County, appeared it might possibly do—that went ahead on its own to desegregate.[28]

Under such rules, one or more "White" schools in various places in Virginia were indeed closed when court orders eventually came in fall 1958—six White schools in the city of Norfolk, two in the city of Charlottesville, plus Warren County's only high school. In Prince Edward County, in Caroline County, in Floyd County, and elsewhere—including Hanover County—the county board of supervisors voted early on in favor of withholding all local funds from the schools rather than permitting them to be desegregated. In short, each such county was signing on, in its

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[26] *County School Board of Hanover County v. Shelton*, 198 Va. 226 (1956), 230, 228.

[27] *County School Board of Hanover County v. Shelton*, 229, 230. [28] Heinemann, *Harry Byrd of Virginia,(323-54.*
[29] Jill Ogline Titus (2011), *Brown's Battleground: Students, Segregationists, and the Struggle for Justice in Prince*

own direct way, to what the legislature was mandating in general.[29]

Resisting Brown V. Board of Education (II)

Bazile did not hold back when he thought the state needed his brand of advice. So not only in the Hanover County school bond case did he weigh in on how he thought developments should unfold in the aftermath of *Brown v. Board*. In a lengthy longhand memorandum, he urged the governor and attorney general to argue that—language in the state constitution to the contrary— Virginia needed no longer to maintain a system of public schools.

Did the invalidation of Section 140, mandating that public schools be segregated, also take down Section 129, requiring the maintenance of a system of public schools? Bazile urged that indeed it did, that one section could not stand without the other. Again, he took advantage of the opportunity to weigh in against the legitimacy of the decision in *Brown*, which had been based, he said, "on the authority of psychology and sociological books written by laymen who knew nothing about constitutional law or the history of the government under which we live." The Court had "overruled a long line of well considered opinions by courts of the highest standing," had done so "without any respectable authority."

"At the time when our [Virginia state] Constitution was promulgated in 1902," wrote Bazile, the Fourteenth Amendment had been "construed by the Supreme Court of the United States and held not applicable to the States in the maintenance of segregated public schools if they were substantially equal." Therefore, he continued, "there can be no doubt as to the validity of Section 140 when the Constitution of Virginia was proclaimed on 6 June 1902." (Never mind that Bazile

Edward County, Virginia (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press); Christopher Bonastia (2012), *Southern Stalemate: Five Years without Public Education in Prince Edward County, School Closures.*

glosses over the "promulgation" of that constitution, its being "proclaimed," rather than, as had been promised, being voted on by the electorate). Judge Bazile recognized that the Supreme Court had the authority, or rather the power, to make its ruling. Yet he insisted that Section 140 "was valid when proclaimed" and remained "valid by any proper construction of the Constitution of the United States."[30]

He went on to speak of a time "when the Supreme Court of the United States was a great court whose opinions were universally respected." In another barb, as he saw them, at the constitutional Lilliputians who concocted *Brown*, he observed: "Of course, this opinion is entitled to the same respect which the members of the Supreme Court showed for the opinions of its great predecessors [in particular, *Plessy v. Ferguson* and "separate but equal"], and no more."

Bazile's memo observed that *Brown* had "removed all Constitutional restraints" on the Virginia state legislature, "left it free to do as it pleases with public education in Virginia so long as it does not by law exclude Negro children from white schools when ordered admitted by the Federal courts." Writing for his own locality as well as the state at large, he went on: "And the General Assembly of Virginia and the Board of Supervisors of this county are fully justified in attempting to thwart this outrageous opinion by any means that they can devise" (the typist erroneously rendered that last word "desire").

"And, of course, the most effective means yet devised of doing so is to close the public schools which are ordered integrated"—whether in his home county or across his home state, whether at retail or at wholesale.

Indeed, two judges on the state's highest court agreed with Bazile's analysis—and even

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[30] Regarding the Constitution of 1902 and its "promulgation" rather than approval by the electorate, see Brent Tarter (2013), *The Grandees of Government: The Origins and Persistence of Undemocratic Politics in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press), 264–72.

adopted much of his language. They were Willis Dance Miller (the justice whom Bazile would seek to replace upon his death the next year) and Harold Fleming Snead. Five others, however, did not. The 5–2 ruling in *Harrison v. Day*, on 19 January 1959, concluded the contrary as to whether the two provisions in the Virginia constitution were separable. Section 129 lived on even if uncoupled from Section 140. (On that same day, a three-judge federal district court ruled against Massive Resistance on Fourteenth Amendment grounds).[31]

R. D. McIlwaine III, who held Judge Bazile's old post as assistant attorney general, wrote the judge on 26 January. The attorney general's office had taken the liberty, he said, of having the memorandum typed up, so a typed copy accompanied the original handwritten version.[32]

Race, Marriage, and State Power

Also in January 1959, a case regarding the crime of interracial marriage unfolded in Judge Bazile's court. Still engaged in the aftermath of *Brown v. Board of Education*, Bazile found himself caught up with the 1924 Racial Integrity Act and its refinement of Virginia's centuries-long banning of marriage between a person classified as "white" and anyone else.

Richard Perry Loving's birth certificate identified him as "white"; Mildred Delores Jeter's classified her as "colored." Whether she considered herself Rappahannock Indian or, as she described herself in 1963 (in a letter seeking legal assistance) as "part negro, + part indian," had no legal significance in the eyes of Virginia officialdom, no bearing on her legal incapacity as a "colored" woman to wed Richard Loving or any other White man. Arrested in July 1958 at their home in Caroline County for violating the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, they each faced a prison

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[31] *Harrison v. Day*, 200 Va. 439 (1959). More specifically, the federal court ruled against the closure of the six schools in Norfolk as in accordance with an "unconstitutional law" requiring the governor's action. *James v. Almond*, 170 F. Supp. 331 (E.D. Va. 1959).

[32] Both versions are in the judge's papers at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture (Virginia Historical Society), Richmond, Virginia.

term for as long as five years.[33]

On 22 January 1959, as an alternative to incarceration for one year (by then the minimum length under the statute), the couple opted to leave Virginia, with the stipulation that they not return together at any point in the next 25 years. By mid-1963, Mildred Loving had had more than enough, and she managed to obtain legal help from Bernard S. Cohen, a young Virginia lawyer affiliated with the American Civil Liberties Union. The next year, Philip Hirschkop joined the effort to end the Lovings' exile and legal jeopardy.

The couple and their attorneys had to go through the original trial judge, Leon Bazile. The effort proved protracted. Both attorneys proved essential to the outcome; one might say that Cohen sought to arrange for a plane that could at least reach the runway, and Hirschkop then piloted a different plane safely to its destination.

In responding to the school bonds issue, Bazile had largely constructed the rhetoric on his own. Regarding interracial marriage, he went more into the ventriloquism business. Drawing on a rich array of materials, he quoted at length from cases from both the North and the South, referenced two relevant rulings by the US Supreme Court, and especially highlighted cases from what he viewed as the dominant authority—the ultimate authority—on the subject, the Virginia Supreme Court and its interpretation of the legislative handiwork of the Virginia General Assembly.

First, Bazile dispatched a variety of objections that the Lovings' lawyer Bernard Cohen had raised back in 1963. For example, was their punishment "cruel and unusual"? Did it constitute "banishment"—and was the period 25 years inappropriate, excessive? Bazile took care of those

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[33] Wallenstein, *Race, Sex, and the Freedom to Marry*, 99; for a close analysis of Mildred Loving's racial identity, see Coleman, *That the Blood Stay Pure*, 151–76.

lesser matters, as he saw them, and then took on the core question of state versus federal authority in the constitutional realm of marriage.[34]

In an 1871 case from Indiana, shortly after the Fourteenth Amendment went into the US Constitution, the question before the Indiana Supreme Court was whether that amendment, or the Civil Rights Act of 1866, overrode the Indiana statute criminalizing Black–White marriage and imposing a possible 10-year sentence on each party:

> In this State, marriage is . . . a public institution established by God himself, is
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> recognized in all Christian and civilized nations, and is essential to the peace, happiness,
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> and well-being of society. . . . The right in the States to regulate and control, to guard,
>
> protect, and preserve this God given, civilizing, and Christianizing institution is of
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> inestimable importance, and cannot be surrendered, nor can the States suffer or permit
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> any interference therewith. If the Federal Government can determine who may marry in a
>
> State, there is no limit to its power.[35]

Later in the 1870s, the Virginia Supreme Court had occasion to rule in a case that somewhat resembled the Indiana case but matched up more closely with the Lovings' situation. Andrew Kinney, classified as Black, and Mahala Miller, classified as White, had made their way to Washington, DC, to marry and then had returned to their home in Augusta County. Virginia had not yet legislated a term in the penitentiary for miscegenation, just a hefty fine. In fact, the Kinney case led directly to a new law imposing a two-to-five-year prison term, whether for marrying

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[34] Case File, Record No. 6163, at 8–14, https://scholarlycommons.law.wlu.edu/va-supreme-court-records-vol206/125/.

[35] *State v. Gibson*, 16 Ind. 389 (1871); see Peggy Pascoe (2009), *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press), 47–56.

within Virginia or for evading the Virginia law by crossing into another jurisdiction and then returning home, the very basis for the terms under which the Lovings were prosecuted 80 years later. Bazile himself might have deployed the language of the 1878 ruling, and by quoting it at length in fact he did:

> If the parties desire to maintain the relations of man and wife, they must change their domicile and go to some state or country where the laws recognize the validity of such marriages. [As it was, theirs was] a marriage prohibited and declared absolutely void. It was contrary to the declared public law, founded upon motives of public policy—a public policy affirmed for more than a century, and one upon which social order, public morality and the best interest of both races depend. This unmistakable policy of the legislature . . . has been shown by not only declaring marriages between whites and negroes absolutely void, but by prohibiting and punishing such unnatural alliances with severe penalties. The laws enacted to further and uphold this declared policy would be futile and a dead letter if in fraud of these salutary enactments, both races might, by stepping across any imaginary line[,] bid defiance to the law by immediately returning and insisting that the marriage celebrated in another state or country should be recognized as lawful, though denounced by the public law of the domicile as unlawful and absolutely void.[36]

Just a few years before the Lovings found themselves arrested, the Virginia Supreme Court had occasion, in another instance of interracial marriage, to trumpet the primacy of Virginia statutory law in the face of an effort to interpose federal authority. In *Naim v. Naim* (1955), written soon after *Brown v. Board of Education* and in language that Bazile had to admire, the state court

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[36] *Kinney v. Commonwealth*, 71 Va. 858 (1878); see Dale M. Brumfield (2017), "Before 'Loving,' Kinney Case Crossed the Color Line," *USA Today*, 20 February.

had declared:

> Regulation of the marriage relation is, we think, distinctly one of the rights guaranteed to the States and safeguarded by that bastion of States' rights, somewhat battered perhaps but still a sturdy fortress in our fundamental law, the tenth section of the Bill of Rights, which declares "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people."

The Virginia Supreme Court had included even more raucous language, which Bazile held back from incorporating.[37]

Bazile took care to include the US Supreme Court in his recounting of the constitutional history of anti-miscegenation law. He wanted to make it clear that the Supreme Court had indeed ruled on the matter, and more than once, including very recently—and in such a way as to show that the law of race and marriage remained entirely subject to state jurisdiction, that it was not a situation in which an interracial couple could call on assistance from the Fourteenth Amendment. In a case from 1883, *Pace v. Alabama*—against a claim that the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause surely overrode the state law in controversy—the US Supreme Court had upheld the state's prerogative and the petitioner's conviction.[38]

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[37] *Naim v. Naim*, 197 Va. 80 (1955); see Gregory Michael Dorr (1998), "Principled Expediency: Eugenics, *Naim v. Naim*, and the Supreme Court," *American Journal of Legal History* 42 (April): 119–59.
[38] *Pace v. Alabama, 106 U.S. 583 (1883);* see Wallenstein, *Race, Sex, and the Freedom to Marry,* 37-39. Bazile was correct in very general terms — the Supreme Court had indeed left the law of race, sex and marriage entirely in the hands of the states—but he misstated the case. At the Supreme Court, lawyers on both sides acted as though the law against their marrying was settled. Tony Pace, classified as Black, and Mary Jane Cox, classified as White, had been charged with cohabitation, living together though not married. Alabama law barred their formalizing their relationship, but they had gone ahead and acted like a married couple, or so the state alleged. The point in contention was that the statute imposed a much stiffer penalty for interracial cohabitation than it did for same-race couples living together without benefit of formal marriage—and that *that* fact violated the Equal Protection Clause. At issue were the two-year prison terms imposed on Tony Pace and Mary Jane Cox, a far greater punishment than had they both been either Black or White. The Lovings similarly were arrested for "interracial cohabitation."

Eight decades later, the Supreme Court had left in place another such conviction from Alabama. In that instance, Linnie Jackson had relied on the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause and Equal Protection Clause as a defense against a charge of miscegenation. And as Bazile observed, the Supreme Court had declined to review the case—leaving her with her conviction and her prison sentence.[39]

One relevant case that the judge neglected to include in his indictment against federal intrusion into the law of race, sex, and marriage, *McLaughlin v. Florida* (1964), had been decided shortly before he finished writing out his justification for the prosecution of the Lovings. In *McLaughlin*, the Supreme Court overturned *Pace v. Alabama* as no longer controlling, instead as a perversion of the Equal Protection Clause. Justice Potter Stewart identified what he saw as the most compelling consideration: "I think it is simply not possible for a state law to be valid under our Constitution which makes the criminality of an act depend on the race of the actor."[40]

It seems most improbable that Bazile did not know of that ruling. Rather, the judge saw *McLaughlin v. Florida* as no more legitimate than *Brown v. Board of Education*. The federal government had no business, under the US Constitution he knew and had sworn to uphold, to interfere with a state matter like marriage any more than it did a state matter like education. So he ignored it, willfully, blatantly, in defiance and no doubt with exasperation.

Bazile's declaration of the law as he saw it in January 1965 did not merely reflect his personal whims, or his judicial idiosyncrasies, but rather summed up very well how most, if not all, southern state judges understood the law of race and marriage in the mid-1960s. For him, there had been no relevant change in the constitutional status of miscegenation laws since the classic

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[39] *Jackson v. State*, 37 Ala. App. 519 (1954); *Jackson v. Alabama*, 348 U.S. 888 (1954).
[40] *McLaughlin v. Florida*, 379 U.S. 184 (1964); see Wallenstein, *Race, Sex, and the Freedom to Marry*, 105.

cases of the 1870s (such as *Gibson* in Indiana and *Kinney* in Virginia), the 1880s (including *Pace v. Alabama*), and the 1890s (especially *Plessy v. Ferguson*).

For science and religion as well as law, he reached back to the nineteenth century. In his distinctive penmanship, Bazile wrote out his opinion, a printed version of which appeared the following year in the case file before the Virginia Supreme Court. By way of conclusion, he wrote how "Almighty God" had "created the races," and had separated them, and his having separated the races when he created them "shows that he did not intend for the races to mix" or, rather, marry.

Demise of the Racial Integrity Act

The case of the Lovings versus the state apparatus of Virginia went to the Virginia Supreme Court. There the justices ruled unanimously in March 1966 that Bazile mostly had it right. Writing for the court was one of its younger members, Harry Lee Carrico, the man who had beat Bazile out for the post a few years before, early in the Lovings' exile.[41]

The state's highest court generally followed trial court judge Bazile's historical and constitutional analysis. Picking up the more recent history with the US Supreme Court's rulings in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954 and 1955) and the Virginia Supreme Court's ruling in *Naim v. Naim* (1955), Justice Carrico demanded to know had anything happened during the following decade that might force (or even permit) the Virginia court to overrule its holding in *Naim*. That was easy. For one thing, *Brown v. Board* had specified public education as the arena in which the US Supreme Court was overruling *Plessy v. Ferguson*—and certainly not marriage.

As for *McLaughlin v. Florida*, the case that Judge Bazile had ignored the year before, Carrico had to take that one on, even if perfunctorily. *McLaughlin*, he declared, "detracted not one

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[41] *Loving v. Commonwealth*, 206 Va. 924 (1966); see Wallenstein, *Race, Sex, and the Freedom to Marry*, 111–15.

bit from the position asserted" by the Virginia court in *Naim v. Naim*. He was content to quote the *McLaughlin* decision that it was not "reaching the question of the validity of the State's prohibition against interracial marriage."

Regarding the many other US Supreme Court rulings in recent years in support of civil rights cited by the Lovings' attorneys, Carrico went on, "none of these deals with miscegenation statutes or curtails a legal truth which has always been recognized—that there is an overriding state interest in the institution of marriage." Virginia authorities would implement that "overriding state interest" in whatever way they saw fit. The Lovings remained guilty of the felony of having gone out-of-state to contract an interracial marriage that, once they returned to Virginia, had absolutely no validity, in fact constituted a crime against the state.

The couple who continued to insist that they were Mr. and Mrs. Loving next took their case to the US Supreme Court. There the Virginia attorney general's office argued once again that the Equal Protection Clause should be understood as reflecting an intent by the framers that, so long as punishments visited upon people, both Black and White (both "white" and "colored"), were the same for violating a law such as Virginia's against interracial marriage, then the requirements of equal protection were satisfied.

On 12 June 1967, the Supreme Court of the United States rejected the state's position. Writing for the Court, Chief Justice Earl Warren mobilized the declaration in the 1964 ruling in *McLaughlin v. Florida* that "*Pace* represents a limited view of the Equal Protection Clause which has not withstood analysis in subsequent decisions of this court."[42] Much as *Brown v. Board* had vanquished *Plessy v. Ferguson* regarding public schools, *McLaughlin* together with *Loving* eliminated *Pace*'s power to govern the law of race and marriage.

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[42] *Loving v. Virginia*, 388 U.S. 1 (1967), 10.

Drawing on both the Due Process Clause and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, a unanimous US Supreme Court issued its judgment: "These convictions must be reversed."[43] More than that, the Court declared unconstitutional all laws restricting interracial marriage not only in Virginia but also in the 15 other states where they had persisted until that time. Regarding the law of race and marriage, Judge Bazile had been emphatically rebutted, whether in Caroline County, Hanover County, or anywhere else in America.

In sum, as the latest in a string of laws dating back to 1878, even as long ago as 1691, the Racial Integrity Act of 1924 had governed Virginians, whether "white" like Richard Loving or "colored" like Mildred Jeter—most especially the 700,000 or so Virginians during that time whom the statute classified as "colored"—for 43 years. It would do so no more. With the crucial help of a few practicing attorneys and federal judges, a "white" man and a "colored" woman were free at last of state-sponsored concerns about "racial integrity"—as was the rest of Virginia, the South, the nation.

Death of a Judge: Commemoration of His Philosophy of Race and State Power

In November 1965, serious health challenges led Judge Bazile to announce his plans to retire from the bench. Ten years had passed since his ruling on Hanover County's school bonds in the aftermath of *Brown v. Board of Education*, ten months since he had handled the Lovings' appeal of the outcome in his court from six years earlier in their case.

The Hanover County Board of Supervisors promptly passed a resolution, highlighting Bazile's virtues—as a constitutional lawyer, a judge, an adherent of the Catholic Church, a family man, and the occupant for a time of the legislative seat once held by Patrick Henry. Indeed, Leon Bazile had long admired Patrick Henry, sought to emulate him, echoed Henry's profound distrust

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[43] *Loving v. Virginia*, 12.

of external authorities (at first imperial, then national), a distrust shared by the people passing the resolution about him at his retirement from the fray.

Leon Maurice Nelson Bazile died on 18 March 1967. The long and happy retirement that well-wishers held out to him in late 1965 had not come his way. He did not live to see the US Supreme Court hand down its decision in *Loving v. Virginia* in June that year. Time had already passed him by. He slipped away, as did the dominance of the worldview he reflected, embodied, and sought to keep intact and in power. Other key figures of Virginia's long-time political leadership died or lost bids for reelection at about the same time, including Harry Byrd.

The *Fredericksburg Lance-Star* noted at Bazile's passing that this "gentle, scholarly man" had not lived to complete his history of Hanover County. It did not mention the years-long Loving saga, but it did take note of Judge Bazile's response to *Brown v. Board of Education*: "He was a leading judicial foe of the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 school desegregation decision, and when it became apparent racial bars would be lifted he was among the first to call for repeal of the state's compulsory school attendance laws."

Fighting for and Against Jim Crow

Prince Edward County stands out as the lone jurisdiction in all the American South that shuttered the doors to all its "public" schools rather than permit any Black students to enroll in any "all-white" schools. Yet Judge Bazile reminds us that, during the time that it could, the Virginia General Assembly authorized, nay required, the governor to close any school that a federal court ordered desegregated, and Prince Edward County in mid-1959 was, in effect, simply following state policy at the local level when the state could no longer do the same at wholesale.

In the run-up to a pair of court rulings in January 1959—one state, the other federal—that curtailed the Massive Resistance policy, Bazile had argued for the position that the minority took

in the 5–2 Virginia Supreme Court ruling in *Harrison v. Day*—that the Virginia Constitution no longer mandated a system of public schools, absent the requirement that they remain segregated. Once the state court seemed to close off that escape route, Bazile promptly proposed an alternative, that an amendment to the Virginia Constitution terminate the requirement that the state maintain a system of public schools under any conditions.

Bazile's writings show him to be a knowledgeable and determined man, committed to the law as he understood the law, and committed to state power in the service of White supremacy. His conception of the American constitutional order took firm shape as it had stood in the first decade after his birth in 1890. His life and career continue today to supply an example of late-colonial Virginia political culture, having adapted some, but only some, since the time of Patrick Henry's tirade at the time of the American Revolution against tyranny emanating from outside Virginia's borders.

Bazile could evidently accept the Thirteenth Amendment, thus a recognition of universal freedom from enslavement, and the Fourteenth Amendment, thus even recognition of Black citizenship—and thus in turn a repudiation of the 1857 *Dred Scott* decision denying Black citizenship[44]—so long, that is, as Black Virginians did not call upon federal power to push toward a more enhanced definition of Black freedom.

The 1896 ruling in *Plessy v. Ferguson* left state legislatures and state courts largely in charge of defining the "races" and assigning them their places in a post–emancipation society. In the face of the Fifteenth Amendment's ban on an overt use of race as a screen against participation

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[44] *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, 60 U.S. 393 (1857). Not only did that ruling leave Dred Scott, his wife Harriet, and their two daughters enslaved, it also declared, for one thing, that they had no right to sue in the federal court system, for, even had they been born free they could never, as Black residents of the United States, be citizens of the nation.

in electoral politics, Virginia authorities—the 1902 constitutional convention; the General Assembly—had done what they could to curtail Black voting strength (as well as that of Black Virginians' potential White allies) that might challenge the way that the tribe of Bazile and his counterparts wished things to remain.[45]

From Racial Integrity to Massive Resistance and beyond, Judge Leon M. Bazile's political trajectory was of a piece. He represented well a core social and ideological strain in twentieth-century Virginia, one that dated back to the 1890s, even to generations before then. And he highlights the constellation of ideas and values and institutions and power—the entire Jim Crow complex—that the Black Freedom Struggle in Virginia was up against in the 1950s and 1960s.

That constellation of ideas and values and institutions and power made some concessions in formal law. In the realm of marriage, for example, marriage licenses show that the Lovings' three children married the rainbow of possibilities in the Caroline County area. Sidney married a "Negro," Peggy an "Indian," and as for the middle child, Donald, whom Mildred was carrying at the time of her arrest, his bride was listed as "white." Donald and Peggy were both members of the first graduating class, 1978, of the new Caroline High School, along with fellow students again from across the rainbow.[46]

Virginia authorities had not followed through on an option that they—and their counterparts at several other states in the South, among them North Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi—had considered of simply getting out of the public-school business if the schools were to be desegregated, a position clearly advocated by Judge Leon Bazile. Such, after all, would be the truly "massive" dimension entailed in a thoroughgoing "massive resistance." But they had

[45] Smith, *Managing White Supremacy*, 19–27; Wallenstein, *Blue Laws and Black Codes*, 170–84.
[46] Wallenstein, *Race, Sex, and the Freedom to Marry*, 141–46, 154–55.

postponed the beginnings of desegregation, and then worked effectively to curtail its reach and impact. School desegregation would come, if at all, on White people's terms.

Epilogue

Hanover County's Lee-Davis High School

Change proved even less thoroughgoing in the ideas and values that had buttressed the former regime. The White supremacy to which Judge Bazile adhered did not, in fact, die with him and his peers, even if it became less dominant. As his own Hanover County demonstrates, his brand of culture and politics persisted, even though challenged, through the next half-century and more.

When the Virginia Supreme Court overrode Judge Bazile's ruling and instead validated the Hanover County school bonds, the county did indeed go ahead with its construction plans—in accordance with Virginia law and local preference. A new high school for White teenagers and their White teachers opened for fall 1959 (during the Lovings' first year in exile in Washington, DC). The previous year, in May 1958 (just as Richard Loving and Mildred Jeter were planning to marry), the Hanover County School Board had settled on the name "Lee–Davis" for the school, thus expressly—one has to think merrily, defiantly—honoring Confederate States of America president Jefferson Davis and Confederate general Robert E. Lee, together with their promotion of a permanently slavery–based White supremacist regime.[47] (A second new school became Stonewall Jackson Middle School).

The first six Black students to enroll at Lee–Davis High School did so in 1963 (the year that Mildred Loving began her quest for her family's safe return to the adjoining Caroline County).

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[47] Jeff Eisenberg (2020), "Go Confederates? A Town Divided over Its High School and Its Mascot," *Yahoo Sports*, 6 July; see also Rebecca Bray and Lloyd Jones (2010), *A History of Education in Hanover County, Virginia, 1778–2008* (Ashland: Hanover County Public Schools).

In 1968 (the year after *Loving v. Virginia*), the US Supreme Court ruled in another Virginia case, *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, that full school desegregation had to begin "now."[48]

For the school year 1969–1970, Hanover County closed its only Black high school, named for the prodigious Black educator John M. Gandy, and opened Lee–Davis to all local Black high school students.[49] Black teenagers, surrounded by a pervasive culture honoring the Confederacy, found themselves at a school whose sports teams were called "the Confederates." Some, for the love of the game, played football even with that name; others, in view of the name, simply could not bring themselves to.[50]

Black citizens had expressed concerns about all of this from early on. More recently, a campaign to change the school's name followed the "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville in 2017, but no change resulted. The local NAACP filed a federal court case in August 2019, 60 years after the school's opening. The suit alleged violations of the Fourteenth Amendment and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974, in that Black students were being subjected to "unequal learning environments based on their race." That is, "state actors"—through "an official policy and deliberate choice made under color of state law," by "creating an environment that glorifies racial oppression"—were creating "a hostile education environment."[51]

Then, on 25 May 2020, came the murder in Minnesota of Mr. George Floyd. Some weeks later, after a very close vote, 4–3, on 14 July 2020, the Hanover County School Board announced

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[48] *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County*, 391 U.S. 430 (1968).
[49] A biographical sketch of Gandy is in "A Guide to the Papers of John M. Gandy, 1914–1947," https://ead.lib.virginia.edu/vivaxtf/view?docId=vsu/vipets00002.xml;query=;.
[50] Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief (2019), *Hanover County Unit of the NAACP v. Hanover County and County School Board of Hanover County* (US District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia), https://www.concernedhistorians.org/content_files/file/le/620.pdf.
[51] Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief, 16, 23, 26, 28.

a new name for the school: Mechanicsville High School. Lee–Davis High would be no more.[52] Members of the football team, Black or White, soon took the field not as the Lee–Davis Confederates but, instead, as the Mechanicsville Mustangs. (Nor would the name at what had long been Stonewall Jackson Middle School any longer celebrate the Confederacy).

Then again, when an opportunity arose three years later with new personnel, the School Board eliminated the name John M. Gandy from what had originated in 1950 as the Black high school; had two decades later applied to a non-segregated elementary school; and would now be replaced by the new multi-racial Ashland Elementary School, to be constructed on the Gandy site. The new school would combine what had operated as the Henry Clay Elementary School (for students through second grade) and the John M. Gandy Elementary School (for grades three through five). Despite a pledge that local authorities would retain Gandy's name for the new structure, such, it turned out, was not to be. An alternative proposal, naming the new building for the Black district it had long served, Berkleytown, was rejected as well. Bitterly disappointed, one local leader called the unexpected outcome "retribution for the Confederate school name changes."[53]

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[52] Chris Suarez (2020), "Hanover School Board Votes to Change Name of Lee–Davis High, Stonewall Jackson Middle Schools," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 14 July.

[53] Michael Paul Williams (2023), "The Hanover School Board Reneges on Gandy School Name," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 15 March; Michael Paul Williams (2023), "In Snubbing 'Berkleytown Elementary,' the Hanover School Board Chose Revenge over Compromise," 13 May.

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Lessons Learned From Failure: An Exploration of Virginia's 2021 Redistricting Commission

Brittany Keegan, Ph.D.,
Director of Research Promotion and Engagement &
Assistant Professor

Robyn McDougle, Ph.D.,
Associate Dean of Research and
Outreach & Associate Professor

Virginia Commonwealth University, L. Douglas
Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs

Contact: Brittany Keegan, Ph.D., keeganbs@vcu.edu, 804-827-3404
921 W. Franklin Street, Room 204, Richmond, VA 23284

Abstract

As we look ahead to the 2024 presidential election, ensuring a fair, open, and accountable voting process is a key topic of discussion. Elections have become seemingly more contentious in recent years, including concerns of a rise in gerrymandering in voting districts across the United States. In Virginia, the 2021 Redistricting Commission, made up of eight state legislators and eight citizens, was given the task of drawing new district maps for Virginia's voters. However, the Commission failed to come to an agreement and the Virginia Supreme Court ultimately created the new maps. This article uses data from the Virginia Commonwealth University Wilder School Commonwealth Poll to explore the extent to which Virginians were aware of the Redistricting Commission (and could thus provide input during the process), perspectives on the Redistricting Commission's efforts, and perspectives on what should be done to improve the redistricting process. We conclude with recommendations for ways in which redistricting commissions could be changed in the future to ensure that their work is better aligned with public opinion, with a key recommendation of ensuring that future commissions are made up of experts and citizens, rather than consisting largely of elected officials.

Keywords: Voting; redistricting; redistricting commission; polling; gerrymandering

Lessons Learned From Failure: An Exploration of Virginia's 2021

Redistricting Commission

Introduction

Political elections have always been contentious issues, and perhaps even more so in recent years. We have heard accusations of elections being rigged, of votes getting lost, and of voices going unheard. Independent of the veracity of these claims, it is still fair to question how we can improve our electoral processes. How can we ensure that our political elections are fair, transparent, and open to all who wish to participate? In addition, how can we help the public to better understand and get involved in political processes so that they can feel confident that their votes will count?

One way that policymakers can help (or hinder) the extent to which individual feel their votes are counted is the way in which they draw electoral, or voting, districts. These are small polling areas created by state and local governments to administer elections (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1994); they also determine which elected officials will represent an area. While ideally these electoral districts will be drawn in a way that is politically neutral, some believe that district lines are often drawn in a way that favors certain political parties over others through a process called gerrymandering (Kirschenbaum and Li, 2021).

In each state, redistricting (also known as the process of redrawing electoral district lines) takes place once every 10 years. In the commonwealth of Virginia, this process has historically been one that has been overseen by the General Assembly and the commonwealth's usual legislative process (i.e. redistricting bills would be created, introduced, debated, and voted upon). In November 2020, however, the decision was made to instead use a redistricting commission to draw the new district lines. This process began in early 2021, and was scheduled to be finalized

by December 2021 (Virginia Redistricting Commission, 2022).

Despite their efforts, the commission was unable to agree on new electoral district lines. Instead, new lines were created by the Virginia Supreme Court (Chambers, 2021). In this article, we use findings from our [name withheld to ensure anonymous peer review] Poll to explore the perspectives of Virginians on the redistricting process and on the redistricting commission's efforts. We also offer recommendations for ways in which redistricting processes could be changed in the future to ensure that they are better aligned with public opinion.

Literature Review

District lines at the national level

The redistricting process occurs every 10 years to coincide with the U.S. Census, as established by Article I of the United States Constitution (U.S. Government Printing Office, 2013). While the timeline is consistent across the country, the redistricting process varies by state.

The majority of states see their state legislature having primary control of the redistricting process for both legislative districts and congressional districts, with 34 state legislatures deciding their own district lines and 39 state legislatures deciding their state's congressional lines (Loyola Law School, 2020). Typically, this process is the same as the process used for passing standard legislation: proposals are be created, debated, voted upon, and then sent to the governor's desk for approval or for a veto.

Beyond this, some states place additional restrictions on how a redistricting plan can pass. In some states, a supermajority vote of two-thirds is required. Other states, including Connecticut, Florida, Maryland, Mississippi, and North Carolina, create district lines by a joint resolution within the state legislature; in these cases, there is no opportunity for the governor to veto (Loyola Law School, 2020).

In some states, the governor holds a larger amount of power over the redistricting process. In Arkansas and Ohio, the governor serves as a member members of their state's redistricting committee. In other states, including Virginia, the governor has the authority to appoint members to serve on advisory redistricting committees (Kniaz and Shields, 2021).

A brief history of Virginia's redistricting process

Prior to 2020, redistricting in Virginia took place within the General Assembly in a similar process to most other states. This process saw General Assembly members propose new district lines in the form of bill, which were then debated, voted upon, and sent to the Governor's desk for final approval (Virginia Redistricting Commission, 2022). However, this was not always a smooth process. During the 2010 redistricting process, the Virginia legislature could not come to an agreement on which plan should be used (Loyola Law School, 2023). Multiple versions were submitted and it was not until 2012 that House Bill 251 was passed and new district lines were initially approved (Virginia Legislative Information System, 2012). Later, however, this bill was struck down due to an unjustified focus on race when creating district lines, and a federal court created a remedial plan (Loyola Law School, 2023).

Virginia's 2021 Redistricting Commission

Virginia's redistricting commission was formally created on November 3, 2020, following approval by Virginia's voters, with a charge of establishing districts for the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, and the House of Delegates for Virginia's General Assembly (Virginia Redistricting Commission, 2022b). The Commission was made up of 16 commissioners, including eight members of Virginia's General Assembly (four members of Virginia's Senate and four members of Virginia's House of Delegates), as well as eight citizen members (Virginia Redistricting Commission, 2022b). These 16 individuals were all selected by Democratic and

Republican leaders in the state legislature, with each choosing four legislators and four citizens, so that ultimately each political party was able to choose eight members of the commission. To many, this seemed like a clear path to partisan gridlock (Eguia and Cox, 2021).

The commission's work began in 2021. During that time, the General Assembly passed House Bill 1890, which provides protection against discrimination in voting. From a redistricting standpoint, this bills prevents district lines from being redrawn in a way that would hinder racial minorities and those whose first language is not English in their voting efforts (Virginia Legislative Information System, 2021), which was a concern during the 2010 redistricting process.

As the commission moved forward in its work, roadblocks continue to arise. Members of the commission failed to agree on how district lines should be redrawn, and went through multiple iterations of drafting new maps, voting on the maps, failing to come to an agreement, and restarting the process. Many doubted that the commission would be successful at all, citing the partisan makeup of commission members (Galuszka, 2021).

In November 2021, one year after the Commission was approved by voters, the Commission was deemed a failure and redistricting authority was passed to the Virginia Supreme Court. An initial version of the Supreme Court's map was drafted for public approval on December 8, 2021; it was then finalized on December 28, 2021 following the public comment period. These new maps made significant changes to some of Virginia's congressional districts, but left the districts for Virginia's Senate and House of Delegates relatively the same (Democracy Docket, 2021).

Gerrymandering concerns in Virginia and beyond

In some cases, citizens believe that the way in which district lines are drawn makes it unduly difficult for them to vote (e.g., by having too few voting locations in an area that are

accessible without a personal vehicle). In other cases, there are concerns that district lines are drawn with too much emphasis put on the demographic characteristics of those in the area (e.g. race or primary language spoken) (Kirschenbaum and Li, 2021).

When the redistricting process is marked by political parties in power attempting to solidify their chances of winning elections by manipulating district boundaries to include or exclude certain populations, gerrymandering occurs. This, in turn, means that the redistricting process may lead to the over, or under, representation of political interests in a given district as they pertain to race, class or political affiliation (Kirschenbaum and Li, 2021).

Historically, Federal legislation regulating redistricting has become increasingly complex, particularly within southern states. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was created as a dissuasion for legislators from denying or restricting linguistic minorities' right to vote; it also called for a Federal "preclearance" of changes made to "any electoral process or mechanism," which includes redistricting plans in jurisdictions with a history of discriminatory political practices. However, because "preclearance" was a reactive, rather than a proactive, approach to redistricting discrimination, it did not achieve the intended effects and instead allowed for discrimination in drawing district lines, or gerrymandering, to still take place. This section of the Voting Rights Act was struck down in 2013 after the Shelby County vs. Holder case (Canon, 2022).

Citizen participation in the voting process

As we consider the redistricting process, we must also consider the voters themselves. Looking at the United States as a whole, the majority of registered voters identity as white, non-Hispanic (Bloomberg Government, 2021). However, we are also seeing an increase in the percentage of minority individuals who are registered to vote. The November 2020 presidential election, for example, saw voting rates reach an all-time high among Latinos (53.7 percent)

(Bergad and Miranda, 2021) and Asians (59.7 percent) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

Voters across the United States also tend to be older, though in recent years there has continued to be an increase in the number of young people who vote (Bloomberg Government, 2021; U.S. Census Bureau, 2021). Other nationwide voting trends include women typically voting more often than men (Igielnik, 2020; Pew Research Center, 2021), veterans typically voting more often than non-veterans, and voting rates tending to increase as family income and level of education increase (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

In Virginia, 92 percent of adults say that they are registered to vote, while 75 percent said that they voted in the November 2022 election. Voting trends in Virginia follow national trends, with older individuals, those with higher levels of income and education, and women being most likely to be registered to vote. In addition, a large majority of Virginias across all races and ethnicities reported being a registered voter (citation withheld to maintain anonymous peer review).

Summary Contributions of this Paper

In this paper, we further explore public perceptions of the redistricting process. With a specific focus on Virginia, we aim to find a better understanding of not only how the public believes redistricting should take place, but also what factors will predict these beliefs. In the following section we provide an overview of our methodology, along with descriptive statistics of our dependent variables (perception of who should be in charge of state redistricting processes, and perception for who is most at fault for the failure of Virginia's 2021 redistricting commission) and independent variables (various demographic characteristics).

Following this, we provide an analysis of which individual characteristics are significant in perceptions of the redistricting process, and consider how these relate to the individual

characteristics that are found to be significant in general research on voting behavior. By gaining

a better understanding of the impact of these characteristics on public perception, this research can

help policymakers better understand which factors should be of high consideration when making

decisions about redistricting, and when communicating these decisions to the public.

Methodology

Data gathered from two of our [Polls] inform this analysis. The first poll was conducted

from July 10 – 30, 2018, with results released in August 2018. This poll had 802 respondents, aged

18 and older, living across five regions of Virginia. Four hundred participants (49.9 percent) were

contacted via landline telephone, and 402 participants (50.1 percent) were contacted via cell phone,

with soft quotas implemented by region and gender. The average interview length was 15 minutes,

and all were conducted in English. Participants were weighted on various demographics (age,

gender, race/Hispanic identity, education level, region of the commonwealth, population density,

and personal phone use) to match a previous wave of this study (which was weighted to the 2010

U.S. Census data) and to maintain levels of non-response for each question. The margin of error

for this poll was +/- 3.49 percentage points. The relevant question from the 2018 poll that will be

highlighted in this article include:

- Every ten years, Virginia redraws the boundaries of state and federal legislative districts
  based on new Census counts. Currently, the Virginia General Assembly has primary
  responsibility for redrawing the districts. In your opinion, who should have the
  responsibility of redistricting legislative districts for the state and federal levels in Virginia?
    - Panel of state and local experts
    - Citizens' commission
    - Bi-partisan commission appointed by the Governor

- o Virginia General Assembly

- o Virginia Supreme Court

- o Don't know

The second Poll was conducted from December 13 – 20, 2021, with results released in January 2022. This poll had 800 respondents, aged 18 and older, living across five regions of Virginia. Four hundred and two participants (50.25 percent) were contacted via landline telephone, and 398 participants (49.75 percent) were contacted via cell phone, The results were weighted to correct known demographic discrepancies, and a two-stage weighting procedure was used to weight the dual-frame sample by sex, age, education, race, Hispanic origin, region and personal phone use. The margin of error for this poll was +/- 4.90 percentage points. Relevant questions from the 2022 poll that will be highlighted in this article include:

- Virginia's Democratic-controlled General Assembly voted for a bi-partisan, independent commission to redraw the state's congressional district maps in which legislators are elected. Are you aware of this commission, or not?

  - o Yes

  - o No

  - o Don't know/refused

- As you may know, the independent commission failed to accomplish redrawing Virginia's congressional district maps. Who do you think is most responsible for this failure?

  - o Democrats in the state government

  - o Republicans in the state government

  - o The makeup of the members of the independent commission

  - o Don't know/refused

In the table below, we provide an overview of responses to each of these three questions, along with the primary demographic variables of interest.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics from the Polls

Variable	Variable Options	Frequency
August 2018 Poll		
Perception of who should run the redistricting process	Panel of state and local experts Citizens' commission Bi-partisan commission approved by Gov. Virginia General Assembly Virginia Supreme Court Don't know/Refused	24% 20% 18% 16% 11% 11%
Age	18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+ Refused	12% 15% 16% 17% 16% 18% 6%
Education Level	High school or less Some college/Associate's degree College graduate or more Refused	35% 28% 36% 1%
Race/Ethnicity	White/Not Hispanic Black/Not Hispanic Hispanic Other/Not Hispanic Refused	63% 17% 6% 8% 6%
Gender	Male Female Refused	49% 51% 0%
Family Income	Under $50,000 $50K to under $100,000 $100,000 or more	22% 27% 31%

	Refused	20%
Employment Status	Employed full-time Employed part-time Not employed Refused	43% 11% 45% 1%
Political Ideology	Democrat Republican Independent Refused	46% 40% 10% 4%
January 2022 Poll		
Awareness of redistricting commission	Yes No Don't know/Refused	54% 45% 1%
Perception of who is most responsible for commission's failure	Democrats in the state government Republicans in the state government Makeup of the commission Don't know/Refused	17% 23% 44% 17%
Age	18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+ Refused	15% 12% 14% 16% 12% 27% 5%
Education Level	High school or less High school graduate Some college, no degree Associate's degree Bachelor's degree Some postgraduate education Postgraduate or professional degree Refused	7% 25% 17% 10% 26% 2% 12% 2%
Race/Ethnicity	White Black, African-American Asian Other/mixed race Refused	64% 18% 7% 5% 6%

Hispanic Origin	Yes	9%
	No	87%
	Refused	3%
Gender	Male	48%
	Female	51%
	Refused	0%
Income	Under $50,000	25%
	$50K to under $100,000	20%
	$100,000 or more	46%
	Refused	21%
Employment Status	Employed full-time	37%
	Employed part-time	6%
	Unemployed and seeking employment	1%
	Unemployed and not seeking employment	2%
	A student	2%
	Retired	44%
	On disability/cannot work	5%
	A homemaker or stay-at-home parent	2%
	Refused	1%
Political Ideology	Democrat	34%
	Republican	23%
	Independent	37%
	Something else	2%
	Refused	5%

In the following section, we share findings of our analysis and discuss how various demographic variables impact the perception variables.

Findings

Factors influencing preference for who should be responsible for redrawing legislative districts

As is show in in Table 1, the August 2018 [Poll] asked Virginians for their perspectives on who should be the primary players in Virginia's redistricting process: a panel of state and local experts, a citizens' commission, a bi-partisan commission appointed by the Governor, the Virginia General Assembly, or the Virginia Supreme Court. Overall, the majority of Virginians (24 percent) felt that a panel of state and local experts should lead the process, followed by a citizens'

commission (20 percent), a bi-partisan commission appointed by the governor (18 percent), the Virginia General Assembly (16 percent), and the Virginia Supreme Court (11 percent).

Table 2 below shows demographic factors that significantly impacted these perspectives.

Table 2

Factors influencing perceptions of key players in redistricting process

Variable	Significance level
Age	0.516
Education Level	0.520
Race/Ethnicity	0.510
Hispanic Origin	0.221
Gender	0.236
Income	0.949
Employment Status	0.402
Political Ideology	0.004

While the majority of these demographic factors did not play a significant role in participant perceptions, political ideology did prove to be significant. Overall, 27 percent of Democrats said that they would prefer the option of a panel of state and local experts and 23 percent of Democrats said that they would prefer a bi-partisan commission appointed by the Governor. Republicans, on the other hand, primarily wanted the process to be led by the Virginia General Assembly or a citizens' commission (both options received 22 percent of Republican support), though the General Assembly was one of the least popular options for poll participants overall. At 21 percent, a panel of state and local experts was the third choice of Republicans. A panel of state and local experts was also the top choice of Independents at 24 percent, followed by a citizens' commission (20 percent).

Ultimately, the redistricting process ended up being led by a bi-partisan commission appointed by the Governor, a choice that was favored by Democrats but not as preferred by Republicans and Independents.

After the commission's ultimate failure to reach a consensus, there were different opinions among those of different demographic identities as to who should be to blame. These perspectives are discussed further in the following section.

Factors influencing perceptions of blame for the commission's failure

In January 2022, following the failure of the commission, our [Poll] asked if Virginians were even aware of the commission's existence, and who they thought was most to blame for the commission's failure. Overall, only 54 percent of all participants knew that the commission existed. The significance of demographic factors on this knowledge is shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3

Factors influencing awareness of the commission

Variable	Significance level
Age	0.561
Education Level	0.738
Race/Ethnicity	0.646
Hispanic Origin	0.839
Gender	0.765
Income	0.048
Employment Status	0.708
Political Ideology	0.615

Again, we found that most variables did not play a significant role in participant awareness of the redistricting commission, with the exception of household income. Of those who said that they were aware that the commission existed, the majority had higher levels of income (21 percent reported an income of over $150,000 per year, and 20 percent reported an income of $100,000 to $149,999). Thus, while over 40 percent of people who knew about the commission made over $100,000 per year, only three percent made less than $20,000 and 18 percent made between $20,000 and $49,999. Here we see a clear pattern that those with higher levels of income were much more likely to be aware of the commissions' existence.

We also asked who was most the blame for the failure of the commission: Democrats in the state government, Republicans in the state government, or the overall makeup of the commission. Overall, 44 percent of participants blamed the overall makeup of the commission, 23 percent blamed Republicans in the state government, and 17 percent blamed Democrats in the state government.

In Table 4 below, we consider what factors played a significant role in perceptions of who was to blame for the commission's ultimate failure.

Table 4

Factors influencing perceptions of blame for the commission's failure

Variable	Significance level
Age	0.948
Education Level	*0.126*
Race/Ethnicity	*0.440*
Hispanic Origin	*0.061*
Gender	*0.004*
Income	*0.111*
Employment Status	*0.019*
Political Ideology	<0.001

We found that there were several variables that played a significant role in perceptions of who is most to blame for the commission's failure, including gender, employment status, and political ideology. Hispanic origin was not significant at the 0.05 level, though it was close at 0.061.

Those identifying as both men and women were most likely to blame the overall makeup of the commission for the failure, with 43 percent of men and 36 percent of women choosing this option, and 24 percent of both men and women blamed Republicans in the state government. Men were more likely than women to assign blame to Democrats in the state government, with 21

percent of men and 15 percent of women assigning blame to this group.

When considering employment status, 57 percent of those who were unemployed, 47 percent of those on disability, 41 percent of those employed full-time, 39 percent of retired individuals, and 29 percent of those employed part-time placed the most blame on the makeup of the commission overall. Twenty-seven percent of those on disability blamed Democrats in the state government, while none blamed Republicans. Conversely, 36 percent of unemployed individuals blamed Republicans in the state government while none blamed Democrats. Of full-time employees, 20 percent blamed Democrats in the state government and 24 percent blamed Republicans. Of part-time employees, 18 percent blamed Democrats in the state governments and 23 percent blamed Republicans.

Unsurprisingly, those identifying as Republicans were unlikely to blame Republicans in the state government for the failure (seven percent of Republicans chose this option), and those identifying as Democrats were unlikely to blame Democrats in the state government for the failure (three percent of Democrats chose this option). Thirty-six percent of Republicans blamed the overall makeup of the commission while 39 percent blamed Democrats in the state government, and thirty-two percent of Democrats blamed the overall makeup of the commission, while nearly 50 percent blamed Republicans in the state government. Independents were fairly evenly distributed, with 50 percent blaming the makeup of the members of the commission, 25 percent blaming Republicans in state government, and 25 percent blaming Democrats in state government.

Those who identified of Hispanic were also more likely to blame the overall makeup of the commission (50 percent), while 21 percent blamed Republicans in state government and seven percent blamed Democrats in state government. The remainder said that they were unsure who held the most blame.

Discussion

Although Virginia's redistricting commission did not ultimately meet its goals, there are lessons that can be learned for states undergoing a similar redistricting process; there are also lessons that Virginia can learn for the future. In the 2018 poll, Virginians made it clear that they preferred that the redistricting process be overseen by a commission that consisted of local and state experts, as well as citizens, to a commission made up of elected officials or individuals chosen by the governor. Political party was found to have played a very significant role in this preference, with Democrats and Independents preferring the process be led by a panel of state and local experts and Republicans preferring that the process be led by the General Assembly. Ultimately the process was led by a bi-partisan commission appointed by the governor, the second choice of Democrats and the third choice of overall participants. When this failed the Virginia Supreme Court was placed in charge, a choice that was not preferred by participants overall or by members of individual political parties.

Thus, the idea of the commission being led by experts and citizens, rather than elected officials, should be something that is considered in the future as this was the top choice of most participants. Future redistricting efforts could also aim to be nonpartisan rather than a bipartisan, and could place specific focus on protecting the rights and interests of minority voting populations, something that Virginia's Black Caucus felt was lacking from the 2021 Commission (Flynn, 2021).

Looking at the January 2022 poll, we found that only a little over half of people even knew that the commission existed. Of those who did know, the vast majority were those in very high income brackets. If those in lower income brackets were not aware of the commission, questions also arise of their ability to submit their names for consideration as commission members (as some members were private citizens) and to have a say in and/or provide feedback to the commission's

decisions. If those who were aware of and involved in the process were those with high levels of income, to what extent were those of lower income levels represented throughout the process? In addition, how could more individuals be included in future processes?

We also found the majority of participants felt that the inability of the commission to meet its goals was due to the makeup of the commission as a whole rather than due to a single political party. While those of different political ideologies, genders, and employment statuses, and to a lesser extent those of different ethnicities, held different opinions, the overall consensus held the trend that all involved in the commission were to blame. This can be another important lesson for current and future policymakers involved in the redistricting process; if the public is not placing blame based on party lines, then perhaps those involved in the redistricting process shouldn't be making decisions based on party lines. Again, we see the benefits of establishing a nonpartisan commission. Starting with a panel of state and local experts, as was the top choice of Virginians in 2018, could be a good starting point.

Recommendations and Conclusion

What lessons can be learned from the failure of Virginia's redistricting commission? Based on these poll findings and on the literature, future efforts could be more successful if they:

- Make intentional efforts to raise awareness of the commission's work so that more citizens could be involved in the process (especially those of varying income levels),

- Use a panel of experts to lead the redistricting process,

- Aim to have a panel that is nonpartisan rather than bipartisan, and

- Ensure that the panel accounts for the needs and preferences of all groups, and especially those who are historically marginalized.

As Virginia and other states look to the future, and to the inevitable need for another

redistricting effort, public perceptions of the failed 2021 commission can provide inspiration for successful efforts in the future. By creating a more inclusive process, by recognizing and mitigating the impact of strict partisanship, future redistricting efforts can lead to the creation of fair and representative voting maps for all.

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The influence of anxiety, parental conflict, and family criminality in predicting juvenile delinquency

Kruthi Jagadish Kumar, Ph.D.
Research Assistant
Prairie View A&M University, Texas
kjagadishkumar@pvamu.edu

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Abstract

Empirical studies have consistently identified family conditions, deviant behaviors, mental health issues, and experiences of abuse and violence as the key risk factors among delinquents. In contrast, parental self-control, academic achievement, and guidance have been identified as protective factors against delinquency (Meldrum et al., 2016; Phillips, 2012; Piang et al., 2017). Using a secondary dataset of a nationally representative sample, this study examined the influence of anxiety, parental conflict, and family criminality in predicting juvenile delinquency. Four research questions addressed the relationship between anxiety, parental conflict, family criminality, and delinquency. Ordinary Least Square Regression and Moderation Analysis were used to test these research questions and their respective hypotheses. The results showed that gender, parental conflict, and family criminality significantly predict delinquency. As well as parental conflict and family criminality significantly moderate the relationship between anxiety and juvenile delinquency.

Keywords: anxiety, parental conflict, family criminality, juvenile delinquency

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A consistent finding in delinquency literature is that adolescence is a stage, characterized by increased risk-taking behavior including engaging in delinquent behavior (Lanza et al., 2014; Liu et al., 2016; Posick, 2015; Tsai et al., 2015). Some of the delinquency risk factors that have been identified among juveniles are parental conflict (Brock & Kochanska, 2015), family and school/community conditions (Murray & Farrington, 2010), and mental health issues (Fazel et al., 2008; Hein et al., 2017; Kroll et al., 2002; McCormick et al., 2017). Adolescents who experience violence, abuse, or neglect at a very young age are more likely to be involved in delinquent acts early on (Mmari et al., 2010; Reingle et al., 2012). The more risk factors are involved in an adolescent's life, the higher the likelihood of the youth to engaging in delinquent behavior (Reingle et al., 2012). Therefore, no individual risk factor can predict a juvenile's likelihood of engaging in delinquent acts (Sickmund & Puzzanchera, 2014).

The family is an essential aspect of any child's development. Family can be defined as a long-term association of two or more individuals connected by biological, legal, or analogous relationships that operate through continuous interactivity to benefit them instrumentally or emotionally (Piang et al., 2017). For example, studies have analyzed low-income families and broken families to be the critical factors affecting delinquency behavior. Other studies suggest that parental self-control, education, parenthood, and guidance play significant roles in protecting children from abuse (Baumrind, 1978, 1991; Meldrum et al., 2016; Nye, 1958; Phillips, 2012; Piang et al., 2017). Similarly, various criminological theories associate delinquency with family dysfunction, parental neglect, abuse, and broken families. This study aims to test the influence of

anxiety, parental conflict, and family criminality in predicting juvenile delinquency. The next section reviews relevant literature related to the aims of the study.

Theoretical Framework

This study focuses on the social bond theory by Hirschi to understand the impact of parental conflict, and family criminality, in predicting juvenile delinquency. The social bond theory, which is a part of control theory, emphasizes that a person is free to involve in delinquent behavior since their associations with societal norms have been weakened (Hirschi, 2014). The social bond theory is explained through attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Whenever these four social bonds are compromised with parents or caregivers, adolescents are more likely to be involved in delinquent behavior (Hirschi, 2014; Zingraff et al., 1993). According to Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) risk factors such as lower parental supervision, harsh and contradictory disciplinary measures, parental conflict, parental criminal involvement, and adolescents' impulsivity and risk-seeking behaviors impacts one's attachment and influence delinquency.

Hirschi, in his theory, says that increased attachments to parents lead to decreased involvement in delinquency. Commitment to societal values indicates the individuals' heightened bonds with the norms of society. Adolescents involved in unusual behavior, such as smoking, drinking, and carrying weapons, are more prone to indulge in delinquency. Finally, juveniles with weak relationships with their family and relatives have higher chances of indulging in delinquency. This study focuses on most of the important findings of Hirschi in explaining the key measures that lead to delinquency.

Family Criminality and Delinquency

Family and parental characteristics have a pivotal role in developing a juvenile's criminal behavior (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990; Laub & Sampson, 1988; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber,

1986; Patterson, 1982; Smith, 2021). In addition, criminological theories have also emphasized on the importance of family characteristics in explaining delinquency such as social bond theory, social learning theory, strain theory, cultural deviance theory, and social disorganization theory (Agnew, 1985, 1992; Akers, 1998; Beaver & Wright, 2007; Hagan, 1989; Hirschi, 1969; Matsueda & Heimer, 1987; Patterson, 1982; Tittle, 1995; Wilson & Herrnstein, 1985).

Family is the oldest institution, the basic social unit in all human societies (Erinosho, 2005). Burgess and Akers (1966) suggest that criminal behavior is understood from intimate personal groups, which suggests that family plays a vital role in the learning of delinquent behavior. Family criminality is another significant correlation with juvenile delinquency, as identified by earlier studies (Beaver & Wright, 2007; Bijleved & Wikjmanm, 2009; Thornberry et al., 2003; Wilson, 1985). As adolescents spend most of their time with their families, it is essential to understand their emotions, thoughts, and ways of thinking being influenced by the family members around them (Smith, 2021). That is, there is a direct correlation between family criminality (Pratt et al., 2010) and juvenile delinquency.

Family criminality has been observed to have direct exposure to increased risks and crimes, ineffective parenting, and future offending behavior (Farrington, 2002; Menard et al., 2015; Thornberry et al., 2003). Adolescents experience various psychosocial problems due to familial criminality, such as anxiety, hyperactivity, aggression, regression, depression, sleep issues, eating problems, truancy, running away, and delinquency (Murray & Farrington, 2005). Imprisonment of parents causes negative outcomes for children, including antisocial behavior, labeling, and stigmatization (Richards et al., 1994). One mechanism that links family criminality and delinquency is the children's experiences, including prison visits and being unaware of their parent's absence (Richards et al., 1994).

Parental Conflict

The 2018 arrest rate for juveniles between the ages of 10 to 17 was 2,167.1 per 100,000 juveniles (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2019) which indicates that offending behavior among juveniles is influenced by various complex relationships categorized as individual, family, peer, school, and community factors (Wasserman et al., 2003). Individual factors, including an adolescent's behavior, emotional, cognitive, physical, social characteristics, and antisocial attitudes, predict prospective involvement in delinquency (Wasserman et al., 2003; Haapasalo & Tremblay, 1994; Tremblay et al., 1994). In addition, factors related to such as family, family violence, inadequate parenting, and antisocial behaviors of family members increase the risks of delinquency involvement among adolescents (Wasserman et al., 2003).

The five factors identified by Wilson (1975) that are vital in causing juvenile delinquency include parental criminality, low income, large family, lower intelligence, and inadequate parental behavior (Wilson, 1975), also times parents were divorced and remarried, and the number of times parental separation also causes delinquency—implying the significant role of a family while studying adolescents and their offending behavior because, parental conflict and family criminality can influence the child to involve in delinquent activities later in life (Fagan et al., 2011; Hoeve et al., 2009). Parental conflict refers to parents engaging in arguments, irritable behaviors, and hostile communication between spouses and has been observed as the risk factors for juvenile delinquency (Liu, 2016). Also, poverty, dysfunctional families, alienation by parents, and abuse will contribute to juvenile delinquency (Hare, 1999, as cited by Hussain et al., 2017).

As Mowen and Boman (2018) state, the transition from adolescence to adulthood is marked by several changes and is not easy to adapt. Parental conflict is one such factor observed to be highly influential (Smith, 2021). Witnessing parental conflict has been associated with several

adverse outcomes, including anxiety, depression, antisocial behavior, aggression, low self-esteem (Mowen & Boman, 2018), violence, substance abuse, and delinquency (Maas et al., 2008; Moylan et al., 2010; Sousa et al., 2011). Due to low coping mechanisms, Wadsworth and Compas (2002) indicate that adolescents who witness parental conflict opt for negative means to overcome parental conflict. For example, juveniles are more likely to evade their problem in a difficult situation than address it (Wadsworth & Compas, 2002). Juveniles who experience parental warmth and support are observed to have a lower probability to involve in delinquent behavior (Hoeve et al., 2009; Jaggers et al., 2017; Wiatrowski et al., 1981).

Earlier studies have emphasized parent conflict as the causal factor for delinquency (Hoeve et al., 2009; Jaggers et al., 2017; Wiatrowski et al., 1981), but only few research focused on parent conflict as moderating factor between anxiety and delinquency (Bridley & Jordan, 2012; Corlis & Damashek, 2019; Kliewer & Kung, 1998; Mize & Kliewer, 2017). Therefore, this study aims to understand the impact of parental conflict in predicting juvenile delinquency and its impact on the relationship between anxiety and delinquency.

Anxiety

Regarding mental health issues, the commonly diagnosed mental health disorders among juveniles are externalizing disorder and internalizing disorder (Fazel et al., 2008). The externalizing disorder includes conduct disorder and oppositional defiant disorder. In contrast, internalizing disorder includes anxiety and depression (Fazel et al., 2008). Unlike externalizing disorders, internalizing disorders do not directly define delinquency. Instead, they are part of the causal process associated with delinquency (Jolliffe et al., 2019). Anxiety is also associated with delinquency and offending behavior (Fazel et al., 2008; Jolliffe et al., 2019; Kroll et al., 2002). For example, Loeber et al. (2008) found that adolescent boys with lower anxiety levels were less likely

to commit offenses, whereas Farrington (1988) found that higher anxiety levels predicted the adolescent's likelihood of involving in offending behavior.

It is identified in earlier studies that there is a relationship between anxiety and delinquency (Fazel et al., 2008; Hein et al., 2017; Kroll et al., 2002; McCormick et al., 2017). However, it is necessary to analyze the direction of this relationship and its correlation with delinquency using the moderation effect. The relationship between Anxiety and delinquency is strongly influenced by moderating factors (Jolliffe et al., 2019) such as parental conflict and family criminality. Several factors that moderate anxiety and juvenile delinquency are parental conflict, peer pressure, academic achievement-based pressure, and neighborhood disturbance (Bridley & Jordan, 2012; Kliewer & Kung, 1998; Mize & Kliewer, 2017).

Also, as stated by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) that the decreased attachment with parents leads to increased probability of engaging in delinquent behavior. Therefore, it can be understood that adolescents who are exposed to parental criminality as well as hostile behavior from parents are more likely to have lower bonds with their parents. Hence, this study aims to understand if moderating factors such as parental conflict and family criminality provides essential explanations regarding the relationship between anxiety and delinquency.

Current study

Earlier literature on juvenile delinquency has emphasized anxiety, parental conflict, and family criminality. Since anxiety is an internal disorder and parental conflict and family criminality are external factors, this study uses a large, diverse sample to understand whether parental conflict and family criminality are strong predictors of delinquency or strong moderators of anxiety and juvenile delinquency. In addition, studies focused on juvenile delinquency have often stressed

gender factors, so this study included them in the model to identify their predicting capacity and contribute to expanding the delinquency literature.

Methods

The data for this study was obtained from ICPSR on "Research on pathways to desistance [Maricopa County, AZ and Philadelphia County, PA]: Subject Measures, 2000-2010." The data was collected through an interview method from different juvenile facilities in Philadelphia and Phoenix. Participants aged between 14 and 17 years old were in the baseline interview. A minimum of 1,354 research participants. Data is obtained from the longitudinal interview and during ten successive tracking interviews, with the first six being observational months and the last four being regular measurement cycles. The current study has utilized baseline data of juveniles guilty of a serious offense from a total of 1,354 cases. After the selection of dependent and independent variables, missing values were addressed using casewise deletion method. Finally, this study's sample size was 425 valid cases. Independent variables were in the ordinal level and the dependent variable at the nominal level. To conduct the statistical analysis, all the independent variables were recoded into dichotomous and nominal level variables.

Variable anxiety is measured using Brief Symptom Inventory (Derogatis & Melisaratos, 1983), a 53-item self-report measuring the extent to which adolescent has been bothered by anxiety on a 5-point scale from 0 (not at all) to 4 (extremely). Parental conflict variable was indexed by adding parental arguments and parental fights. The reliability analysis for the variable parental conflict indicated that, the Cronbach's alpha was at 0.508, although the acceptable alpha value is closer or above 0.70, the alpha value at 0.508 is retained since it measured only two items. The family criminality variable index was created by biological father arrest and arrest of any family member with an alpha value of 0.60. The dependent variable delinquency is indexed by adding

property damage, set fire, broke in to steal, stolen car, shot someone, forced with a weapon, beaten and seriously injured, and carry a gun.

Research Questions

RQ 1: Are anxiety, parental conflict, and family criminality strong predictors of juvenile delinquency?

H_{01}: Anxiety has no impact on juvenile delinquency

H_{a1}: Anxiety has an impact on juvenile delinquency

H_{02}: Parental conflict has no impact on juvenile delinquency

H_{a2}: Parental conflict has an impact on juvenile delinquency

H_{03}: Family criminality has no impact on juvenile delinquency

H_{a3}: Family criminality has an impact on juvenile delinquency

RQ 2: Does interaction between anxiety and parental conflict, and anxiety and family criminality predict juvenile delinquency?

H_{04}: Anxiety and parental conflict does not significantly predict juvenile delinquency

H_{a4}: Anxiety and parental conflict does significantly predict juvenile delinquency

H_{05}: Anxiety and family criminality does not significantly predict juvenile delinquency

H_{a5}: Anxiety and family criminality does significantly predict juvenile delinquency

RQ 3: Do parental conflict moderate anxiety and juvenile delinquency relationship?

H_{06}: Parental conflict does not significantly moderate the relationship between anxiety and juvenile delinquency

H_{a6}: Parental conflict does significantly moderate the relationship between anxiety and juvenile delinquency

RQ 4: Does family criminality moderate anxiety and juvenile delinquency relationship?

H_{07}: Family criminality does not significantly moderate the relationship between anxiety and juvenile delinquency

H_{a7}: Family criminality does significantly moderate the relationship between anxiety and juvenile delinquency

Dependent Variable

This research aimed to examine the impact of parental conflict and family criminality in predicting delinquency and if parental conflict and family criminality strongly moderated the relationship between anxiety and juvenile delinquency. For this purpose, the dependent variable in this study is delinquency which is indexed with the variables destroyed/damaged property, set fire, broke in to steal, stole car or motorcycle, shot someone, took by force with a weapon, beat up someone with a serious injury, carried a gun, broke into a car to steal.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's alpha
Gender	-	-	-
Anxiety	.0824	.27523	-
Parental conflict	.5247	.49998	.508
Family criminality	.6753	.46882	.600
Delinquency	.7788	.41553	.750

N = 425

Independent Variables

The independent variables used in this study are gender, anxiety, parental conflict, and family criminality. The anxiety variable measures if the juvenile ever felt tensed or keyed up, for

which the answers vary from not at all to a little bit. The variable parental conflict includes arguments and physical fights between parents. The family criminality variable includes if the biological father was arrested or jailed, and whether anyone in the family has been in jail or prison. The independent variables anxiety, parental conflict, and family criminality were measured with a 5-point Likert scale.

Analytical Procedure

In reliability analysis for the variable parental conflict, Cronbach's alpha is at 0.508, although the acceptable alpha value is closer to or above 0.70, the alpha value at 0.508 is retained. The alpha value for the variable family criminality is 0.600, which is closer to 0.70. The dependent variable, delinquency, has an alpha value of 0.750. The normality and linearity test shows that data is normally distributed and linear. Hence, OLS regression is used. Z-scores are obtained to test the interaction effect between anxiety and parental conflict, and anxiety and family criminality variables.

Results

All the independent variables such as gender, anxiety, parental conflict, and family criminality are included for conducting OLS regression. The model is significant, multicollinearity and tolerance are not a problem as tolerance is above .01, and VIF values are below ten. The model summary R square indicates that the independent variables explain a 9% variance in the dependent variable. The independent variables in table 2, gender, parental conflict, and family criminality, are significant in predicting delinquency. Gender (-.177) is the best predictor of the dependent variable.

Anxiety is not significant in predicting delinquency suggesting failing to reject the null hypothesis because the significant value is greater than the .05 level of significance. Family

criminality and parental conflict are significant in predicting delinquency and therefore, rejected the null hypothesis to accept the alternate hypothesis. The interaction variables anxiety and parental conflict and anxiety and family criminality do not significantly predict juvenile delinquency indicating fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Table 2

Ordinary Least Square Regression models

Variable	B	β	*SE*
Gender	-.177[**]	-.131	.064
Anxiety	-.028	-.018	.161
Parental conflict	.112[**]	.135	.042
Family criminality	.138[**]	.156	.047
Interaction anxiety[*]parental conflict	-.170	-.087	.160
Interaction anxiety[*]family criminality	-.108	0.65	.231
R^2	.09		

Note: n = 425. Reported values are standardized coefficients.

(-) indicate the variables not observed in the particular model

**p <0.05

Moderation Effect

To conduct moderation, the software Process Procedure was downloaded for SPSS version 3.4.1, written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D. In this analysis, Y is the dependent variable; X is the focal independent variable, and W is the moderated variable, as shown in figure 1. The reason for using Process to conduct moderation effect on variables is because it creates the proportion of variance in Y credited to the moderation of the effect of X by W. In the models, b2 indicates that

if the sign is positive, it can be inferred that among those participants those who have anxiety about parental conflict, have a stronger affiliation towards delinquency. Furthermore, b3 indicates that as the effect of X on Y changes, as there is a change in W by one unit (Hayes, 2018).

Figure 1

Fundamentals of Moderation Analysis
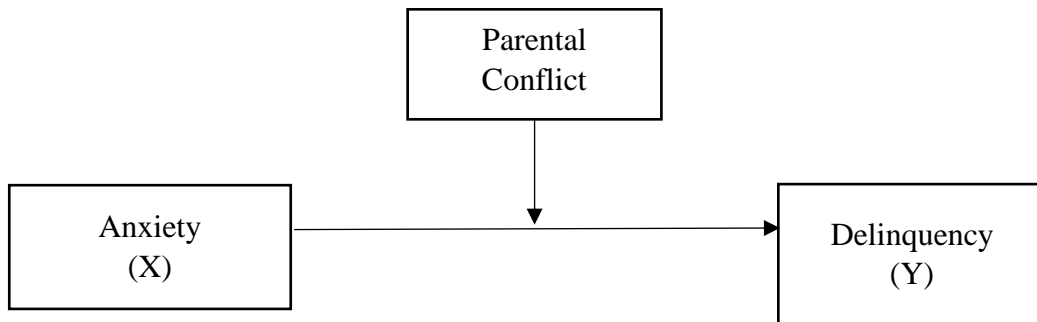
Model 1 in table 3 shows that anxiety and parental conflict indicates that parental conflict is significant in moderating anxiety and delinquency at <.05 level indicating to reject the null hypothesis. The moderation effect model has .0508 of R square, which means a 5% variance is explained by the moderation model 1. Model 2 explains the moderation effect of family criminality on anxiety and delinquency. The table indicates that family criminality is significant in moderating anxiety and delinquency at <.05 level with a variance of 9% therefore, study rejected the null hypothesis.

Table 3

Moderation effect

Variables	Model 1		Model 2	
	B	S.E.	β	S.E.
Anxiety	1.3378[**]	.3623	1.1937[**]	.3647
Parental conflict	.3900[**]	.1418	-	-
Family criminality	-	-	.6358[**]	.1204
R^2	.0508		.0909	

Note: n = 425. Reported values are coefficients and standard error.

**p <0.05

Discussion and Conclusion

An estimated 424,300 adolescents were detained in the United States in 2020 (Puzzanchera, 2022), also, between 2016-2019, 9.4% juveniles were identified to have anxiety (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023). Fazel et al. (2008) found that among 16,000 young offenders, a commonly identified psychiatric condition was anxiety, among various other disorders. This implies that only 1% of violent offenders with mental health issues are responsible for 5% of the offenses (Fazel & Grann, 2006; Taylor, 2008; Varshney et al., 2015; Vinkers et al., 2012; Walsh et al., 2002; Rueve & Welton, 2008) which indicates that there is a need for an emphasis on the association between mental health and offending behavior. It is also indicated in the earlier studies that anxiety might not overlap the delinquency definition and therefore may be observed as a causal factor associated with delinquency (Jolliffe et al., 2019). Unlike previous studies (Farrington, 1988; Fazel et al., 2008; Hein et al., 2017; Kroll et al., 2002; McCormick, Peterson-Badali, & Skilling, 2017), this study identified anxiety does not predict delinquency.

However, from the model, it can be understood that although anxiety is statistically not significant, yet it is found to have an inverse relationship with delinquency.

Similarly, parental conflict and family criminality, among various risk factors of delinquency, have been identified as significant predictors of juvenile delinquency. Parental conflict and family criminality were found to impact delinquency, which are significant predictors at an alpha level of .05. As family plays an essential role in the development of a child, poor family relationships also impact the adolescents' law-abiding adolescents' behavior (Piang et al., 2017). As identified by Wilson (1975), some important factors that cause delinquency include parental criminality, low socio-economic status, large family, low intelligence, and inappropriate parental behaviors. These factors are essential since they influence adolescents' involvement in delinquent behavior. As seen in the earlier studies, this study results also indicate that gender, parental conflict, and family criminality significantly predict juvenile delinquency.

Delinquency has always been addressed with reference to various concepts and their influence on delinquency. However, not many studies discuss the effects of moderation of parental conflict and family criminality in predicting juvenile delinquency. Hence, this study could be an addition to the existing literature. Furthermore, the moderation effect analysis also shows that parental conflict significantly moderates an adolescent's anxiety and delinquency and also family criminality is also significant in moderating the relationship between anxiety and juvenile delinquency which are significant predictors of juvenile delinquency at an alpha level of .05. These results indicate that parental conflict and family criminality are able to explain that anxiety and its relationship with delinquency is not only a direct relationship instead it is influenced by other factors as well. Therefore, it is suggested that future studies attempt to analyze the moderation effect of various other risk factors to identify the impact they have in predicting delinquency.

Although this study has utilized various statistical techniques to analyze the predictors of juvenile delinquency, there are certain limitations to this study. First, the obtained dataset has certain serious offenses, such as killing someone which is masked for confidentiality, for which serious offenses could not be included in the dependent variable to see the effect of independent variables on serious offenses. Second, the dataset has high missing values for which the case-wise deletion was conducted, and some of the variables had to be dropped from the study, which could have made a difference to the results.

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Understanding the Relationship Between Children's Awareness of Victimization Resources, Victimization Experiences and Fear of Crime

Praveenrao Bolli, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor
Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice
Virginia State University, Virginia, U.S.A

Author Note

No known conflict of interest to disclose.

Correspondence regarding this article shall be referred to
Praveenrao Bolli, Virginia State University

804-524-6863   pbolli@vsu.edu

Abstract

The relationships that explain the evolution and etiology of fear can advance fear of crime research. Empirical studies on children's fear of crime found that females, minorities, low socio-economic status, and low academic achievement have an association with fear of crime. Although studies included age variables in their model, the study results were inconsistent and varied based on the measurement instrument. In addition, various studies examined fear of crime using individual and environmental factors. However, limited studies have analyzed the impact of awareness of resources on the victim's fear of crime. Similarly, earlier studies also indicate that prior victimization experiences increase fear of crime. Therefore, this research attempted to study the relationship between children's awareness of victimization resources, victimization experiences and fear of crime. Ordinal Logistic Regression was utilized to examine the relationship between fear of crime and demographic variables, impact of prior victimization on fear of crime, awareness of victimization resources and fear of crime, and finally the interaction of children's victimization and awareness of victimization influence on fear of crime. The study results indicated that age, gender, race and ethnicity, victimization experience, and awareness of victimization resources were significant predictors of children's fear of crime.

Keywords: fear of crime, victimization, awareness of victimization resources, children, gender

Understanding the relationship between children's awareness of victimization resources, victimization experiences and fear of crime

Fear of crime is a social problem (Garofalo, 1981; Garofalo & Laub, 1978; Lewis & Salem, 1986) and a major concern for many in the United States of America (Adams & Serpe, 2000; Baumer, 1985; Moore, 1998; Warr, 1995). With the existence of fear of crime in advanced societies, some attempts to minimize the fear are required (Ferraro, 1995b). Therefore, the relationships utilized in explaining the evolution and etiology of other forms of fear could be beneficial.

Fear of crime studies emphasized extensively on adult's fear (Baumer, 1978; Clemente & Kleiman, 1977; Conklin, 1975; Furstenberg, 1971; Garofalo, 1977, 1979; McIntyre, 1967; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981; Stafford & Galle, 1984), than children's and adolescent's fear of crime (Alvarez & Bachman, 1997; May et al., 2002; May, 2001; May & Dunaway, 2000; Schreck & Miller, 2003; Wallace & May, 2005; Wilcox et al., 2006; Lane, 2006; May, 2001a, 2001b; May et al., 2002; Lane, 2009), even though the risk of victimization are greater for youngsters than adult population (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006;Rand & Catalano, 2007; Shaffer & Ruback, 2002). For example, in 2014, around 850,000 school students aged 12-18 reported nonfatal victimization (such as property and violent victimization) (Zhang et al., 2016).

Although studying adolescent fear of crime has comparatively increased recently in various aspects (Cops, 2010; De Groof, 2008; Lane 2006, 2009; May, 2001; May & Dunaway, 2000; May et al., 2002; Melde, 2009; Melde & Esbensen, 2009; Melde et al., 2009; Prezza &Pacilli, 2007; Randa & Wilcox, 2012; Swartz et al., 2011; Wallace & May, 2005), however studying adolescents from a vulnerable perspective can explain significant relationships between children and fear of crime. Adolescents are often considered a vulnerable population and hold greater levels of fear.

For example, girls hold greater levels of fear despite their lower victimization rate than males, such phenomena among girls are contributed to their views of being defenseless or vulnerable (Parker & Ray, 1990).

Awareness of Victimization Resources

Many studies examined how children's physical and social vulnerability contributes to children's fear (Goodey, 1997; Hale, 1996; Hindelang et al., 1978; Killias, 1990; Madriz, 1997; May et al., 2015; Parker & Ray, 1990; Schreck & Miller, 2003; Warr, 1985), and stated that fear is strongly associated with vulnerability (Killias, 1990; Riger et al., 1978; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981; Vrij & Winkel, 1991), while only a few studies examined children's fear using the sources of vulnerability. Studies argue that one's economic resources reduce feelings of vulnerability (Adams & Serpe, 2000) and simultaneously fear (Adams 1992a, 1992b; Adams & Serpe, 2000). Therefore, studies exploring adolescents' sources of vulnerability and their impact on fear may advance the understanding of adolescents' fear.

Among studies emphasizing on sources of vulnerability's impact on children's fear, one's awareness and access to resources have found to gain scholarly attention. However, many studies in this domain focused on the adult population, such as the following. Studies examined, elderly citizen's lack of financial resources makes them feel vulnerable and contributes to fear (Killias, 1990), sexual attacks upon females as a source of vulnerability impacted fear of crime, and neighborhood disorganization as a source impacted adult fear (Adams & Serpe, 2000). According to (Adams & Serpe, 2000) social integration as a resource can make one feel less vulnerable and act against the fear of victimization (Adams & Serpe, 2000).

Adult studies investigating how education, family socio-economic status, and home ownership as resources associated with adult victims' fear (Skogan, 1987) found a significant

correlation. Victimized adults who are poor and have lower education levels may have trouble accessing resources, resulting in greater fear of crime (Friedman et al., 1982). Despite several adult studies, one of the adolescent studies examined how children traveling to high-risk areas as a source of vulnerability induces fear and found that children's presence in high-crime areas makes them feel vulnerable to victimization. Another adolescent study analyzed how school security techniques as a resource against vulnerability reduce students' fear of crime and found no correlation between school security techniques and fear of crime (Christopher & Miller, 2003).

According to Ferraro (1995a), measures that protect against victimization can impact the level of fear. This statement of Ferraro can be interpreted as that one's awareness or access to resources could contribute to fear. Therefore, it is very logical to assume that lacking the awareness of victimization resources will be vulnerable and fearful, which means that one's access to a resource is a source that correlates with children's vulnerability and fear. Furthermore, according to Killias (1990) one's lack of access to or awareness of resources is a social dimension of vulnerability that can potentially cause fear of crime among individuals as they are concerned about the seriousness of the consequence and feel vulnerable and fearful.

Hereafter, this study examines how the awareness of victimization resources contributes to children's fear since lack of awareness of victimization resources may make one feel vulnerable and fearful, especially among those with victimization experience. Therefore, this study also examines how the interaction between victimization experience and awareness of victimization resources impact children's fear of crime.

Fear of Crime

Fear of crime is "a negative emotional response to crime or associated symbols of crime" (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987). According to Lane et al. (2014) this definition of fear of crime is the

most often cited in the last 35 years of the fear of crime literature. However, there is variation among fear of crime studies in measuring the concept of fear (Ferraro, 1995c; Hale, 1996; May & Dunaway, 2000; Mesch, 2000; Wilcox Rountree & Land, 1996; Warr & Ellison, 2000; Williams et al., 2000). For example, earlier studies relied on a single item to measure fear (Baumer, 1985; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981) or measured fear as one's afraidness or uneasiness (DuBow et al., 1979), judgment regarding future victimization (Warr, 2000), and cognitive evaluations of perceived risk (LaGrange, Ferraro, and Supancic 1992; Rountree & Land, 1996b). Despite the range of studies, Hale (1996) states that around 200 research works were published by 1996 in the domain of fear of crime. In an attempt to understand fear, studies relied on various models and theoretical predictors (Covington & Taylor, 1991; Katz et al., 2003) such as vulnerability model, victimization model, neighborhood context model, subcultural diversity model, and adolescent fear of crime.

Vulnerability Model

The studies of the vulnerability model state that one gains fear of crime due to vulnerability views. Studies using this model are typically classified into physical vulnerability and social vulnerability. Physical vulnerability studies extensively examined how young adolescents' and old adults' feelings of vulnerability impact their fear of crime (Hale, 1996; Warr, 1985). While studies of social vulnerability employed variables like gender, race and ethnicity to examine how views of social vulnerability correlate with fear (Hindelang et al., 1978; Schreck & Miller, 2003). Overall, studies of the vulnerability model consistently predicted perceived vulnerability relationship with fear particularly among females (Madriz, 1997; Parker & Ray, 1990) due to their fear of victimization (Goodey, 1997; May et al., 2015)

Victimization Model

Victimization model studies claim that individuals with an increased scope of victimization (one vulnerable identity of self may also increase their victimization views) or experiences of victimization are associated with increased fear. Victimization model studies extensively used socio-economic status, sex, level of education, and race and ethnicity to extend the model (Melde, 2007). Overall, victimization model studies attempted to understand how one's perceived vulnerability to getting victimized elevates fear of crime (Hale, 1996; Katz et al., 2003).

Neighborhood Context Model (Disorder and Community Concern)

This model argues that individuals who believe that they are in a deteriorating environment, such as disorganized neighborhoods hold a fear of crime (Rountree, 1998). Further, the model argues that individuals who have negative beliefs about their environment are more likely to identify the environment with signs of crime (gangs, publicly using drugs, and unattended buildings), assuming themselves to be in danger of victimization (Skogan, 1990; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981). Similarly, those who lack community cohesion (Bellair, 1997, 2000; Bursik, 2000) and collective efficacy (Skogan & Maxfield, 1981) in their community will also contribute to fear is proposed by this model.

Subcultural Diversity Model

According to the subcultural model, individuals may rely on stereotypes concerning social identities such as race, ethnicity, and other cultural backgrounds (Fishman et al., 1987) to make judgments about others; in the process, it may turn out as a causal factor to fear of crime. For example, the lack of trust in each other contributes to increased fear, as proposed by the subcultural diversity model (Melde, 2007). Studies of this model consistently found that the decline of racial homogeneity in a neighborhood increased fear among its residents (Chiricos et al., 1997; Covington & Taylor, 1991; Merry, 1981; Moeller, 1989).

Adolescent Fear of Crime

Studies extensively examined fear of crime among the adult population. Initially, adolescent fear studies utilized demographic predictor variables. For example, studies used variable gender to know if there is a difference between male and female adolescent fear (Cops, 2010; May & Dunaway, 2000; Wallace & May, 2005). Studies found that females hold greater fear than males and stated that the difference is due to socialization differences among both genders (Gilchrist et al., 1998; Goodey, 1994, 1997; Stanko, 1995). Studies of adolescents also investigated whether variation in age and socio-economic status contribute to adolescent's fear (Cops, 2010; May et al., 2002); results suggested that younger adolescents hold greater fear. Parental attachment is also used as a predictor in assessing adolescent's fear (Baek et al., 2019; Cops, 2010, 2013; De Groof, 2008; May et al., 2002; May et al., 2015) and identified consistent results in the relationship between greater parental attachment decreasing adolescent's fear.

Similar to adults, experiences of victimization impact on fear are widely studied among adolescents (Cops, 2010, 2013; De Groof, 2008; May et al., 2015; Wallace & May, 2005); however, results were mixed. Studies using girls' samples found a greater correlation between girls' fear and victimization. For example, according to May (2001) the impact of sexual victimization increases fear among children, especially this rate is greater among girls. Bullying victimization as a predictor was found to have a similar direct effect on boys' and girls' fear (Baek et al., 2019).

Adolescent Fear in the Context of School

The researchers used the school as one of the major domains to examine adolescents' fear of crime (Bachman et al., 2011; May & Dunaway, 2000; Swartz et al., 2011; Tillyer et al., 2011). School-based fear has gained more attention since 1990 (Lane et al.,2014), while earlier studies assessed individual and contextual factors that impact adolescent fear. Studies of school children

fear vastly used the victimization model to explain the fear of crime in the school context (Alvarez & Bachman, 1997; Dinkes et al., 2009; Hutchinson Wallace & May, 2005; May & Dunaway, 2000; Schreck & Miller, 2003; Swartz et al., 2011; Welsh, 2001; Wilcox et al., 2005; Wilcox et al.,2006). For example, studies argued that school-level factors such as school disorder and lack of effective policies increase children's risk of victimization and contribute to fear development (Welsh, 2000, 2001; Welsh et al., 1999; Welsh et al., 2000). A study by Bachman et al. (2011) investigated the relationship between children's fear perceptions when traveling to and from school and found that one with previous victimization experiences and belief of school and neighborhood disorder holds greater levels of fear while traveling to and from the school.

Studies explored how the school environment contributes to adolescents' perceived risk and fear perceptions (Alvarez & Bachman, 1997; May & Dunaway, 2000; Wallace & May, 2005; Wilcox et al., 2006). However, two major limitations among school children's fear studies are that the literature on school children fear is inconsistent in its results concerning race and ethnic differences at school (Randa & Mitchell, 2018). Secondly, only a few studies paid attention to individual and school-level factors, such as school commitment and involvement, associated with fear of victimization (Anderman & Kimweli, 1997; Kulka et al., 1980; Wei & Williams, 2004).

Vulnerability and Children's Fear of Crime

Although many studies found that children who feel vulnerable can have greater levels of fear (May 2001; May et al., 2002; Wallace & May, 2005), in the context of vulnerability, studies found that African Americans, poor, and females hold views of vulnerability and fear. In comparison, less vulnerable views and fear are found among higher educated, higher socio-economic status, males, and White (Balkin, 1979; Baumer, 1985; Clemente & Kleiman, 1977; Garofalo, 1979; Smith & Hill, 1991; Warr, 1984). According to Riger et al. (1978) female

vulnerability could be due to sexual victimization. The less vulnerable views and fear among higher educated and high socio-economic status individuals could be attributed to their awareness and access to resources that help avoid or cope with victimization.

Theoretical Predictors of Children's Fear of Crime

Although fear studies explored causal factors for fear of crime, the studies supported by formal theoretical perspectives are less (Lee, 2001; Mesch, 2000; Schafer et al., 2006; Wallace & May, 2005). Among those adolescent studies that used theoretical frameworks popularly employed routine activity theory or lifestyle theory for the fear analysis. Several studies of fear using routine activity theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Cohen et al., 1981; Medle, 2007) examined variables such as delinquent peer association, parental attachment, and involvement in gangs' impact on children's fear of crime.

Other adolescent studies found to use general strain theory (stating that one's risk of victimization as strain impact fear) (May et al., 2015), social learning theory (Rader & Haynes, 2011), (for example explaining how one learns fear by having delinquent peer association (May et al., 2015), and Self-Control theory (stating that how individuals level of self-control contribute to emotion like fear in the context of cybercrime) (Higgins et al., 2008). In general, studies using a theoretical framework consistently found gender, vulnerability, parental supervision, and level of attachment correlated with children's fear of crime (May 2001; May et al., 2002; Wallace & May, 2005). Besides these findings, there is a lack of theoretical integration in assessing the fear of crime (Alvarez & Bachman, 1997; Gabriel & Greve, 2003; May et al., 2015; May et al., 2002; Schreck & Miller, 2003).

Consequences of Fear

Learning the consequences of fear increases the understanding of the fear of crime. Most fear consequences argue that one with greater fear may gain or adopt constrained behaviors. Constrained attitudes refer to stay-away behaviors, such as not leaving home at night and adopting safety strategies like equipping security alarms (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987). For example, individuals with greater amount of fear of victimization are more likely to carry weapons or other forms of protective measures (Arria et al., 1997; DuRant et al., 1999; Kingery et al., 1996; May, 1999; McNabb et al., 1996; Rudatsikira et al., 2007; Wilcox et al., 2006). In general, constrained behaviors are of two categories: avoidance and defense attitudes (Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987). According to Melde et al. (2016), fear induces a protective function. As a result, constrained behavior occurs, and the relationship between one's fear and constrained behavior can be mediated by risk perceptions (Ferraro, 1995b; Rountree & Land, 1996b; Garofalo, 1981; Williams et al., 1994).

Besides constrained behavior, consequences of fear include spatial avoidance (Warr, 1994), such as spending more time at home (Warr, 1995) and lack of social cohesion (Warr, 2000). Studies also identified that fear could create deterrence, such as avoiding aggressive and anti-social behavior (Jackson & Gray, 2010; McCarthy & Hagan, 2005). Overall, studies that examined the relationship between fear and consequences such as constrained attitudes excessively relied on the adult sample (Chan & Rigakos, 2002; Ferraro, 1995c; Hale, 1996; Keane, 1998; Liska et al., 1988; Mesch, 2000; Pain, 2001).

Current Study

The study emphasizes how children's awareness of victimization resources and interaction of one's awareness of resources and victimization experience impact fear of crime. It is assumed that individuals lacking awareness of resources to avoid or cope with victimization may most likely

feel vulnerable and have a greater fear of crime. This study investigates if any such relationship exists between the variables, awareness of victimization resources and fear of crime. This research also includes demographic and victimization variables to predict fear of crime. Finally, extending the scope of the study, the interaction relationship between awareness of victimization resources and victimization experience is examined to predict fear of crime.

Methods

This study utilized secondary data developed by the National Evaluation of the Teens, Crime, and the Community and Community Works (TCC/CW) program. This data is collected during the school academic year 2004-2005. Although this data is from 2004, this data is observed to be beneficial in understanding fear of crime unlike other datasets for two main reasons. Firstly, this data, unlike other previous studies, did not rely on a single item of fear (Warr, 2000; Ferraro & LaGrange, 1987; LaGrange et al., 1992), instead constructed measures of adolescent fear of crime using multiple crime-specific items which only a few adolescent studies have (Lane, 2006; May, 2001; May et al., 2002; Schreck & Miller, 2003; Wallace & May, 2005; Wilcox et al., 2006). Therefore, this data overcame issues like validity and reliability for its measures. Secondly, this data consists of a large sample size of adolescents, enhancing the statistical power to predict relationships between the variables.

Research Questions

RQ1: Is there any relationship between fear of crime, and age, gender, and race and ethnicity?

H_{01}: Age, gender, and race and ethnicity do not correlate with fear of crime.

H_{a1}: Age, gender, and race and ethnicity do correlate with fear of crime.

RQ2: Does victimization experience increase children fear of crime?

H_{02}: Victimization experience may not increase children's fear of crime.

H_{a2}: Victimization experience may increase children's fear of crime.

RQ3: Do children awareness of victimization resources impact fear of crime

H_{03}: Children awareness of victimization resources does not impact fear of crime.

H_{a3}: Children awareness of victimization resources impact fear of crime.

RQ4: Do the interaction of children victimization and awareness of victimization resources increase fear of crime?

H_{04}: The interaction of children victimization and awareness of victimization resources does not increase fear of crime.

H_{a4}: The interaction of children victimization and awareness of victimization resources does increase fear of crime.

Population and Sample Description

The current study used pre-test data from the original study. For the pre-test, the study had 1,624 students, of which 46% were males, and 54% were females. This study sample is exclusively juveniles with ages ranging from ten to sixteen. In addition, the study has 11% Blacks, 42% Hispanic, 31% White, and 15% of other or mixed racial background students.

Data collection

The original study initially selected schools (250 sites) across the United States for the study using a purposive sampling technique. However, the schools were finally selected for study only if they provided TCC/CW program at their site. Of the eighteen schools that met the program criteria, only fifteen were interested in participating in the study.

Within each selected school, using the quasi-experimental technique, classrooms were selected. The comparison group selected classrooms with no TCC/CW program implementation, whereas the treatment group received TCC/CW program. The original study selected 98

classrooms for the treatment and comparison groups. Students of the selected classrooms were asked to obtain active parental consent. This study recruited teachers to collect the consent forms and paid $2.00 for each collected consent form, irrespective of the consent response. Across the selected fifteen schools, an 84% consent return rate is found.

Independent and Dependent Variable

This study has five independent variables and one dependent variable. The five independent variables are age, gender, race and ethnicity, victimization experience, and awareness of victimization resources. The variable age has four response categories: age under 12, 12, 13, and over 13. However, the range of age varied between 10-16. The variable gender has two response categories such as male and female. For the variable race and ethnicity, this study limited its responses to three categories as Black, Hispanic, and White.

The variable victimization experience is an index variable consisting of questions related to the student's experience of property and violent victimization. For example, the questions of property victimization asked if students' things were stolen at school, if others had ever forced them to get their money or items and if students' things were stolen anywhere from them. The violent victimization questions are used to know if the student has been hit by someone with an intent to hurt and attacked by someone with a weapon to seriously hurt them. All the questions related to property and violent victimization had categorical responses such as Yes or No.

The final independent variable, awareness of victimization resource, is an index variable from four questions asking students awareness about programs or services that help victimized, knowing someone to reach when victimized, the ability to guide a victimized individual to a place that provides help and knowing someone to share the problems they have at school. The four items have an ordinal scale response: strongly agree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, and strongly

agree. Finally, this study has one dependent variable, fear of crime, which is indexed from eight questions. The questions of fear have an ordinal level response asked if students are not at all afraid, a little afraid, somewhat afraid, afraid, and very afraid if they have been robbed, stolen, threatened, attacked with a weapon, attacked on the way to or from school, if someone breaks into their house while they are at home, away from home.

Descriptive Statistics

Initially, the original data had a total sample size of 1,624. After addressing the missing values (using the case-wise deletion technique), the data was found to have 1232. For the variable age (ranging from ages 10-16), 24% sample was aged less than 12, 34.7% sample was 12, 31.3% was aged13, and 9.9% were over 13. The variable age holds 53.5% of females and 46.5% of the male sample. Variable race and ethnicity consist of Black, Hispanic, and White sample who are 13.3%, 49%, and 37.7%, respectively.

The variable victimization experience has 41% sample with no experience of victimization, 25.3% with at least one victimization experience, 21.3% with victimization experience of two kinds, 10.01% sample experiencing three kinds of victimization, 1.9% with four kinds of victimization experience, and 0.4% of the sample having all five kinds of victimization experience. For the variable awareness of victimization experience, most of the sample stated that they either agreed or disagreed with saying they were aware of victimization resources. The variable fear of crime was found to have responses across all response categories, with most of the samples stating that they hold somewhat fear.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Cronbach's alpha
Age	12.27	.936	-
Gender	1.53	.499	-
Race	2.11	.924	-
Victimization experience	1.0804	1.12394	.56
Awareness of victimization resources	3.6700	.71012	.70
Fear of crime	2.9627	1.05256	.90

N = 1232

Analytical Strategy

This study initially conducted reliability and factor analysis for the indexed variables. The index victimization experience was found to have Cronbach's alpha value of .56 for its items. The factor analysis identified the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure (KMO) value as .613 (expected to have a value greater than .5) and found it to be significant in Bartlett's test with a value less than .001. All the items are included and found to explain 31% variance. From the component matrix, it is observed that all the items are loaded in the component and have a value greater than .5. Therefore, the variable victimization experience is indexed by adding the items since the items have categorical responses.

The index awareness of victimization resources has a Cronbach's alpha value of .70. The factor analysis stated a KMO value of .706 (expected to have a value greater than .5) and was found to be significant in Bartlett's test with a value less than .001. All the items are included and found to explain 53% variance. From the component matrix, it is observed that all the items are loaded in the component and have a value greater than .5. Therefore, variable awareness of victimization resources is indexed by summing the mean of all the items.

The index fear of crime has a Cronbach's alpha value of .90. Factor analysis stated a KMO value of .899 and was found to be significant in Bartlett's test with a value less than .001. All the items in the index were found to explain 100% variance. From the component matrix, it is observed that all the items are loaded in the component and have a value greater than .5. Therefore, the variable fear of crime is indexed by summing the mean of all the items.

The variables are checked for normality and results found to be not normally distributed. To achieve the normality, variables are transformed using the Log function and again checked for normality. It is observed that the variables did not achieve normality. Therefore, it is decided to utilize ordinal regression since it does not require the data to have a normal distribution. First, ordinal regression examines the relationships between independent and dependent variables. Later, this study executed ordinal logistic regression to investigate the interaction effect of the variable's victimization experience and awareness of victimization on children fear of crime.

Table 2

Ordinal Regression

	Estimate	SE	95% CI		p
			LL	UL	
Male	-1.004	.104	-1.208	<.001	<.001
Female	0ª	.	.	.	.
White	-.768	.110	-.983	<.001	<.001
Black	-.583	.154	-.885	<.001	<.001
Hispanic	0ª	.	.	.	.
Under 12 years of age	1.137	.190	.764	<.001	<.001
12 years of age	.666	.180	.314	<.001	<.001
13 years of age	.391	.182	.035	.031	.031
14 and above years of age	0ª	.	.	.	.
Victimization experience	.139	.045	.051	.002	.002
Awareness of victimization resources	.291	.071	.153	<.001	<.001

Link function: Logit.

Results

From the ordinal regression, the model fitting information and goodness of fit are assessed to know how well the model fits the data. It is found that the model is statistically significant, as the value is less than .05 (from the model fitting information). From the goodness of fit table, the Pearson (.999) and deviance (1.0) values are identified as greater than .05. Both tests suggest that the model fits the data well. The Nagelkerke (.169) value (from the Pseudo R-square table) suggests that this model explains 17% of the variance in the dependent variable as a result of the independent variable. Finally, the test for the assumption of proportional odds (Test of parallel lines) value is observed to be .997 (expected to be greater than .05). It suggests that this model did not violate proportional odds. For the ordinal logistic regression, from the goodness of fit test, it is found that the Pearson Ch-square value (1.012>.05) and deviance value (.756>.05) state that the model fits the data. The Omnibus test has a value of .00, indicating that the model is statistically significant and good for analysis.

Results of ordinal regression suggest that variables age, gender, race and ethnicity, victimization experience, and awareness of victimization as significant predictors of children fear of crime. To answer research question one, variables age, gender, and race and ethnicity. Among the variable age (significant predictor), the model took the category over 14 as the reference category stating that children over age 14 have less fear when compared to the other ages (under12, 12, and 13) in the study. Therefore, regression results state that youth between ages 10 to 13 have more fear of crime than ages 14 to 16.

For the variable gender (significant predictor), the model took the female category as a reference indicating that females hold higher levels of fear when compared to males in this sample. In the variable race and ethnicity, the category Hispanic is used as a reference category, suggesting that Hispanic children with more fear than Black and White children. Reviewing the correlations between variables age, gender, and race and ethnicity, it is decided to reject the null hypothesis, and it can be stated that there exists a relationship between age and fear of crime, gender and fear of crime, and race and ethnicity and fear of crime.

To answer research question two, the impact of victimization experience on fear of crime is analyzed from the regression results. Variable victimization experience is a significant predictor of children's fear. Analysis states that increase in youth victimization experience increased their fear of crime. This evidence is used to reject the null hypothesis, stating that children's victimization experiences increased fear levels among children. Finally, variable awareness of victimization resources and fear of crime are analyzed to answer research question three. The model found the variable awareness of victimization r3esources as a significant predictor of children's fear, suggesting that the greater awareness of victimization resources contributed to youth fear of crime. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected, observing a significant impact of children's awareness of victimization resources on their fear of crime.

Table 3

Interaction effect

Variable	B	Std. Error	95% Wald Confidence Interval		Hypothesis Test			Exp(B)	95% Wald Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
			LL	UL	Wald Chi-Square	df	Sig.		Lower	Upper
Awareness of victimization resources *	.023	.0118	.000	.047	3.991	1	.046	1.024	1.000	1.048

Victimization experience (Scale)	1[a]

Dependent Variable: Fear of crime

Model: (Threshold), Awareness of victimization resources * Experienced victimization

a. Fixed at the displayed value.

An analysis of the ordinal logistic regression model is required to answer the final research question. The model observed that the variable interaction of victimization experience and awareness of victimization resources is a significant predictor. The results indicate that with every unit increase in the interaction of victimization experience and awareness of victimization resources, fear of crime increases by a factor of 1.024. Therefore, evidence suggests rejecting the null hypothesis describing that the interaction between variables of victimization experience and awareness of victimization resources significantly increases children's fear of crime.

Discussion and Conclusion

Adult studies dominate literature on fear of crime. However, it is not widely studied if adult studies and their findings can be generalized to explain adolescent's fear of crime. Therefore, it is vital to explore adolescents' fear of crime. This study, as an attempt, may advance the etiology of children's fear. It has been suggested by earlier studies that children feeling vulnerable may express higher levels of fear (May 2001; May et al., 2002; Wallace & May, 2005) and specific racial, ethnic, and genders can have higher perceptions of vulnerability and fear. However, the awareness of resources to overcome victimization is assumed to decrease fear of crime perceptions. As limited studies have emphasized the relationship between awareness of victimization resources and fear of crime, this study attempted to contribute to the fear of crime literature.

The current study results suggest that the age categories under 12, 12, and 13 are significant predictors having a positive relationship with children's fear of crime, while age above 14 being a significant predictor has a negative relationship with children's fear of crime. This means that adolescents under 13 have higher levels of fear, while adolescents over 13 have lower levels of fear. The lower the age of the juvenile, the greater the fear is observed from the results. Results are consistent with previous findings (May et al., 2002; Cops, 2010). The former could vary among adults, such as the older the adult, the greater the fear (Parker & Ray, 1990; Skogan & Maxfield, 1981).

The gender male and female are significant predictors of children fear of crime in the study. However, the direction of impact on fear varied among males (negative) and females (positive). Regression results indicate that males hold less fear while females hold greater levels of fear, as stated similarly by the previous studies (Goodey, 1997; May, 2001; May et al., 2015). For the variable race and ethnicity, Black, Hispanic, and White categories were significant predictors, but the direction of correlation varied between Hispanic, Black, and White children. Children from Black and White backgrounds were found to have minimal views of fear of crime, while Hispanic children were found to have maximized fear views. While several studies found greater fear among minority groups (Chiricos et al., 1997; Covington & Taylor, 1991; Warr, 1994), and the poor (Taylor & Covington, 1993; Warr, 1994), this study's results contradicted those findings.

The study found that victimization experience is a significant predictor of children's fear. However, the impact of victimization experience on fear is not strong compared to gender male and age under 12. Most of the studies explained the direct association between victimization and fear of crime (Bursik & Grasmick, 1993; Hale, 1996; Ferraro, 1995a); however, the studies also

stated that the effect is not very strong (Cops, 2010, 2013; Garofalo, 1977; Liska et al., 1988; May et al., 2015). Therefore, these study results are found to be in a similar manner.

Variable awareness of victimization resources is a significant predictor having a direct correlation with children's fear. Although the children's awareness of victimization resources did not increase children's fear at a greater level, one's awareness of resources' impact on fear is two times greater than one's victimization experience. Studies explain this phenomenon as one emphasizing victimization resources may simultaneously hold a greater perceived risk of victimization and fear (Schreck & Miller, 2003).

In the context of victimization experience and awareness of victimization, it is predicted that one with a greater risk of victimization may make themselves constantly aware of their victimization resources and avoid the fear of crime. However, results from the regression state that when victimization experience and awareness of victimization resources interact, children are likely to hold fear. Overall, variables age with category under 12 and gender male are the strongest predictors of fear in this study. Several limitations that affected this study are the low Cronbach alpha value for the variable victimization experience (.56). Secondly, the study used cross-sectional data, which may not provide an understanding of the stability of fear of crime in long periods. Future studies using longitudinal panel data may contribute to the fear of crime literature.

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Are They Damaged Goods?

Discovering Urban Teachers' Perception and Treatment of High-Needs Students Who May Have Experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences Which Has Resulted in Trauma

Ja'Van B. Jefferson, Ed.D.
Assistant Professor
Virginia State University
jjefferson@vsu.edu
(804) 504-7043

Abstract

The research study sought to investigate the treatment offered by teachers to high-needs students who may have experienced adverse childhood experiences, which has resulted in trauma, based upon their educational setting. More specifically, the study sought to review the level and types of teacher trauma-informed care offered to students in high-need school settings in comparison to their peers that are not in high-need school settings. The Center for Disease Control defines Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACES, as potentially "traumatic" events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). Also included are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding such as growing up in a household with substance misuse, mental health problems, instability due to parental separation or household members being in jail or prison. ACES are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. ACES can also negatively impact current education goals and future job opportunities.

Everyone processes a traumatic event differently because we all face them through the lens of prior experiences in our lives. Trauma-Informed Care is an approach that works with children, and adults, who have been exposed to traumatic events and conditions. In the educational setting, trauma can manifest as inattentiveness, behavior problems, difficulty developing relationships, anxiety and academic issues. The researcher focused on the perceptions of teachers and administrators of high-need students that attend an urban school district in central Virginia. The study focused on teacher perceptions, experiences and actions regarding the implementation of trauma-informed care practices within the school district.

Keywords: adverse childhood experiences (ACES), trauma, trauma-informed care, teacher perceptions.

Are they damaged goods?

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Introduction

The social, political, and educational landscape of life during the 2020 global pandemic in relation to COVID-19 has heightened the emotional state of the human experience. Scholars and practitioners see now, perhaps more than ever, the need for an understanding of trauma. Trauma is synonymous with the experiences of many households throughout the world during the pandemic. If you were not familiar with the word trauma or if you were unable to identify before the current state of living, you now have a connection in your lived experience. Imagine how the pandemic and the world are currently viewed through the lens of children? Their routine was halted abruptly in March 2020, and the life that they knew changed drastically overnight. Although initially, students were projected to only have two weeks out of the school building, those two weeks extended into three months out of school, and the 2019-2020 school year ending with students still in their homes due to the "stay at home" order that was in place. The original three months in the home then became eighteen months away from the building which included one full school year of virtual learning in the home.

What if home was not a safe place and school was your refuge to avoid the toxic environment that was provided through your family? How were the lives of teachers and their homes affected? In addition to experiencing individual trauma, everyone in a school (adults included) may be affected by community trauma such as the grief and collective hardship resulting from additional economic and social instability as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Browning & Romer,2020). Collective trauma, a response that can follow a variety of traumatic experiences,

was experienced by each individual during the pandemic. Situations that may elicit a collective trauma response may include but are not limited to: wars, natural disasters, mass shootings, terrorism, pandemics, systematic and historical oppression, recessions, and famine or severe poverty (Aydin, 2017; Chang, 2017; Hirschberger, 2018; Saul, 2014). As human beings, sudden change can be difficult for anyone to process but major life events that occur without warning may be one of the hardest environments to adapt to.

Students who had not experienced trauma before COVID-19 are now familiar with it after the abrupt disruption to the life that they knew. Children required intense support, love and trauma-informed care to make the successful transition back into the school building for in person learning. Professor, Clinician and Senior fellow of the Child Trauma Academy, Bruce Perry, believes that the healthier relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love.

Literature Review

Statement of the Problem

The research seeks to address the challenges of students who have experienced trauma. Do teachers, staff and administrators know the signs of trauma and how to support the students who may have had traumatic experiences? This is why it greatly behooves teachers and administrators to be aware of the impact of trauma so that they are able to help children succeed and survive in an educational environment (Department of Children and Families,2012; Wolpow et al., 2009). Most students in the United States attend public school. With these educational facilities providing the education for most of the children of our country, it would be the most effective way to introduce research-based interventions and trauma-informed care. Currently, no other institution

in the United States has such a readily available structure to implement trauma-sensitive education nor such direct, long-term access to children during the thirteen crucial developmental years.

Having observed students with trauma over the last decade, there are some critical issues that include training for academic staff, lack of trauma identification tools, curriculum adjustments for trauma-informed care and social emotional learning, community dialogue and support for those who have experienced trauma, or adverse childhood experiences. The researcher desires to conduct a phenomenological study to investigate teacher's perception and treatment of high-needs students. The study aims to provide an intentional view on the role that student experiences plays in their ability to learn, behavioral challenge or emotional challenges. Teachers may not have knowledge of adverse childhood experiences which has resulted in trauma to determine if these factors affect their view of high-needs students. The researcher proposes to complete the study by electronic survey to assist in eliminating the need for in person contact. The findings are going to be presented to the school district as a study to be used to establish a foundation that will lead toward implementation of standard district practices to support students who have experienced ACES and various levels of trauma.

Framework

The investigation was predicated on the theoretical frameworks of Urie Bronfenbrenner, Erik Erickson and Dr. Sandra Bloom. Psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner had a major influence in human development research, theory developmental psychology and formulation of social policy. The ecological systems theory, developed by Bronfenbrenner, explains how human development is influenced by different types of environmental systems. Researchers, policy makers, and practitioners are interested in how adverse childhood experiences, trauma and toxic stress affect students in the academic setting. The ecological systems theory directly correlates with the role

and effects of adverse childhood experiences during child development. Erik Erikson, a developmental psychologist who specialized in child psychoanalysis, was best known for his theory of psychosocial development in humans. Erickson's theory breaks the life cycle down into eight comprehensive stages, ranging from birth to death. Erikson's theory focused on how social interactions and the environment work together to influence personality development.

The sanctuary model is a trauma-informed method for creating or changing an organizational culture. Dr. Sandra Bloom created the sanctuary model which was originally developed in a short-term, acute, inpatient psychiatric setting for adults who were traumatized as children. Over the years, it has evolved into an evidence-supported template for system change. This is based on the active creation and maintenance of a nonviolent, democratic, therapeutic community in which staff and clients are empowered as key decision-makers to build a socially responsive, emotionally intelligent community that fosters growth and change (Bloom, 1997; Rivard et al., 2003; Rivard et al., 2004a; Rivard et al., 2004b; Rivard et al., 2005).

Purpose Statement

The study investigates the perceptions of trauma-informed care offered by educators, including teachers and administrators of high-need students that attend an urban school district in Virginia. It will identify educator's insight on high-needs students who may have experienced adverse childhood experiences, which has resulted in trauma, based upon their educational setting. More specifically; the study sought to analyze perceptions regarding the implementation of trauma-informed care practice offered by urban elementary school teachers and administrators. Within the urban district, schools are classified in two categories, title one schools and non-title one schools. The study aimed to identify if the perceptions of educators of students in the title one elementary school settings compared to the perception of educators in the non-title one elementary

school setting. The school district serves over 28,000 students from pre-k to twelfth grade. The student population is 55% African American students, 18% Hispanic students, 21% White students, 3% two or more races, and 2% Asian students. Students with disabilities make up 12% of the student population. English language learners make up 13% of the student population. There are many students and families that are classified below the poverty line, and 48% of the students have been labeled as economically disadvantaged.

The U.S. Department of Education states that high-needs students are those who are at risk of educational failure or otherwise in need of special assistance and support, such as students living in poverty, attend high-minority schools (as defined in the Race to the Top application). Other students can also be classified as "high-needs" such as those who are far below grade level, who have left school before receiving a regular high school diploma, who are at risk of not graduating with a diploma on time, who are homeless, who are in foster care, who have been incarcerated, who have disabilities, or who are English learners.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) describes individual trauma as resulting from an event, series of events or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. Everyone processes a traumatic event differently because we all face them through the lens of prior experiences in our lives (The Center for Treatment of Anxiety and Mood Disorders, 2019). Trauma can be experienced throughout any period in your life, even during childhood. When trauma occurs as a child, it may fit into a category classified as an adverse childhood experience (ACES).

The Center for Disease Control (2020) defines Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACES, as potentially "traumatic" events that occur in childhood (0-17 years). Also included are aspects of the child's environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding such as growing up in a household with substance abuse, mental health problems, instability due to parental separation, or household members being in jail or prison. ACES are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance abuse in adulthood. ACES can also negatively impact education and job opportunities.

ACES are common across all income groups, though 58% of U.S. children with ACES live in homes with incomes less than 200% of the federal poverty level. ACES are common across all race/ethnicity groups, though they are somewhat disproportionately lower for White, Non-Hispanic and lowest for Asian children. Black children are disproportionately represented among children with ACES. Over 6 in 10 have ACES, representing 17.4% of all children in the U.S. with ACES (Bethell et al., 2017).

ACES can be addressed by creating trauma-informed schools utilizing trauma-informed care (TIC). According to SAMSHA (2014), TIC is an approach to education and care where a system (i.e., a human service agency, hospital, school district, juvenile probation system, housing bureau, child welfare system, etc.) realizes the profound impact of trauma in those they serve, recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma, responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into policies and practices, and resists re-traumatization. TIC assumes these practices at all levels of the system. Research suggests that TIC is associated with considerable benefits for children and their families, including reductions in children's behavior problems and post-traumatic stress (Dym-Bartlett et al., 2016). SAMHSA (2020) identified four key assumptions of a trauma-informed approach; the approach should:

1. realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery;

2. recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma;

3. fully integrate knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and

4. seek to actively resist re-traumatization.

Significance of the Study

Traumatic reactions can include a variety of responses, such as intense and ongoing emotional responses, depressive symptoms or anxiety, behavioral changes, difficulties with self-regulation, problems relating to others or forming attachments, regression or loss of previously acquired skills, attention and academic difficulties, as well as difficulty sleeping and eating, (National Child Traumatic Stress Network,2020). The researcher aims to provide information in order for stakeholders to gain a deeper understanding of trauma and the effect it has on students. This effect spans across multiple areas of a student's life, and the residue of these lived experiences can manifest in school, in the home, or the community. This is particularly important because the effects of the experiences can be masked as inattentiveness, learning difficulties, behavioral challenges, or inability to interact appropriately with both adults and peers.

Schools are often the first to notice negative behavioral changes related to attention, abstract reasoning, memory, impulse control, and attendance issues, and it is critical for educators to understand these may be due to adverse childhood experiences and trauma. Once symptoms are assessed, trauma recovery can begin (McGruder, 2019). Chronic toxic stress resulting from ACES can impact on the neurological, immunological and hormonal development of children. Repercussions of such impacts include substantive increases in the risk of adopting antisocial and health-harming behaviors, accelerated development of chronic disease, and premature death. Further, research is increasingly identifying more immediate impacts of ACES on a wide range of

health and social outcomes during childhood (Bellis, Hughes, and Ford, 2018). The ACE study findings suggested that adverse childhood experiences were significant risk factors for the leading causes of physical illness and disability, mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety, early death, and a generally poor quality of life in the United States (Felitti et al., 1998).

The researcher sought to determine teacher perceptions and treatment of high-needs students. The researcher also sought to determine if there is a correlation between adverse childhood experiences and some of the identifiers that classify students as "high-needs". The study aimed to assist educator's ability to learn how to identify the signs of students who have experienced trauma so that targeted support can be developed and implemented. It is essential that adults become aware of the prevalence and impact of trauma and learn to apply a "trauma lens". A trauma lens will allow educators to gain the capacity to view children's difficulties in behavior, learning, and relationships as natural reactions to trauma that warrant understanding and sensitive care (Children's Mental Health, 2021). It is the desire of the researcher for practitioners to discover their perspectives towards the implementation of trauma-informed care for students. Based on the findings, professionals will have opportunities to view how their interactions with students guide the students' experience in a positive or negative manner. This research will require educators to take an in-depth look into the role that they play in potentially re-traumatizing students or supporting students. Findings also identify additional knowledge, resources, and professional development offerings to support the growth and understanding trauma and adverse childhood experiences.

In addition, educators can learn key strategies to manage trauma-related problems during the childhood of a student. These include creating environments that feel physically and emotionally safe; teaching children self-regulation, language and communication skills, and how

to build healthy relationships; learning each child's trauma triggers and how both the child and adults can limit, anticipate, and cope with them; and supporting the development of healthy attachments with parents and other caregivers, as well as positive relationships with peers (Barlett & Rushovich, 2018).

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed based upon the purpose of the study:

1) How do urban educators in title one and non-title one elementary schools perceive trauma-informed care?

2) What is the level of trauma experienced by urban educators in title one and non-title one elementary schools?

3) Do teachers' perceptions of trauma have an impact on how they deliver trauma-informed care to students?

Research Methodology

The researcher conducted a mixed methods research design which consists of a phenomenological qualitative methodology and a quantitative descriptive methodology. The quantitative descriptive methodology provided information through the completion of a survey. Phenomenology uses criterion sampling, in which participants meet predefined criteria. The most prominent criterion is the participant's experience with the phenomenon under study. The researchers look for participants who have shared an experience but vary in characteristics and their individual experiences (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). The researcher conducted a virtual focus group to explore the experiences of teachers who have encountered students that have experienced different levels of trauma. Teachers can confirm that students have experienced trauma based on the information provided to them by school personnel (academic specialist, behavior specialist,

therapists, school counselor, school social worker, case manager, etc.) that they may be working with the student regarding situations that have happened during the school year. Information is also provided from parents regarding the students' home environment.

Austin and Sutton (2015) remind us that face-to-face interviews and interactions such as focus groups to explore a particular research phenomenon may help in clarifying a less-well-understood problem, situation, or context. Phenomenology focuses on understanding how human beings experience their world. It gives researchers the opportunity to put themselves in another person's shoes and to understand the subjective experiences of participants. It is also necessary to explain the role of the researcher in qualitative research. Austin and Sutton (2015) state that the role is to attempt to access the thoughts and feelings of study participants. This is not an easy task, as it involves asking people to talk about things that may be very personal to them. Sometimes the experiences being explored are fresh in the participant's mind, whereas on other occasions reliving past experiences may be difficult.

Instrument

The data collection within the research utilized one instrument: The Attitude Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Scale. The ARTIC was administered to teachers and administrators. The ARTIC measures the favorable or unfavorable attitudes of service providers toward Trauma-Informed Care (TIC). It is based on the premise that staff attitudes are an essential driver of staff behavior and the moment-to-moment behavior of staff is a critical factor in the successful implementation of TIC. The instrument has eight subscales consisting of 75 potential items. These eight subscales fully represent the most central components of attitudes supporting TIC implementation (or unsupportive). These subscales included attitudes about (a) underlying causes of problem behavior and symptoms, (b) the impact of trauma, (c) responses to problem

behavior and symptoms, (d) on-the-job behavior, (e) self-efficacy at work, (f) reactions to the work, (g) personal support of TIC, and (h) system-wide support for TIC. Items were written to characterize a TIC favorable attitude and were then paired with the opposite attitude (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2020).

As such, all items utilize a seven-point bipolar Likert scale. For example, the favorable attitude for one item is "the students I work with could act better if they really wanted to,'' while its opposite is ''the students I work with are doing the best they can with the skills they have''. This format allows individuals to characterize their attitudes on a bipolar spectrum and reduces the risk of socially desirable responses such as rating both TIC-indicated and TIC-contraindicated items (Woods & Hampson, 2005). The ARTIC has six core subscales related to attitudes relevant to TIC implementation (i.e., subscales a–f) and two additional subscales tapping into support of TIC adoption (i.e., subscales g–h) (Baker, Brown, Wilcox, Overstreet and Arora,2015). The researcher obtained the tool from the Traumatic Stress Institute.

Results

Based on the analysis of the quantitative survey and the qualitative focus group, there are various degrees of perceptions among the participants. The quantitative research, data was analyzed through null hypothesis significance testing. This is a formal procedure for assessing whether a relationship between variables or a difference between groups is statistically significant. The quantitative analysis yielded the following results: there were no significant differences between how title one and non-title one educators perceive trauma-informed care. Teachers had similar beliefs regarding students' reactions to the trauma-informed care approach and the length of time needed to implement trauma-informed care with students. Teachers also had similar perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the trauma-informed care approach as well as managing

all of the requirements and responsibilities of the trauma-informed care approach.   There were no significant differences in teachers' perceptions of the impact of trauma regarding how they deliver trauma-informed care. Teachers had similar beliefs regarding the level of support that they would need from the school district in order to implement trauma-informed care in their classrooms, throughout the school building and there were similarities on creating a plan to start implementation within the building. Teachers also had similar perceptions regarding having the support needed to work in a trauma-informed way and the support of the building administration to implement trauma-informed care approaches building. It was their desire for trauma-informed care to become a way of life in the educational setting, throughout all functions of the school building and with all stakeholders, to include parents and community members, being trained on trauma-informed care practices.

In the qualitative study, thematic analysis was employed to analyze focus group and teacher interview data. The researcher systematically identified patterns and themes within the discussions, generating codes to categorize and interpret the data. This method facilitated a deeper understanding of participants' perspectives on teaching practices and educational challenges. The qualitative focus group provided an in-depth rich view of the teacher's perceptions, some which provided a different perspective than the results of the quantitative survey. Teachers conclude that trauma-informed care is taking care of yourself first and targeting the whole child.   More clarification of teacher roles is needed at the building level. Prior to the pandemic there was an effort for schools to be trauma responsive to students but it needed to be further developed. Teachers believe that there is a greater emphasis on facilitation of curriculum and instruction and staying on academic pacing. These things are perceived to have greater priority over implementation of trauma-informed care. Division support of the initiative is needed to give

building administrators the tools needed to support the teachers. Parent and community engagement were also noted as a way to support teachers and families in being trauma responsive.

Interpretation of Findings

There were differences in the overall demographic data collection but common trends throughout the study. The themes provided the researcher with the ability to draw conclusions that aligned with each research question. The conclusions from the research are expanded upon in the sections below. The researcher ran the data to see the overall results from all nine elementary schools that participated in the study. A secondary comparison study between target group A (Title 1) and target group B (Non-Title 1) was completed and discussed in the findings below. This study matched the three non-title one schools that were the most similar in demographics, to include the number of teachers and students, to three title one schools. There were 98 participants in this study which is 70% of the participants from the original study. Nearly 43 percent (n=42) were title one teachers and 57.14% (n-56) were non-title one teachers.

Title One and Non-Title One Teacher Perceptions of Trauma-Informed Care

The researcher completed a secondary study to discuss the results of the survey in a comparative study between three title one elementary schools and three non-title one elementary schools. This is a smaller sample size extracted from the larger study which had six title one schools and three non-title one schools totaling nine schools. The selected schools have similar teacher and student demographics. The results of the analysis are discussed below.

The survey results of the secondary study conclude that 57.14% of non-title one teachers have favorable attitudes that students will react positively to trauma-informed care. Of the title one teachers, 78.57% have favorable attitudes that students will react positively to trauma-informed care approach. Nearly 74% of the title one teachers and 48.2% of non-title one teachers

agree that trauma-informed care saves time in the long run. Almost 61% of non-title one teachers and 71.43% of title one teachers believe that the trauma-informed care approach is effective. Of the title one teachers 71.43% and 28.57% of non-title one teachers believe that they are able to carry out all of their teacher responsibilities with respect to the trauma-informed care approach. Nearly half of title one teachers, 54.76%, and 30.36% of non-title one teachers agree that they can manage all that the trauma-informed care approach requires. The researcher concludes that the secondary study showcases a difference between the perception of trauma-informed care. Based on the results, title one teachers have a larger scope of positive beliefs surrounding teacher perceptions of trauma-informed care than non-title one teachers.

The teacher focus group showcased different results when discussing perceptions of trauma-informed care and there was no difference in the responses provided by title one teachers and non-title one teachers. The group discussed the projections for the results of the survey instrument measuring attitudes relating to trauma-informed care. Participants agreed that before you can discuss trauma-informed care for students that you first must address taking care of self. It was also agreed that after taking care yourself, when looking at trauma-informed care support for students, the whole child must be addressed. There was also discussion about incorporating mindfulness as a building wide practice to assist students with trauma.

Teachers detailed whether their building would be considered "trauma responsive" prior to the pandemic. The larger themes that emerged among the group was that some of the schools within the district had made efforts to incorporate trauma-informed care but the practices were not implemented consistently. Teachers shared that they felt the curriculum and pacing may have greater priority than trauma-informed care implementation. Teachers were also asked what they needed to feel supported in implementation of trauma-informed care practices. The response

indicated that division support of trauma-informed care was the top requirement. Teachers felt that because there is not a large division presence, building administrators do not have the tools to support teachers. Parent and community engagement were also discussed. Bringing in parents and the community will assist in keeping all stakeholders informed of practices used to provide the necessary supports to the students.

The Level of Trauma Experienced by Educators in the Title I and Non-Title I Setting

Adverse childhood experiences and its effects were discussed at great lengths during the virtual teacher focus group. Teachers were asked to take the ACE quiz prior to starting the session so that they would know what their ACE score was and be able to gage the level of trauma that they had been exposed to from the adverse childhood experiences lens. Of the teachers within the focus group, 44% of the participants have experienced one ACE. An additional 44% of participants have experienced more than one A.C.E. Collectively, 88% of the focus group had experienced at least one A.C.E. Throughout the group session, the participants were also asked if they had dealt with or encountered psychological trauma. 100% of the participants had experience with psychological trauma. There was no difference between the level of trauma experienced by title one educators and non-title one educators within this group.

Teacher Experiences Affect the Delivery of Trauma-Informed Care

The qualitative focus group responses support the conclusion that teachers experience with trauma impact how they deliver trauma-informed care within the building. Teachers detailed their experiences with trauma throughout their childhood and personal life. Teachers also shared in depth about their experiences in the education field and interacting with students who have experienced trauma. It was agreed by all participants that although there were shared experiences dealing with trauma and different experiences dealing with trauma, both personal and professional

perceptions of trauma were derived from their experiences. It is these experiences that have an impact on how they structure their classroom to interact with students who have experienced trauma and how they deliver trauma-informed care to their students.

The quantitative survey results from the secondary study yielded results that indicated teachers experiences and perceptions of the delivery of trauma-informed. The survey results of the secondary study conclude that 42.7% of title one teachers and 23.21% of non-title one teachers have favorable attitudes that they have enough support to implement trauma-informed care. 33.33% of title one teachers and 26.79% of non-title one teachers had unfavorable attitudes regarding if they have enough support to implement trauma-informed care. Nearly 90% of title one teachers and 62.5% of non-title one teachers feel that they can go to their colleague or supervisor for help when they feel that they cannot handle trauma-informed care alone. Almost twelve percent (11.9%) of title one teachers and 17.86% of non-title one teachers feel that they cannot go to their colleague or supervisor for help when they feel that they cannot handle trauma-informed care alone. Almost half, 54.76% of title one teachers, and 30.36% of non-title one teachers feel that they have the support needed to work in a trauma-informed way. Of the title one teachers 9.52% plus 19.64% of non-title one teachers do not feel that they have the support to work in a trauma-informed way. Fifty-seven percent of title one teachers and 37.5% of non-title one teachers feel that everyone is committed to working in a trauma-informed way. Almost all, 9.52% of title one teachers and 10.71% of non-title one teacher do not feel that everyone is committed to working in a trauma-informed way.

Conclusion

The researcher sought to discover if there was a difference in teachers' perceptions of trauma-informed care based on their educational work environment. The aim was to identify if

there was an alteration in the level of trauma-informed care being provided at title one and non-title one school settings. The researcher also sought to discover if there was a correlation between trauma experienced by teachers and the impact it has on their delivery of trauma-informed care. The principal and sole quantitative descriptive data-gathering method was a survey in which the data was accumulated to measure the attitudes related to trauma-informed care. The qualitative phenomenological focus group entailed a list of targeted questions where teacher participants engaged in dialogue and discussion explaining their experience and beliefs centered around the trauma that they have encountered and the details of the level of implementation of trauma-informed care within the schools in which they currently work. The teacher participants also made suggestions for implementation that could assist with transforming their buildings and the division in becoming more trauma sensitive.

The quantitative data yielded results that indicated teachers experiences and perceptions of the delivery of trauma-informed care. Nearly sixty eight percent of teachers believe that students will react positively to the trauma-informed care approach. Sixty percent of teachers believe that the trauma-informed care approach saves time in the long run. Almost fifty-nine percent of teachers believe that the trauma-informed care approach is effective. Forty-two percent of teachers believe that they are able to carry out all of their responsibilities with respect to the trauma-informed care approach. Forty-three percent of teachers believe that they can manage all that the trauma-informed care approach requires. Thirty percent of teachers believe that they have enough support to implement trauma-informed care. Sixty-seven percent of teachers believe that when they feel like they cannot handle this alone, they can go to their colleagues and/or supervisor(s) for help. Forty-four percent of teachers believe that they have the support they need to work in a trauma-informed way. Forty-nine percent of teachers believe that there is clear indication that the

administration supports their work. Fifty-one percent of teachers believe that everyone is committed to working in a trauma-informed situation long term.

When reviewing the overall results of the survey, it indicates that thirty percent of teachers believe that they have enough support to implement trauma-informed care. Sixty-seven percent of teachers believe that when they feel like they cannot handle the work of trauma-informed care alone, they can go to their colleagues and/or supervisor(s) for help. Forty-four percent of teachers believe that they have the support needed to work in a trauma-informed way. Forty-nine of teachers believe that there is clear indication that the administration supports their work. Fifty-one percent of teachers believe everyone is committed to working in a trauma-informed way long term. The qualitative focus group responses support the conclusion that teachers' experience with trauma impact how they deliver trauma-informed care.

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Health Care Professionals in the Virginia General Assembly

Jacob T. Ellis

University of Richmond

Abstract

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According to information theories of legislative organizations, legislators depend on policy expertise from committees to make decisions. Expertise may also be derived from knowledge held by individual legislators, typically knowledge from their professional backgrounds. Research has shown that legislators sponsor (or patron) bills related to their professional backgrounds and other legislators defer to their expertise. Moreover, bills sponsored by legislators with professional expertise are more likely to advance through the legislative process. This paper considers the role of information derived from professional background on the patronage and passage of health-related legislation in the Virginia General Assembly. In so doing, the paper takes a unique approach. Whereas most studies classify legislators in terms of their professional field, this analysis probes more deeply by assessing the effects of a legislators' current or former occupations within their professional field. This paper finds that occupational background is even more influential than the professional field of a legislator on bill patronage and bill passage. The effects of occupational background hold up against alternative explanations such as committee membership, majority party status, or gender in determining bill patronage and passage rates.

Keywords: General Assembly, Health care, Profession, Occupation

Health care professionals in the Virginia General Assembly

Introduction

Scholars have shown that legislators focus on issues related to their professional background, and in so doing they provide vital information sought after by fellow legislators. In the Virginia General Assembly, for instance, one hundred and forty members bring knowledge of public policy from a range of professional fields such as agriculture, business, health care, and law. In fact, they bring specific expertise on public policy issues from their occupations *within* those fields. In the COVID-19 pandemic's most trying days, members of both parties looked to a nurse serving in the General Assembly for expert knowledge on nurse scope of practice legislation. Similarly, in the wake of *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which repealed both *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, Republicans looked to an OB/GYN in their ranks to provide expertise, not just as a health professional, but as an expert in maternal health.

This study seeks to determine the extent to which Virginia legislators use their professional experiences to patron and pass health-related legislation in the General Assembly. Probing further, the study considers how the particular occupations of health professionals affect agenda setting and legislative effectiveness. To what extent do legislators patron bills relate to their occupation, i.e., their specialty within the health care profession? Are bills that relate directly to the legislator's occupation more successful than those that do not? This research finds that legislators with professional backgrounds in health care patron a significant number of bills related to their occupations within the health field. In addition, bills that are congruent with a legislator's occupation are more likely to pass the legislature than other pieces of legislation, including other health-related bills that are not congruent with occupation.

Information in State Legislatures: Professional Backgrounds and Occupations

Legislators cannot be well-versed on every public policy issue. According to informational theory they rely on experts within the legislature to make informed choices (Makse, 2022). Scholars have found that informational advantages come from two sources: a legislator's committee assignment and a legislator's professional background or experience. According to information theory, legislators without expertise in a particular field or profession rely on advice and guidance from experts in that field (Makse, 2022). Intuitively, the more technical the legislative language, the more likely legislators are to look for colleagues with subject matter expertise. As a result, research has found that committees wield substantial power and influence because of the wealth of knowledge they harbor in the legislative body (Berry and Fowler, 2018; Miler, 2017). Within the legislative process, committees serve as important sources of information in specific fields (Berry and Fowler, 2018; Francis and Bramlett, 2017; Hamm, Hedlund, and Post, 2011; Miler, 2017). Consequently, committee assignments often include legislators with professional backgrounds related to the committee's jurisdiction. As a result, committees benefit from having policy experts who can provide explanations and insights, thereby enhancing the committee's knowledge base and credibility in their respective areas of policy (Battista, 2012; Hamm, Hedlund, and Post, 2011).

However, even legislators who are not assigned to a committee with jurisdiction over bills related to their professional field can provide expert knowledge in the legislative process. Legislators with professional backgrounds and policy expertise in a given field have the knowledge and lived experiences to understand the challenges facing the field and the policy changes needed to address those challenges. Scholars have examined the influence of professional backgrounds on agenda setting (measured by bill sponsorship) and effectiveness (measured by successful passage of legislation). Studies show that legislators apply their professional expertise to their legislative

work (Francis and Bramlett, 2017 Hamm, Hedlund, and Post, 2011; Makse, 2021; Makse, 2022). Independent of their committee assignments, legislators patron bills that relate to their professional expertise (Hamm, Hedlund, and Post, 2011; Makse, 2021).

Professional expertise enhances a legislator's credibility within the legislature on issues related to their profession. The credibility and expertise derived from their professional backgrounds result in increased specialization and authority in setting legislative agendas (Francis and Bramlett, 2017; Makse, 2022). Due to the tendency of legislators to rely on experts for information, professionals who understand an issue, take a personal stance, advocate for action, and provide personal testimony can shape policy in their field because legislators often rely on experts for information (Clement, 2018; Kerschner and Cohen, 2002). Thus, the bills congruent with a legislator's professional background are more likely to advance through the legislative process (Makse, 2021; Makse, 2022; Smith, 2022). Therefore, this paper anticipates that health-related bills sponsored by legislators with healthcare professional backgrounds will have higher success rates compared to all bills sponsored by these legislators.

If a legislator's professional field establishes their credibility regarding legislation within their specific professional field, it logically follows that a legislator's occupational background within the professional field will further enhance the legislator's credibility. Studies with large numbers of cases categorize legislators into general professional fields such as "health," "law," or "business." (Makse, 2021; Makse, 2022; Smith, 2022). For example, Makse (2022) uses both the terms "policy spheres" and "occupational categories" to describe larger groupings of professionals, but Makse and others do not test the effects of occupational specialties within professional fields (Makse, 2022). This study assesses the effects of a more specific form of expertise by considering

how a legislator's occupation within a field affects agenda setting (bill patronage) and effectiveness (bill passage).

This approach captures nuances within a profession: nurses should be distinguished from doctors, and both should be distinguished from health administrators. We should want to understand the legislative behavior of physicians, nurses, administrators, or dentists as it pertains to their unique occupational expertise and experiences. Each occupation has its own particular background, knowledge, training, and expertise, and thus credibility on health care policy matters. Thus, for example, one should expect an administrator of a nursing home to have expertise regarding nursing home or rehabilitation center policies and would thereby be likely to patron and pass bills pertaining to nursing homes and continuing care. Similarly, one should expect a nurse to be an expert in the post-COVID-19 nursing shortages, and to patron and pass bills pertaining to this critical issue. Legislators with occupational expertise are likely to leverage their credibility and be more likely to patron and pass bills relating to their occupation in the health care field. Therefore, this study considers not just a legislator's background as a health professional but the legislator's particular occupation within the field. Hansen, Carnes, and Gray (2019) find that the presence of legislators with insurance backgrounds resulted in consideration of more favorable bills pertaining to the insurance industry. Professions and their occupational organizations have recognized this benefit and have dedicated resources to elect professionals in their field or even in advocacy roles (Hansen, Carnes, and Gray, 2019; Sullivan and Reedy, 2005; Young, 2019). As a result of their heightened expertise and credibility, legislators should have more success passing bills congruent with their occupations than passing other health-related bills.

In addition to the occupations of legislators, this paper also consider variables that have been known to affect agenda setting and bill success for health legislation—committee

membership, gender, and majority party status. Research has shown that members of committees of jurisdiction are more likely to patron and gain passage of legislation related to their professional background (Battista, 2012; Berry and Fowler, 2018). In terms of gender, women are more likely than men to patron and gain passage of health-related legislation (Bratton and Hayne, 1999; Davis and Upston, 2004). Studies have also found that members of the majority party are more likely to pass bills than those of the minority party (Hansen, Carnes, and Gray, 2019; Makse, 2021; Makse, 2022).

This research compare these variables to the patronage and passage of the two types of bills: health-related bills and occupationally-congruent health related bills. Health-related bills relate to a legislator's profession, in this case healthcare. For example, this would include a nurse introducing a bill to regulate the number of MRI scanners, or a doctor introducing a bill to require minimum staffing at nursing homes. Occupationally-congruent bills are bills that directly pertain to a legislator's occupation within the health care profession. Such bills would include an OB/GYN introducing bills pertaining to abortion eligibility, or a nurse patroning a bill about reciprocal nurse licensure.

This research expects the three variables—committee membership, gender, and majority party status-- will help to explain variations in the percentage of all health-related bills patroned by health professionals, but the relationships should be weaker and perhaps fail to explain variations in occupationally-congruent bills. If occupation matters, then committee membership, gender, and majority status should make little or no difference in terms of explaining patronage and passage of occupationally-congruent bills.

Data and Methods

The researcher collected data on health professionals serving in the legislature from 1994

to 2023. The beginning of this period (1994) marks the first year the Virginia General Assembly began to catalog all of its bills into a searchable database. The twenty-nine year stretch of time includes a variety and a good number of health professionals. To identify health professional legislators during this period, the researcher collected data from three primary sources: the History of the Virginia House of Delegates, the Virginia General Assembly Legislative Information System (LIS), and the Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP), a non-profit organization dedicated to Virginia political reporting. The House of Delegates manages a comprehensive repository spanning from the late 18th century, encompassing service records, gender, available portraits, and reported occupations of all delegates. Employing the terms "doctor," "nurse," "physician," "dentist," "health," and "medical," the researcher identified health professionals in the General Assembly. This outcome was cross-referenced with legislator profiles in the Virginia Public Access Project. For the Senate, the researcher relied on profiles from the Virginia Public Access Project. These combined searches yielded twenty-seven legislators with health backgrounds: twenty delegates and seven senators.

Then the researcher organized the health professionals by occupation. Any legislator with a D.O. or M.D. was labeled as a physician. This category included OB/GYNs, surgeons, and pediatric neurologists. Any legislator reporting their occupation as "nurse," "dentist," "optometrist," and "pharmacists" was categorized into their respective occupational category. The researcher created a category for "non-clinical" health professionals, which included health care consultants, lobbyists, home health care network owners, and hospital administrators. Two legislators, who are clinical health practitioners did not fit into any of the previous categories (a chiropractor and physical therapist). These professions have their own degrees and certifications similar to nurses and doctors, but are independently regulated by the Virginia Department of

Health Professions. Since the two were not similar enough to have an existing and widely accepted label, they were placed in an "other" category.

The researcher gathered data from the Virginia General Assembly's Legislative Information Service (LIS) on all bills patroned by each health professional for every year they served in the Assembly. The researcher also noted how many of the patroned bills by each legislator passed the chamber. Once the year for a particular legislator was retrieved in the database, bills each one patroned were identified first as "health-related" or "non health-related." Bills that were filed with the committees with jurisdiction over health care were labeled "health-related," as were additional bills relating to the medical treatment of mental health disorders within the criminal justice system, medical marijuana as it pertained to prescriptions (but not bills dealing with legality or sale), and the prescription of opiates (but not bills dealing with criminalization).

Once "health-related" bills were identified, the researcher sorted out the "occupationally-congruent bills," i.e., bills with content that matched each legislator's occupation. Occupationally-congruent bills are nested within the larger category of health-related bills. For example, if a dentist sponsored a bill expanding the number of practitioners who can prescribe a medication, and dentists were included, that bill would be identified as congruent with the legislator's occupation. Conversely, if a dentist introduced a bill pertaining to say maternal health, the bill would be labeled a "health-related" bill, but not an "occupationally-congruent" bill. Because bill patronage varies across time and legislators, proportional variables were created to standardize the data. The variable "percent of health care related bills patroned" refers to the number of health care related bills patroned by a legislator divided by the total number of all bills patroned. The variable "percent of occupationally-congruent bills patroned" refers to the number of occupationally congruent bills patroned by a legislator divided by the number of health-related bills patroned by a legislator.

A bill was considered to have "passed" if it passed the chamber of origin and went to the other chamber. Bills that were combined—or incorporated as it is called in Virginia—into bills that ultimately passed their chamber of origin were also considered to have "passed," since they contained substantive legislative language dealing with health. The variable "percent of health care related bills passed" refers to the number of health care related bills which passed as described above divided by health care related bills patroned by a legislator. The variable "percent of occupationally-congruent passed" refers to the number of occupationally-congruent bills passed divided by the number of occupationally-congruent bills patroned by a legislator.

Given the limited number of health professionals, as well as the limited number within each occupation, the researcher gathered data for each session (i.e. each year) the legislator served in the Assembly. Thus, the unit of analysis is the session each health professional served in the General Assembly. For instance, if Senator X is a health administrator who served ten sessions in the Assembly, the dataset has ten observations for that health administrator. Anticipating the effects of other possible variables on bill patronage and success, the researcher adjusted for majority party status and committee assignment over the length of a legislator's career. For example, if Senator X's party changes from majority to minority, or if Senator X is appointed to a health committee in six sessions of their career, the coding of the variable also changes for those sessions.

Table 1 shows the distribution of health professionals by occupation and the number of sessions they served in the legislature over the length of the study (1994-2023). As expected, the legislators represent various medical professionals: physicians, nurses, optometrists, and others. The total number of sessions served by health professionals (N= 273) is the number of cases for the analysis of five dependent variables: percent of health bills patroned, percent of occupationally-

congruent bills patroned, percent of all bills passed, percent of health bills passed, and percent of

occupationally-congruent bills passed. Our first test is to consider the frequency of occupationally-

congruent bills. Most importantly we want to know if health professionals are more successful in

gaining passage of health-related bills compared with all bills and whether they are even more

successful in passing occupationally-congruent bills than health bills.

Table 1

Number of Legislators and Combined Number of Sessions

Occupation	Number of Legislators	Combined Sessions Served
Physician	7	56
Nurse	2	9
Pharmacist	4	54
Non-clinical	7	92
Dentist	2	11
Optometrist	3	29
Other	2	22

N=273

This research was also interested in the extent to which each of three theoretically relevant

independent variables—gender, committee assignment, and majority party status—compared with

each of the five dependent variables. Each variable is coded as a dummy variable. Men were

assigned a 1, Women a 0; legislators in the majority for a given year, they were assigned a 1, if

not, a 0; and members of the committees with jurisdiction over health care were also coded 1,

while those who were not on the committee of jurisdiction for health care were given a 0.

One could expect all three independent variables to be related to the passage rates of all

bills. As noted above women, members of committees, and members of the majority party should

experience more success in passing legislation dealing with any subject, and should be no different

for health professionals. However, if professional field matters to the patronage and passage of

legislation, then the independent variables should be less significant for health-related bills than

for all bills. Moreover, if occupation within the health field matters, then the independent variables will be even less important in terms of explaining the percentage of occupationally-congruent bills patroned and passed by health professionals compared with health-related bills.

Results

We start with descriptive statistics of percentages of bills patroned and passed, particularly for professionally congruent bills and occupationally congruent bills for the entire length of the study. Todd Makse (2022, 122) defines professionally congruent as "a match between the subject matter of the bill and the profession of the author." Makse finds that 18% of bills introduced in state legislatures meet this definition of "professionally congruent occupational bills" (a term that relates to the legislator's professional field, not their specific occupation) (Makse, 2022). Makse's result might serve as a rough benchmark for the data collected for this study.

Table 2 breaks down the percentage of health-related and occupationally-congruent bills patroned and passed and the percentage of all bills patroned by health professionals that passed. For health care professionals in Virginia, the total percentage of health-related bills was 25.83%, close to but higher than the result in Makse's study. The difference could be explained by differences in data collection or conceptualization of "health-related" bills. Although we have no existing standard to compare with, as an indicator of the importance of occupation on agenda setting, nearly half (47.43%) of the health-related bills patroned by health professionals were congruent with the legislator's occupation within the health field. The passage rates of bills in the three categories also reveal the importance of occupation. The passage rate for health-related bills is higher than the rate for all bills, and the passage rate for occupationally-congruent bills is higher than health-related bills.

Table 2

Percent of Bills Patroned and Passed

Category	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Percent of Health-related Bills Patroned	25.83%	20.73%	273
Percent of Occupationally-Congruent Bills Patroned (of Health Bills)	47.43%	25.64%	140
Percent of Bills Passed	59.68%	22.98%	273
Percent of Health-related Bills Passed	72.31%	32.00%	231
Percent of Occupationally-congruent Bills Passed	82.44%	28.10%	138

The following three tables report the effects of committee assignment, gender, and majority status of health professionals on the patronage and passage of health-related and occupationally-congruent bills and the passage of all bills. Recall that since the unit of analysis is the session every health professional served in the General Assembly, the means reported in each table refer to the average percentage for all the sessions served by the health professional. This paper compares the means across categories of the independent variable for each dependent variable. The results offer several insights and, most notably, reveal the role of occupation on the patronage and passage of bills.

Based on the results in Table 3, as expected, health professionals serving on the committees with health care jurisdiction patroned more than twice as many health-related bills as health professionals not on committees of jurisdiction. Yet, committee members with health backgrounds were not more likely than non-committee members to patron occupationally-congruent bills. In fact, non-committee members patroned a larger percentage (59.73%) of occupationally-congruent bills per session than committee members (41.79%). A similar pattern held for passage of health-related and occupationally-congruent bills. Non-committee members successfully passed a higher

percentage of occupationally-congruent bills compared to committee members. These results confirm the critical role of occupation in terms of patroning and passing health care legislation.

Table 3

Mean Percentages of Bills Patroned and Passed by Committee Status

Committee on Health		Percent Health-Related Bills Patroned	Percent Occupationally - Congruent Health Bills Patroned	Percent of all Bills Passed	Percent of Health-Related Bills Passed	Percent of Occupationally - Congruent Health Bills Passed
Yes	Mean	33.46%**	41.79%**	64.33%	75.64%	81.17%
	N	156	96	156	145	94
No	Mean	15.65%**	59.73%**	53.48%	66.70%	85.15%
	N	117	44	117	86	44

*p<0.05. **p<0.01

Table 4 shows the results for majority party status. This research expected that legislators with health care backgrounds in the majority party would be more successful in passing bills, including health-related and occupationally-congruent bills, at higher rates than legislators with health care professions in the minority party. However, given the credibility that goes with professional background and occupation, the percentage differences in success of passage should be lower for health-related bills than all bills and even lower for occupationally-congruent bills than health-related bills. As expected, legislators in the health professions who are in the majority party are more likely than those in the minority to pass all the bills they patron—nearly a 17% difference. The difference in percentage of health-related bills passed between majority and minority party members is just 9%. Thus, health professionals in the minority are relatively more successful in getting health-related bills passed than all bills passed. For occupationally-congruent bills, the difference between being in the majority versus the minority shrinks to just under 4%, a

statistically insignificant difference. The finding that occupationally-congruent bills do not depend on majority status validates the independent importance of occupation on legislative effectiveness.

Table 4

Mean Percentages of Bills Patroned and Passed by Majority Party Status

Majority Party Status		Percent of all Bills Passed	Percent of Health-related Bills Passed	Percent of Occupationally-congruent Bills Passed
Yes	Mean	66.20%**	75.52%**	83.30%
	N	166	148	107
No	Mean	49.57%**	66.60%**	79.46%
	N	107	83	31

*p<0.05. **p<0.01

Finally, Table 5 reports the results of gender differences in patronage and passage of health-related and occupationally-congruent bills for health professionals. The results show that there is no significant difference between men and women in the percentage of health-related bills or the percentage of occupationally-congruent bills patroned. However, both health-related bills and occupationally-congruent bills patroned by women are more likely to pass than those patroned by men. The differences are roughly similar, but a bit larger for occupationally-congruent bills. The results conform with findings in existing literature that female legislators with health care professional backgrounds are more likely to achieve the passage of health care related legislation.

Table 5

Mean Percentages of Bills Patroned and Passed by Gender

Occupation	Percent Health-related	Percent Occupationally - Congruent of	Percent of all Bills Passed	Percent of Health-related Bills Passed	Percent of Occupationally-congruent Bills Passed

		Bills Patroned	Health-related Patroned			
Woman	Mean	24.57%	43.84%	60.57%	80.95%*	93.99%*
	N	60	23	60	43	23
Men	Mean	26.19%	48.13%	59.43%	70.33%*	80.13%*
	N	213	117	213	188	115

*$p<0.05$. **$p<0.01$

Conclusion

The results of this study enhance our understanding of how legislators' professional backgrounds influence their ability to shape the legislative agenda and pass legislation. Health professionals who support health-related bills have a higher success rate in getting them passed, compared to all the bills they patron. They experience even greater success with bills that are congruent with their occupation within the health care profession. More importantly, neither committee assignments nor majority party status affects the passage of occupationally-congruent bills.

One of the key takeaways from this study is the importance of considering occupational backgrounds within the realm of health professionals. Occupation plays a more significant role in bill passage rates than a legislator's broader professional field. Thus, studies investigating how information affects legislative behavior should focus on the specific occupational field within a legislator's profession. These findings could then be applied to other policy areas. For instance, legislators with a background in criminal prosecution should be likely to have distinct policy priorities and more likely to pass bills related to prosecution compared to defense attorneys or corporate lawyers. Similarly, teachers should be more likely to propose bills addressing classroom issues and be more likely to succeed with those bills than school administrators. It is crucial to

consider not only whether a legislator has a professional background in the field of health, law, or education, but also their subspecialty within the field. Legislatures are more likely to rely on and give credibility to professionals who possess detailed expertise within their respective occupations.

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Eugenics to The Great Replacement – How Eugenical Ideas Impact Modern Movements of White Supremacy

Asta Jørgensen
University of Virginia, School of

Education and Human Development
4th Year Undergraduate Student
Major: Youth and Social Innovation
adj9yx@virginia.edu

Abstract

While White supremacist ideas have been part of Western cultures since the Enlightenment, the ways in which these ideals are expressed change over time. In the early 1900's White supremacists widely supported Eugenics, a pseudoscience which claimed White people were superior to all others and attempted to create a better human race by controlling people's ability to reproduce. In modern times, many White supremacists believe in Great Replacement Theory. Supporters of the Great Replacement Theory (GRT) believe that there is an intentional ploy to replace White populations in the Western world by non-White immigrants. This paper argues that the fear of losing status and power by proponents of GRT parallels the fears of eugenicists in the early 1900's. This paper focuses on the similarities between the ideas expressed by Tucker Carlson, a public intellectual and former Fox News host, in his 2022 article "The Great Replacement is an Electoral Strategy" and student term papers from the University of Virginia (UVA) from 1923 to 1935, when UVA was a leading university in the American eugenics' movement (Dorr, 2008). This analysis revealed four major themes shared amongst the eugenics papers and Carlson's paper: belief in White supremacy, the need to protect the White race and its superiority from a common enemy, the need to protect White people's financial wellbeing, and the fear of White replacement resulting in a civilizations' decline. Taking Carlson's paper as a representative of contemporary Great Replacement Theories and the UVA papers as representative of early 20th century eugenical beliefs, this paper highlights some of the enduring beliefs and anxieties which have undergirded White supremacist discourse over the past century.

Keywords: Great Replacement Theory, Eugenics, White supremacy, University of Virginia, Tucker Carlson

Eugenics to the great replacement: How eugenical ideas impact modern movements of white supremacy

Introduction

According to a poll conducted by NORC, a research institution, and the Associated Press, 29% of American adults are either extremely or very concerned "that native-born Americans are losing economic, political, and cultural influence in this country [United States] because of the growing population of immigrants" (Associated Press, 2022). In this same study they found that 32% of American adults strongly or somewhat agree with the statement, "There is a group of people in this country [United States] who are trying to replace native-born Americans with immigrants who agree with their political views" (Associated Press, 2022). These statements align with the Great Replacement Theory (GRT), a belief system that argues that supposedly lenient immigration policies in the United States and Europe are a plot to replace the political and cultural power of the White race (The Great Replacement Theory, Explained, n.d.). The rising belief in GRT is happening alongside growing projections that the percentage of the non-White population in the United States will be larger than 50% of the total population, occurring between 2030 and 2060 (Craig et al., 2018; Vespa et al., 2018). Many White Americans perceive this future "majority-minority" shift as a threat to their status in social, economic, political, and cultural arenas (Craig et al., 2018).

This paper argues that the fear of losing status and power by White Americans is not new; it parallels the fears of eugenicists in the early 1900's. This paper focuses on the similarities between the ideas of Tucker Carlson, an accepted public intellectual and news talk show host, as expressed in his article "The Great Replacement is an Electoral Strategy," and student term papers from the University of Virginia from 1923 to 1935, during which UVA was a leading university in the

American eugenics movement (Dorr, 2008). To my knowledge, there is a lack of research connecting eugenicists beliefs to the modern-day movement of Great Replacement. This paper works to illuminate that connection.

Literature Review

White Supremacy

Both Great Replacement Theory and eugenics are movements which support and seek to maintain White supremacy. The foundation of modern White supremacy can be traced back to medieval Europe. At that time, there was a belief in a Chain of Hierarchy, which Europeans used to rank plants, animals, and people in accordance with their closeness to God, with humans at the top of the hierarchy (Ogunnaike, 2018). In medieval Europe, this sorting focused primarily on intellect; during the Enlightenment, the emphasis switched from intellect to one's physical appearance and culture, turning subjective and cultural characteristics into proxies for intellect (Ogunnaike, 2018). As a result, the Great Chain of Being, a later evolution of the Chain of Hierarchy, placed the White race at the top of the hierarchy; every other race was compared to this highest standard and ranked accordingly by White scientists. This enshrined race essentialism into the modern Western intellectual tradition, judging a person's perceived value based on their proximity to the White race and paving the way for the elaborate racial hierarchies of the 18th and 19th centuries (Ogunnaike, 2018). This modified Great Chain of Being created the epistemological basis for the growth of slavery, colonialism, and the eugenics movement in the 1900's, and embedded White supremacist ideals within the political, social and economic structures of the modern world.

Eugenics

In the late 19th century Francis Galton coined the term eugenics having been inspired by Charles

Darwin's *Origins of Species*. Eugenics is a scientifically inaccurate theory with two core tenets; foremostly, it strives to prove the inherent superiority of rich White people over Black, Native American, immigrant, and low socioeconomic status populations; and secondly, it aspires to create an idealized human race through controlling people's ability to have children, most frequently using the tools of forceful sterilization, segregation, and blocking inter-racial marriages. The theory is considered scientifically inaccurate due to eugenicists' inaccurate assumption that human qualities such as intelligence were inherited genetically, their lack of focus on how environmental impacts shift these qualities, and their oversimplification of complex traits and disorders (National Human Genome Research Institute, 2022). Galton supported both increasing birth rates and reproduction amongst those with "natural gifts" as well as decreasing reproduction in those he considered "refuse" (Bulmer, 2003, pp. 80-81). These Galtonian principles were the basis of the eugenics movement which took hold in over thirty countries, including the United States and Germany in the early 1900's (Bulmer, 2003). In the United States, approximately 376 colleges nationwide were teaching eugenics by 1928 and it received considerable public support throughout the 1930's (Dorr, 2008; Wilson, 2024). The United States internationally led the way in writing eugenics into both state and federal laws, allowing the forceful sterilization of people who were deemed unfit to have kids (Kuhl, 2002). In some cases, these laws were used as inspiration for Nazi laws around sterilization and eugenics (Kuhl, 2002). In part due to the close ties of the German and American eugenics movements, eugenics largely fell out of favor following the Second World War, when the world saw the catastrophic impacts of the Holocaust and Nazi rule (Kuhl, 2022; Wilson, 2024).

Eugenics at UVA

The University of Virginia (UVA) was a leading institution in the American eugenics' movement. At UVA, leaders such as Thomas Jefferson, Paul Brandon Barringer, and Edwin Alderman ensured that students were exposed to and taught eugenical ideas from 1826 until 1953. These teachings not only ingrained false ideas of racialized superiority into UVA students, but also prepared them to spread eugenics to the world around them after graduating. The founder and architect of UVA, Thomas Jefferson wrote in his *Notes of the State of Virginia*, that he believed "as a suspicion only, that the Blacks, whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to the Whites in the endowments both of body and mind" (Jefferson, 1996, p. 143). He believed this suspicion could be proven under the "anatomical knife" and designed his university accordingly (Jefferson, 1996, p.143). To prove this suspicion of White racial superiority Jefferson hired a professor of medicine and anatomy, Robley Dunglison (Gates, 2017). When Dunglison refused to perform anatomical dissections of cadavers for students in his home, Jefferson designed the Anatomical Theater (*Anatomical Theatre Render Gallery*, n.d.; Gates, 2017; Rathbone, 2013). This theater had a dissection table in the middle and stadium style seating around it to allow for students to watch dissection happen (Nelson, 2022). Thus, with UVA's founding in 1819 Thomas Jefferson planted the seeds to allow UVA to become a leader in the eugenics movement almost a century later.

At the turn of the 20th century, Paul Brandon Barringer, was appointed UVA's Chair of Faculty, a similar position to the current university president position. At the time, Barringer was "America's most visible, learned, and 'scientific' southern expositor on the 'Negro problem,'" (Dorr, 2008, p. 28). "The Negro Problem," in this case, was the supposed threat Black people posed to White people (Dorr, 2008). Barringer espoused the doctrine that the increased spread of syphilis amongst the Black community was proof of their biological inferiority, and this

assumption guided his professional work (Dorr, 2008, p. 22). Under Barringer, UVA built its first hospital in 1901. Guided by his ideals of White racial superiority he ensured "Medical students during the Barringer era learned his attitudes not merely as social views, but as part of their medical education" (Lombardo & Dorr, 2006, p. 301). During his tenure, Barringer trained several future U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) physicians, an assistant surgeon general, and, most notably, two surgeon generals (Dorr, 2008). In fact, the PHS surgeon general responsible for starting the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment and the two assistant surgeon generals who oversaw it during its first decade all graduated from UVA's medical school having been heavily influenced by Barringer's ideals and the emphasis of eugenics in their studies (Lombardo & Dorr, 2006).

Following Barringer's tenure as Chair of Faculty in 1905, UVA's first President, Edwin Alderman, moved eugenical ideas outside of the scope of anatomy studies and medical training and began weaving eugenical ideals into curricula across the university, including in the School of Education (Hantman, 2018; Reynolds, 2020). Alderman also appointed several well-known eugenicists to senior university roles (Hantman, 2018). Alderman's expansion exposed most UVA students to the tenets of the eugenics movement, preparing these students to impact state and national policies in line with eugenics.

Influenced by UVA, the Virginia Assembly passed the Virginia Sterilization Act of 1924, which allowed for the forceful sterilization of people deemed unfit to bear children. While this law is not the first sterilization law in the United States, it is the first to be widely enforced as it was designed to withstand legal challenge (Bulmer, 2003). At the time of passage, a quarter of the Virginia House of Representatives were UVA alums, displaying the impact of UVA's eugenics focused curricula (*House History*, n.d.). Eugenics historian, Gregory Dorr writes in his book *Segregation's science: Eugenics and society in Virginia,* that the Virginia Sterilization Act of 1924 was passed

because "Virginia's eugenical propagandists— physicians at the state's two medical schools, undergraduate teachers of eugenics, and high school teachers taught to think and instruct eugenically— had transformed public opinion" (2008 p. 129). It is clear that one of the two medical schools Dorr refers to is UVA, the other likely being the Medical College of Virginia. As already established, UVA not only had a medical school but taught eugenics both at the undergraduate level and in its School of Education, highlighting the impact UVA had on statewide policy decisions (Dorr, 2008).

In 1927, The Virginia Sterilization Act was challenged in the Supreme Court case of *Buck v. Bell*, bringing the Virginia Sterilization Act to a national stage and carrying UVA's influence with it. The *Buck v. Bell* case centered upon Carrie Buck, who was forcefully sterilized at the Virginia Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-Minded (Lombardo, 2008). The defendant, John H. Bell, a UVA alum, argued that the forceful sterilization of Carrie Buck was for the public good, because it would stop her from passing on her feeble-mindedness to any more children (Lombardo, 2008). Upon receiving this argument, the Supreme Court upholds *Buck v. Bell*, giving constitutional backing for similar sterilization laws to be passed across the nation; as a result, the sterilization rate increased to approximately 3,000 per year in the United States in the 1930's (Bulmer, 2003). Importantly, *Buck v. Bell* was also used during the Nuremberg trials to support why the Holocaust was not a war crime (Bruinius, 2007; *Buck v. Bell, Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia*, n.d.). Overall, the University of Virginia and its alums had a wide-reaching impact on the study of eugenics, and the legislative landscape of forceful sterilization both nationally and internationally.

Great Replacement Theory and Tucker Carlson

As a more modern take on White supremacy, Great Replacement Theory can be traced back to 1973 when French author Jean Raspail wrote a fictional book, *The Camp of Saints*, about the

destruction of White society due to immigration from the global south. This book has circulated within American White supremacist groups since the 1980s (The Great Replacement Theory, Explained, n.d.). The term gained popularity in 2012 when French philosopher Renaud Camus wrote a book called *The Great Replacement* which argued that Europe was being colonized by immigrants who were "flooding the continent in what [amounted] to an extinction level event" (Ekman, 2022, p. 3; The Great Replacement Theory, Explained, n.d.). More recently, GRT has gained mainstream attention as politicians and newscasters disseminate the theory both in the United States and Europe and as several mass shootings have been linked to this rhetoric (The Great Replacement Theory, Explained, n.d; Ekman, 2022; Davey & Ebner, 2019; Obaidi et al., 2022).

Great Replacement Theory argues White people are existentially threatened by immigration (Obaidi et al., 2022). The International Institute for Counter Terrorism delineates the fear of replacement from a larger overarching theory of "the White Replacement Theory." White Replacement Theory argues that the "White race is facing an existential threat of extinction, endangered by an influx of non-White people who intend to dilute White culture and racial pedigree" (Azani et al., 2020). While "White Replacement Theory" better encapsulates the ideologies that feed it and better highlights the extreme fear of White extinction, this article will use the language of Great Replacement Theory as it is the most frequently used descriptor.

Tucker Carlson, a former host on Fox News, the most-watched cable TV network in the United States in 2022, is a prominent figure in the American GRT movement, often referenced as a figurehead of the movement (Bump, 2022; Deplatform Tucker Carlson and the "Great Replacement" Theory, 2022; Peters, 2022; Rahman, 2022; Ekman, 2022). Through his Fox News notoriety, Carlson has been credited for moving far-right viewpoints into mainstream American

politics and directly influencing the views of former President Donald Trump (Duignan, 2024). Carlson's beliefs are on display in his 2022 article "The Great Replacement is an Electoral Strategy," which outlines his beliefs on the existential threat immigration poses on American society.

Methodology

To establish the relationship between eugenics and GRT, I used a cross-comparative study of texts on eugenics and GRT. As source material for eugenics, I collected student term papers from the UVA Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library. I identified 17 student term papers discussing eugenics, sterilization or racial hierarchies. Seven of them are dated ranging from 1923-1935. The rest are undated but presumably fall within a range of 1920's to the 1950's as many of them come from students studying under Professor Ivey Foreman Lewis, who worked at UVA from 1915 to 1953 (Dorr, 2008). Analyzing these papers, I sought to identify key themes underpinning their eugenical ideas. For example, when a student wrote about the supposed inherent inferiority of Black people, I identified quotes highlighting why this was believed to be important to the well-being of White people or the state. Once I read all the texts and pulled out quotes, I sorted them into categories based on what belief, fear, or reason they gave for sterilization or eugenics. In reporting these findings, I limited the quotes to one exemplar quote per paper per fear, belief, or reason. My analysis produced four common themes found within the UVA student term papers: protection of a superior race, economic protection of the superior race, fear of replacement, and fear of civilization's decline (see Table 1). Using student term papers allowed me to gain a general understanding of the ideas students were learning which highlights the ideals alums may have used to create the widespread acceptance of eugenical sterilization discussed above.

After analyzing student term papers, I shifted my research to the modern Great Replacement Theory and Tucker Carlson. Carlson summarizes his views on the Great Replacement Theory in a Fox News article titled "The Great Replacement is an Electoral Strategy." Similar to the analysis for student term papers, I categorized quotes from this article and sorted them based on similarity to the core themes of eugenics found in the student term papers. This cross-comparison of beliefs allowed me to analyze eugenics and the Great Replacement Theory as interrelated theories. Below is a table summarizing the four themes highlighted above and the quotes that support those fears and beliefs.

Table 1

Comparison of themes found in student papers and Tucker Carlson's article

Source	Protection of superior race	Economic reasons	Fear of replacement	Fear of civilization's decline
Tucker Carlson (2022). *The Great Replacement is an Electoral strategy*	"People who are moving here, are not becoming assimilated"	"So naturally, people are coming because … you will be treated like someone who deserves to be here and given every possible public benefit"	"Eventually there will be no more native-born Americans."	"You have a recipe for social collapse"

Blair (1934). *Eugenical Sterilization.*		"Great burden to the state and something should be done to relieve society of the care" (p. 3)		"Some means must be found to check the impending degeneracy of mankind" (p. 1)
Eversole, (n.d.). *The inheritance of Feeblemindedness.*				"How are we to preserve society? … by the enforcement of rigid eugenic reforms." (p. 15)
Feinstein, (n.d). *Race Mixture.*	"The Negro certainly injures or destroys the more specialized qualities of the White race" (p. 1)		"In the near future…the Whites will be pressed to the wall by the increasing numbers of colored races" (p. 2-3)	

Graves, (n.d.). *Sterilization for Human Betterment.*	"Sterilization must be put into immediate practice as a means of protection" (p. 2)	"Sterilization for the betterment of the state" (p. 5)		"The birth rate and the death rate will coincide… it becomes more and more necessary for the thinking element of our population to demand and enforce eugenic methods to prevent this racial suicide" (p. 2)
Gregory, (n.d.). *A Plan of Eugenics.*			"Over balancing of the relations between competent and the incompetent" (p.1)	"We will rush head long into the same abyss of destruction that has swallowed so many peoples in the past." (p. 2)
Guy, (1923). *The Adaptations of Man.*	"It is hoped in the future this mixing will cease and the better civilization can proceed uninterrupted" (p. 8)			"Man is the sickest of all animals" (p. 8)

Heins (1935). *Sterilization and Society.*		"Mentally defective people, in this country are quite a burden upon the taxpayer." (p. 7)	"Morons are multiplying faster than the college professors" (p. 2)	"Civilized races are, biologically plunging downward" (p. 2)
Horsley, (n.d.). *The Negro Problem in the US.*				"History shows again and again that such an amalgamation leads to degeneration and a downfall of the existing civilization" (p. 11)
Lisle, (n.d.). *The American Race Problem.*	"Can such a backward group be plated on parity with such a culturally advanced group as the Whites without dragging the White standard to a level intermediate between the group?" (p. 3)		"Negro population is increasing in greater numbers than the White population" (p. 3)	

Markowitz (n.d.). *Shooting The Mad Stork, a Paper on The Present Status of Human Sterilization.*			"There exists a rapid multiplication of the socially inadequate with corresponding diminution of the superior classes" (p. 1)	"The population in relatively few years will be poisoned by these border line and feebleminded individuals and that average intelligence will take a drop" (p. 2)
Ripley, (n.d.). A *Race Problem in America.*	"Today more than ever before it's [the White race's] supremacy is becoming endangered and in part is becoming extinct through its failure to cope with problems of racial intermingling" (p.2)		"The character of the more advanced race will tend to become more and more obliterated" (p. 3)	"Down fall of civilizations may for the most part be attribute to their intermingling with inferior and genotypically different races" (p. 1)
Rogati, (1930). *The Problem of Populations in General*	"The indiscriminate mixing of cases of men… is essentially a process of mongrelization" (p. 32)			

Thorne, (1930). *The Mentally Deficient Classes.*				"Our civilization will slump or crash from mere lack of brains" (p. 6)
Williams, (1935). *The Superior Must Perpetuate the Race.*		"As the burden of relief becomes lighter and the inferior population becomes less, there will be more room and a brighter future for superior children" (p. 5)		
Worthington, (1935). *Inheritance of Mental Traits.*		"For every incapable eliminated there is at least an economic gain" (p. 17)		

Discussion

Assumptions of Superiority Based on Race and Class

At the foundation of all the quotes above is the inherent belief in White supremacy. Eugenicists make this explicit as they often reference the White race as the superior race, and the superiority of the upper class, or at least of the middle class. Eugenicists claim superiority over everyone who

is not male, rich, or "American" and frequently reference college educated individuals. Several of the students also refer to the inherent inferiority of immigrants; for example, Graves states that, "the immigrant class [is] mentally weak" (n.d. p. 3). In his 1934 essay, Blair writes, "We all know the personalities about us who are objectionable, and we can quickly point out the stocks that should not reproduce" (p. 4). What was considered objectionable then, similar to what is considered objectionable today, was heavily influenced by people's individual biases and who was considered superior.

Another aspect of this superiority was students' hierarchical views on race. Students used the higher IQ of White people to claim they were naturally superior to Black people, whilst students ignored any environmental factors or cultural biases inherent in the test that would create this difference (Jencks & Phillips, 1998). Furthermore, UVA students supported White superiority through racist and factually inaccurate ideas about Africa and civilizations across time. Horsley believed that "No negro or any colored race has ever developed a civilization" (n.d., p. 11). These students instead believed that civilizations like ancient Egypt were "Caucasian and declined rapidly after the infiltration of Negro blood" (Horlsey, n.d, p. 2-3). Although historically inaccurate, such passages highlight the extent of students' beliefs of superiority. They could not fathom a successful civilization that didn't have the White race in the seat of power.

The White superiority espoused in Tucker Carlson's piece on GRT is much less obvious. Without explicitly mentioning the superiority of White people, Carlson uses coded language to make a similar point. For example, Carlson focuses on the superiority of "native-born Americans" and takes issue with a quote from Joe Biden where Biden points out that "Fewer than 50% of the people in America from then on will be White European stock. That's not a bad thing. That's a source of our strength" (Carlson, 2022). Carlson refutes and takes issue with this claim of strength, asking

"how is that a source of strength" (Carlson, 2022). The specific emphasis on White people losing majority, and therefore "native born Americans" losing power to immigrants, is coded language for loss of power of White people. Thus, while Carlson uses less explicitly racist language than eugenicists, his beliefs remain centered within a belief in White supremacy.

Protecting a Superior Race from a Common Enemy

Protection of the superior race from a common enemy is a fundamental fear which eugenicists as well as proponents of GRT use to emphasize the need for preventative action: sterilization and more restrictive immigration policies, respectively. While eugenicists had many groups of people they viewed as a threat, a common enemy was identified in Black people and by extension, mixed-race children. Student papers highlighted fears that "intermingling" between White and Black people would cause mixed race children, which Ripley described as "menace[s]" (n.d.). They also were worried that mixed race children would "degrade the White stock" (Horsley, n.d, p.11). Out of this fear came the need to protect the White race. This was emphasized by Ripley's statement that "Sterilization must be put into immediate practice as a means of protection" (n.d, p. 2).

Tucker Carlson in "The Great Replacement is an Electoral Strategy" makes similar assertions on the need to protect White supremacy from a supposed threat. When describing the threat, Carlson blames immigrants who are "not becoming assimilated" (Carlson, 2022). Carlson is worried the lack of assimilation coupled with immigrants outnumbering White Americans threatens the dominant White culture of the United States. Interestingly, while Carlson and the eugenicists would agree on the existence of an existential threat to White superiority, they label this threat differently. While eugenicists emphasize the risk of "intermingling" races, Carlson focuses on the risk of immigrants who do not properly assimilate with American culture. Despite this difference, the basis of both fears are that the White race needs to be protected from outsiders: those who do

not look and speak like the White majority, in other words, the "common enemy." This in turn connects to the need to protect the White race economically and opens up the final two key fears shared by the eugenics and GRT movements: a fear of replacement, and a fear of the decline of civilization as a whole.

Economic Reasonings

Students and Carlson are concerned about protecting the financial wellbeing of the state, and by extension White people, from having to support either feeble-minded people or immigrant populations. One route for this economic protection is through decreasing state spending, and in turn saving taxpayers' money. In 1934, Blair highlighted that mentally ill people are a "great burden to the state and something should be done to relieve society of the care" (p. 3). Overall, students argued that the state was spending too much money on the "feeble-minded," and that this in turn is "quite a burden upon the taxpayer" (Heins, 1935, p.7). Tucker Carlson, in contrast, is not worried about "feeble-minded" people receiving too much aid, but instead that immigrants are "given every possible American benefit" (2022). Presumably some of these benefits are social policies meant to support immigrants and other marginalized populations. He does not explicitly say that the money being spent on social policies could be used for something else, but instead argues that immigrants are a burden on the state raising the need for restrictive immigration policies. This burden is described as a direct burden on taxpayers as Carlson asserts that undocumented immigrants are moved around the United States by the government, "often at public expense paid for by you without your knowledge" (2022). While both Carlson and students use claims of betterment for the state, the real people they are worried about are taxpayers. They are not, however, worried about all taxpayers, but instead believe that superior individuals would financially benefit from other people being sterilized or unable to immigrate, despite these

individuals also being tax-paying members of our society. This is explicitly referenced in two essays when Graves and Williams described how sterilization creates more space for superior people and their children (n.d.; 1935). Tucker Carlson highlights a similar sentiment when he states that current immigration policies in the United States are "aligned against your most basic interests" (2022). Basic interests, in this case, are a reference to jobs. He goes on to say that "foreign born applicants" are being given "American jobs" (Carlson, 2022). Carlson's comments share similarities with the economically motivated argument of UVA students, but instead of focusing on notions of "money" (Graves, n.d. p. 4; Williams, 1935, p. 5) or "more room" (Graves, n.d. p. 6; Williams, 1935 p. 5), Carlson focuses on "jobs" (2022).

Fear of Replacement

The fear of replacement is, in simplest form, the fear that "inferior" people will soon greatly outnumber "superior" people. Students were afraid Black people, immigrants, and others that they considered "feeble-minded" would replace them and their power in the United States. Carlson is specifically worried that "eventually there will be no more native-born Americans" and that "the problem is the volume [of immigrants]" (2022). The Institute for Strategic Dialogue highlights that YouTube videos supporting Great Replacement Theory often "suggest explicitly or implicitly that migrant communities are impure and have a polluting effect on the host society" (Davey & Ebner, 2019, p. 13). Furthermore, in the text *The Great Replacement*, Camus explicitly wrote that immigrants were outnumbering French natives due to their higher birthrates, showcasing how a fundamental text of GRT shares sentiment with Tucker Carlson's beliefs (Ekman, 2022). Many of the GRT analyses and statements share parallels to the fears held by Ripley when he wrote, "Every day we find aliens pouring in by the thousands from every corner of the earth" (n.d., p.1). Ripley was worried about the volume of immigrants, and by using the term alien, inferred a similar

polluting aspect as highlighted by Davey and Ebner, researchers for the Institute for Strategic Dialogue. In fact, the similarities between the eugenicist's beliefs and those of proponents of GRT highlight how little these sentiments have shifted in the past 100 years.

Decline of Civilization

As eugenicists fear their replacement, they grapple with another fear that if they are replaced civilization will fail. Much of the fear of a decline in civilization was based on the inaccurate belief that White people are responsible for all progressive civilizations and the belief that the "downfall of civilizations may for the most part be attributed to [White people] intermingling with inferior and genotypically different races" (Ripley, n.d., p. 1). Civilization's decline is also attributed to an increased amount of people who are feeble-minded; for example, Thorne states, "Our civilization will slump or crash from mere lack of brains" (1930, p. 6). The solution to this decline in civilization is sterilization. In "Sterilization and Society," Heins goes as far as to say he believes "that such a [sterilization] program [as the German one] carefully and conscientiously carried out in this nation…would result in a few hundred years in a healthier and happier America" (1935, p. 20). The sterilization program Heins references is the 1934 Nazi sterilization law, which mandated forceful sterilization for people with certain mental and physical disabilities (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.). His use of "happier and healthier America" also emphasizes the point that sterilization was seen as the benevolent solution because it would have stopped the impending decline of civilization, which allowed students to conveniently ignore the harm that forced sterilization caused. Importantly the "happier and healthier America" students are seeking is one where White rich people remain at the center of power, because according to them civilization can only exist with White people in power. The underlying message that supports

sterilization to prevent civilization's decline is also sterilization for the maintenance of White supremacy.

Similar to eugenicists, Carlson believes that the replacement of White people by immigrants not assimilating will lead to the downfall of civilization. Tucker Carlson believes that "five million migrants became citizens without even being able to speak our language… This could capsize the United States" (2022). The danger of these five million immigrants is their lack of assimilation, which is highlighted by the fact that they do not speak English. This lack of assimilation threatens White people's power, because it stops White culture and language from being the dominant culture in the United States. Carlson believes that this lack of assimilation and therefore lack of White superiority will "capsize the United States." The argument that immigrants threaten a society existentially is also seen in the European Great Replacement movement. The Institute of Strategic Dialogue analyzed 20 European Great Replacement YouTube videos and found that the most frequently expressed fear was 'existential threat' which included the "demise of European culture" (Davey & Ebner, 2019, p. 13). This further emphasizes my previous point, that while both Carlson and eugenicists reference downfalls of civilization, the underlying fear is that as civilization declines, so does White supremacy.

Conclusion

While eugenics as a movement fell out of favor after the Second World War, the foundational ideas that supported national movement of forceful sterilization, the rise of Nazi Germany, and gross disregard for human rights continues in a modern movement of the Great Replacement Theory. The deep-seated belief that not all men are created equal that prospered throughout the first half of the 1900's has not been erased with time. This case study demonstrates that while these two movements are not identical, eugenics and GRT are built on common beliefs and fears. This

is highlighted in their support of White supremacy, their need to protect a superior race, the need for economic protection of this superior race, as well as their fear of replacement which connects to their fear of civilization's decline. Only by understanding the deep historical roots of the Great Replacement Theory can we start to dismantle the White supremacist beliefs in the U.S. and around the world. If we do not, the history of White supremacy has shown us that the belief "men at birth are not all equal" (Heins, n.d, p. 1) will continue to persist and prosper for centuries to come.

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