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**THE MORRILL LAND-GRANT COLLEGE ACT, 1862–2012:  
VIRGINIA TECH AND THE EMERGENCE OF  
COEDUCATIONAL, MULTIRACIAL, RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITIES**

Peter Wallenstein  
Virginia Tech

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**ABSTRACT**

*Focusing as a case study on Virginia Tech, this essay traces the tremendous long-term historical significance, on its 150th anniversary, of the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant College Act. This essay first considers the origins of the Morrill Act, as well as its early post–Civil War reception in Virginia, including the beginnings of three southern variations on the national pattern: a greater emphasis than outside the South on a military regimen; a legislated mandate for racial segregation; and a rejection of coeducation at the white land-grant schools. At greater length this essay explores how what began as a teaching institution emphasizing engineering, agriculture, and the military, with an entirely white male constituency, developed into a public research university with a comprehensive curriculum and a coeducational, multiracial, and largely civilian constituency. The initial patterns and continuing changes came about through a combination of state law, institutional leadership, and new departures in federal policy. From its beginning in 1872, Virginia Tech, the state’s historically-white land-grant institution, embodied a transformation that reached across the South and indeed the nation.*

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**INTRODUCTION**

**A**s one of the nation’s dozens of land-grant institutions of higher education, Virginia Tech owes its origins to a congressman from Vermont who proposed the 1862 Land-Grant College Act that has come to carry his name, and a president from Illinois who signed it while Virginia was warring against the Union whose

Congress had just passed that law. Virginia Tech also owes its origins to the vicissitudes of early post–Civil War state politics, when the Commonwealth’s only public institutions of higher education, the Virginia Military Institute (VMI) and the University of Virginia (UVA), canceled each other out as they contended for Virginia’s share of the land-grant money. From those beginnings grew a university vastly different from the one legislated into existence in 1872. This article surveys the school’s beginnings as Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and then sketches how, through a combination of institutional leadership and shifts in federal policy, it grew into Virginia Tech.

A few years ago, at a conference at the University of Illinois, the 200th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln kicked off with an examination of Lincoln’s connection to the Land-Grant College Act of 1862, which in 2012 itself turned 150. More than one participant took exception to a then-recent and highly-publicized television series by Ken Burns, coupled with a big book, on “America’s best idea”: the system of national parks.<sup>1</sup> Not to take anything away from the national parks—Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Mount Rainier, and all the rest—but these speakers proposed a rival for the title “America’s best idea.” Maybe they were willing to consider sharing top billing, maybe not, but regardless, they wished to place the nation’s land-grant system of higher education into nomination as “America’s best idea.” This alternative nomination supplies a place to begin examining how America’s other “best idea” got put into practice and what became of it over time.

During the decade 1862–1872, under the 1862 Morrill Land-Grant College Act, American states embarked together on the establishment of a constellation of new institutions of higher education. Another transformation, or collection of transformations, over the course of the next hundred years built upon these nineteenth-century beginnings such that a new kind of institution emerged. What typically began as colleges to train farmers and engineers, in many cases both white and male and nobody else, grew into a whole new complex: coeducational, multiracial, research institutions, offering a near universe of programs to a universe of constituencies.

As one student of the Civil War origins of modern higher education has noted, in a book published on the 150th anniversary of the 1862 Morrill Act, early colleges in America had not only

been tiny but had “offered a narrow curriculum and served a narrow range of students.” By some point—the book’s author, David Michael Cohen, puts it as early as the 1870s—the “comprehensive state university” was newly coming into view, especially in the South. In short, the Civil War “sparked the formation of a major new type of institution, the Southern comprehensive university.” Together, Cohen concludes, various sets of stakeholders “reconstructed the college campus to serve new constituents and new educational purposes.”<sup>2</sup>

Although what Cohen says has considerable merit, it rests on a slim empirical base and substantially overstates the speed and degree of change, even if it points toward a future that in the end tends to bear out his major argument. For one thing, he focuses on seven institutions from across the nation, three of them in “the South”: the University of Missouri, in the Border South, and two institutions in the Deep South, the University of South Carolina and Wesleyan Female College, a private institution for white women in Georgia. While he sketches its passage, the Morrill Act plays relatively minor roles in the broader changes he traces.<sup>3</sup> An examination of a land-grant school in an Upper South state can supply another approach to the history of higher education in those early years as well as later.

A somewhat earlier study, by Rod Andrew Jr., focuses on “the Southern military school tradition” before World War I. Andrew, too, examines a sample of schools, one that excludes all schools from the Border South, such as the University of Missouri, but includes a few black land-grant institutions as well as a majority of the white land-grant schools both in the Deep South and in the Upper South, in addition to the Citadel and the Virginia Military Institute. He points out that, far more than was the case outside the South, southern land-grant institutions relied heavily upon a military organization of campus life.<sup>4</sup>

Cohen and Andrew therefore each frame the history of higher education in a new and promising way. Andrew supplies a trajectory for discerning a “southern military school tradition,” and the place of southern land-grant schools in it, from the pre-Civil War years until the World War I era and another new departure by the federal government, the establishment in 1916 of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps, after which many southern schools shifted away from their earlier emphasis on military discipline. Cohen highlights some important developments that came out of the Civil

War experience and did much to reshape higher education in every type of institution. Especially was this true in the South, where in part “Southern colleges initiated reforms that Northern colleges had already begun,” with decisions driven by such considerations as “colleges’ dearth of students, the financial woes of Southern planters, the physical remnants of battles, and the federal government’s new attention to educational matters.” Both point out that, not only did Congress include military training in the 1862 bill (unlike an earlier version that failed of enactment), but additional legislation shortly after the war offered further inducements for colleges across the land, certainly including the new land-grant schools, to hire an instructor in military affairs.<sup>5</sup>

### **ABRAHAM LINCOLN, JUSTIN MORRILL, AND THE LAND-GRANT ACT**

For Abraham Lincoln, the American ideal was best understood as the opportunity to achieve economic independence. The counter-image of the slave South gave Lincoln occasion to voice his image of the North with its free-labor basis, where young farmers did not all start out in possession of land, nor did young artisans begin work owning the tools they would need, but they need not labor for others all their lives. As Lincoln argued in 1856, they had the opportunity to obtain land or tools of their own: “The man who labored for another last year, this year labors for himself, and next year he will hire others to labor for him.”<sup>6</sup> In this rendition of the American ideal—metaphorical as well as gendered—Lincoln was collapsing into three seasons the traditional means whereby an apprentice learned his craft from a master, subsequently became a journeyman, and eventually (in many cases) himself became a master, taking on one or more apprentices, continuing the cycle and replicating in the next generation the expertise of past generations. This was not a world in which all people—all male people—were at any one time equal, but it was a world in which such people moved through the cycle of life toward and into economic independence, even an egalitarian prosperity, at the same time promoting a stable world in which social order and personal well-being were simultaneously reincarnated, generation after generation.

Lincoln had little formal schooling, having spent little time in grade school, let alone college. Most post-Civil War presidents graduated from college, so Lincoln represents an earlier time. In his

campaigns for high office, the key issues were denominated in terms of slavery, or the expansion of slavery into new areas in the West; of tariffs to protect jobs and enterprises in the manufacturing arena; and of land, access to it, in the West. Had he been speaking of the importance of schooling, he might have deployed different rhetoric, for he was hardly unaware that the course of advances in science and technology during his lifetime had begun to render the image he was projecting in that speech ever more anachronistic, certainly less applicable than it had long been.<sup>7</sup>

At much the same time, a congressman from New England, Justin S. Morrill of Vermont, had gained a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, a legislative body in which Lincoln, too, had, for a single term in the 1840s, once represented *his* constituents. Morrill, born the year after Lincoln, shared a background with the future president that included such features as persistent poverty, scant schooling, a striving for economic well-being, and social and political ambition.<sup>8</sup> Slavery was not likely, he surely thought, to make inroads into his home state; Vermont had outlawed slavery in the act of becoming a state, back in the eighteenth century. But his neighbors had fled their home state, in droves, in a sustained effort to gain economic independence, to gain their own land—in the West, and of course almost everything in the United States is west of Vermont—or perhaps make it rich in the gold fields of California.

Increasingly, an idea had been circulating that new colleges to train farmers were in order. As a member of Congress, Morrill promoted an idea that might put to great good the vast expanse of public land in the West, to improve the lives of people throughout the nation, including in Lincoln's Illinois and Morrill's Vermont. Back in the 1830s, in earlier parts of the adult lives of both Lincoln and Morrill, the nation's treasury had suffered the embarrassment of a chronic fiscal surplus, a result of land sales in what at that point was a less westerly West. Unable to agree on whether or how to spend the resulting surplus directly, Congress had arranged for this budgetary "surplus" to be "distributed" to the states, on the basis of their representation in both houses of Congress, and the recipient states would then determine how best to put such new funds to work for the benefit of their people.<sup>9</sup>

Morrill wished to fine-tune that idea, to give it more particular direction, yet still leave it up to the states to manage the funds he intended to go their way. The direct object of this largesse

was to be institutions, most of them new, that would transform the traditional approach of higher education. Rather than seek to enhance the opportunities of the social elite—the sons of prosperous families, who might train to be lawyer and doctors—Morrill championed providing formal training for the nation’s next generation of farmers and engineers, of agriculturalists and mechanics. And those lands in the West could supply a means to support this new system, even as the land itself came to benefit the families and communities that farmed that land.

Both houses of Congress approved such a bill in 1859, but President James Buchanan vetoed it. Eventually, conditions changed, and Congressman Morrill tried again. This time, Congress having approved much the same measure, a new president held office, and Lincoln signed it on July 2, 1862.<sup>10</sup> In the midst of a huge war—even as southern states were suspending operations at institutions of higher education, redirecting the limited funding that had previously gone their way, repurposing school buildings as military hospitals, with faculty and students alike heading off to war—the Union, in the midst of that war, embarked on an immense new endeavor in the realm of higher education.<sup>11</sup> The land in question, held by the federal government in the West—or, rather, scrip representing a certain amount of acreage—was apportioned to states on the basis of their congressional representation. Each state sold its allocation of land, created an annuity, and began contributing to the support of a school (or in some cases to more than one school) with programs of study consistent with the 1862 law.

How might “America’s best idea” work out? How did it play out in one of the Confederate states, Virginia? One Lincoln scholar has said about the president, always distracted by extremely pressing military matters, that he “apparently played no role” in the act’s passage and then “forgot to mention it” later that year in a list of his administration’s accomplishments. Another notes that the press paid little if any attention to it either, though once it had become law one leading journalist suggested that it could bring “wide and lasting good.”<sup>12</sup> Indeed, the congressman’s handiwork proved to have a stunning impact on the course of American social and economic history in general and the history of high education in particular.

## VIRGINIA AND THE LAND-GRANT SYSTEM

Following the Civil War, Virginia had to get restored to normal political relations with the nation—and this took until 1870—before it could hope to garner any proceeds from the Land-Grant Act. By then, the Virginia legislature had ratified the Fourteenth Amendment, and its members included a substantial number of African American men.<sup>13</sup> Even then, the legislature could come to no agreement. In a prolonged contest that a Richmond newspaper dubbed the “war of the colleges,” every college in Virginia, and some wannabe schools, went after the money. VMI and UVA were much the strongest contenders. They had both been up and running for a few decades before the war, both were state-supported institutions, and each had loyal alumni and substantial political support. Therein lay a problem, unless a compromise split the proceeds between the two schools. When neither could vanquish the other, or rather once each had vanquished the other, the legislature turned in 1872 to an offer from near the new West Virginia boundary.<sup>14</sup>

A white boys’ Methodist academy in Montgomery County, the Preston and Olin Institute, would give up its life in its previous incarnation to become a land-grant school. The state finally accepted this offer, coupled as it was with five acres of land, the former school building, and a small pot of local money, and thus was born the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC).<sup>15</sup> Years later, the institution would uniformly date its origins to that 1872 act of the Virginia legislature, although other schools—Longwood University in Virginia comes to mind, as does the University of Tennessee, another land-grant school—date their beginnings to a time decades before the modern institution was established, the time, rather, that the predecessor institution came into being.<sup>16</sup>

Finding a president, establishing a curriculum, recruiting a faculty, finding some students, all of this was a challenge, a constellation of huge challenges. Credited with arriving as the new school’s first student is Addison Caldwell, who hiked in roughly the distance of a marathon from next-door Craig County. Selected as the first president was Charles Landon Carter Minor, who had briefly served as president of Maryland Agricultural College (which became a land-grant school and today is the University of Maryland). Among the men he edged out for the post were Thomas

Conrad, former principal of the Preston and Olin Institute, and Confederate general Lunsford L. Lomax, both of whom would eventually serve as school president in the 1880s.<sup>17</sup>

How central to the school's operations and identity should the military component be? This question, one that prove recurrent in the history of the school, was particularly salient in the early years, as the school was getting under way and everyone knew that the patterns set early on would likely persist a very long time. Professor James H. Lane, a graduate of VMI, taught the sciences, and he wished the military component, which he directed, to be a central feature. President Minor wished a different emphasis, with the military component secondary, and the school emphasizing the A&M—that is agricultural and mechanical, not agricultural and military. At a faculty meeting in March 1878, a fistfight erupted between Professor Lane and President Minor over the school's future. During that time of chronic upheaval, enrollment dropped from never-robust numbers to no more than 50, so the entire enterprise was in as much doubt in Virginia as was the case in any number of other states in those early years of the land-grant system.<sup>18</sup> By the end of the school's second decade, however, it found some consensus and stability, so the land-grant designation stuck at VAMC rather than being redirected to another school, often a brand new one, as happened in North Carolina, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Connecticut, and elsewhere.<sup>19</sup>

As for the institution's early leaders, no building marks their ever having been on campus, although until the late-twentieth century, people who had played key faculty and/or administrative roles were so recognized rather than, as has frequently been the case in recent decades, major donors to the institution. Yet together, through turbulent times, these men shepherded the school from idea to reality, from promise to accomplishment. The history of the school recognizes four presidents between 1872 and 1891: Minor, Buchanan, Conrad, and Lomax. John Lee Buchanan, Minor's successor, was terminated after three months in 1880, but then he was offered the post back, something he declined. In August that year, Scott Ship (later he spelled his name Shipp) was brought in from VMI for a presidency that lasted maybe a few days, as he quickly gave it up and headed back to Lexington. Professor John Hart served as acting president in 1880–1881. Both before and at the end of Hart's year, the board of visitors offered the post to William Henry Ruffner, who had served as the board's first rector,

but Ruffner demurred. Then the board recycled its offer to former president Buchanan, who this time agreed to return to the office, where he remained for five more months.<sup>20</sup>

Not all the land-grant money went, under the Virginia legislature's 1872 act, to VAMC. Two-thirds did, but the other third went to a black school, Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute, a coeducational institution 300 miles to the east of VAMC that promptly developed a military component.<sup>21</sup> This, just a few years after the Virginia law that had banned all schools for black Virginians got scrapped. In 1890, when Congress passed a Second Morrill Act, it supplied considerably more money to schools in the system, but it also demanded as a condition that black students as well as whites benefit from the fund, although segregation was acceptable in lieu of both black and white students being admitted to the same school. Virginia, having already arranged for black citizens to benefit from a portion of the land-grant fund, continued to split the money by thirds.<sup>22</sup> In 1920, the legislature lifted the land-grant designation from Hampton, a private institution, and bestowed it on what is today Virginia State University, a public institution that had not yet been established at the time of the 1872 decision.<sup>23</sup>

## TEACHING, RESEARCH, SERVICE

People at land-grant schools, and here Tech is no exception, generally take the mantra of teaching, research, and service as two things they are not: unique to the land-grant system and, more important, an omnipresent feature of the system's past. On the brick wall along one end of campus at the University of Alabama, in Tuscaloosa, three words are emblazoned: teaching, research, service. This is the University of Alabama, the state's so-called flagship school, not Auburn, the historically-white land-grant institution many miles to its east and south. So we might well conclude that this three-part institutional identity, this brand with a trio of missions, has perhaps more to do with a school's being a *public* institution than its being a public *land-grant* place of learning.

Yet we might well posit that this fact *underscores*, not that it *undermines*, the historical significance of the Land-Grant Act of 1862. The bill that Morrill championed, and that Lincoln signed, inaugurated public higher education as a core value of the American

system. That law placed the imprimatur of the national legislature on the importance of higher education for a far more universal class of people than any public policy had previously promoted.<sup>24</sup>

As for that triple-mission, it has, like anything, its own history; it was not always what it is. VAMC began as a teaching school, virtually pure and simple. Whatever might happen in classrooms, whatever faculty might do on the side, teachers met students in classrooms where one party saw its duty as conveying to the other a body of material that was, largely at least, already known and simply required being passed along. The creation of new knowledge was not a core feature of the teaching and learning process, not central to the role of the institution. Graduate classes, in particular, were nowhere to be seen.

But Congress passed another law, and then another. The Hatch Act of 1887 inaugurated research as a second wing of the land-grant college mission.<sup>25</sup> An agricultural research station soon became an important part of each land-grant school's operations—and of its understanding of itself and its role in society. We aren't talking here, not yet, of graduate programs or external grants or anything like that, but we are talking about the quest for new knowledge, most of it of an applied kind, especially increasing agricultural productivity by addressing, for example, ills that distressed commodity crops or farm animals.

By the 1910s, Congress was enacting other laws, new mandates, new opportunities, new missions. The Smith–Hughes Act (1917) had to do with training teachers for the emerging high schools, teachers of home economic for girls and agriculture for boys. Tech became an important institution in the schooling of the teachers who would go out and do that teaching. Perhaps even more than that, under the Smith–Lever Act (1914) Congress created the extension service, according to which land-grant schools had a big new responsibility of seeing to it that the knowledge being taught—or even generated—at the home campus be extended throughout society. People should benefit from the existence of the land-grant system regardless of whether they had ever set foot upon a college campus, regardless of whether they knew where (or even whether) there was such a school.<sup>26</sup>

By the 1920s, then, the land-grant system had grown up. The funds reached ever so much farther than the nineteenth-century legislation had gone, whether dating from 1862, 1887, or 1890. The modern triple-mission had taken firm shape. Over time, that shape

would continue to change. In modern times, the extension service has periodically been savaged when budgetary times grew tough. Then, as relative prosperity returned, efforts have been made to reconstitute what had been torn down; but the local knowledge, the institutional memory, all the assets that had been in place might no longer be available for deployment. Yet people at land-grant institutions continue to hear about, and talk about, and take seriously, the triple mission of teaching–research–service in something of the form that, by around a half-century after 1862 or 1872, had taken that form.

### **THREE GREAT PRESIDENTS OF VIRGINIA TECH**

The longer-term history of the institution reflected a recurrent reconsideration of its major features as a land-grant school, with the institution’s leaders playing key roles in the school’s development. The early presidents get little respect on the Virginia Tech campus, though they got the institution up and running and developed its core features. Not only does no building carry any of their names, not all even get counted when some later president gets termed the eighth, the tenth, the fifteenth. Regardless of the pioneer leaders’ individual and collective importance, here I identify three men as the institution’s greatest leaders, and I use their presidencies to sketch the twentieth-century history of the school that started out as Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, with all those no-name nineteenth-century presidents.

John McLaren McBryde came to VAMC from South Carolina, and he very much left the mark of his presidency on his new school. From his term in office (1891–1907) we can date the origins of the name Virginia Polytechnic Institute (1896), or VPI, although the formal name would actually, for many years, be a hybrid: Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute. Then there’s intercollegiate football, a development accompanied by the school’s new colors: orange and maroon. And also a new school cheer, written by one of the students, from which both the term “Hokie” and the term “Tech” can first be seen, in the first two lines:

*Hoki, Hoki, Hoki, Hy!  
Tech! Tech! V.P.I.!*

Then there's the yearbook, the *Bugle*, a name reflecting the military nature of the school, as well as a school newspaper, now called the *Collegiate Times* but it began life in 1903 as the *Virginia Tech* (finally we get to something that dates from *after* the second-foundational 1890s). As for academics, a genuine graduate program at Tech also dates from the 1890s. So, McBryde's tenure saw such new beginnings as a graduate program, intercollegiate sports, other dimensions of an extracurricular kind, and a name change as well. Moreover, the YMCA Building, completed in 1902, permanently introduced Hokie stone as a prominent feature of campus architecture, and a variety of other new buildings went up on McBryde's watch as well.<sup>27</sup> The building today known as McBryde Hall, albeit the second edition of such a building with that name on that site, commemorates this first of the three great presidents in Virginia Tech history.

Next up is Julian Ashby Burruss, a civil engineering graduate of VAMC, class of 1898. Burruss came back to VPI—or VAMCPI—from the inaugural presidency of a white women's teaching institute in Harrisonburg, today known as James Madison University. And he served more than 25 years (1919–1945), from just after World War I until nearly the end of World War II.<sup>28</sup> At the beginning of the Burruss presidency, the Blacksburg school resembled VMI far more than it would by the time he left that office. One metaphor for the convergence of the two institutions: a cadet from China, Tien-Liang Jeu, transferred from VMI to VPI in 1921, the first of many students of Chinese ancestry to attend the Montgomery County campus that is often thought of as having remained, until the 1950s, “all-white.”<sup>29</sup> But just in the next few years, in fact that very year, VPI began to diverge significantly from its cousin institution, a divergence that became far greater in the 1960s.

Early in his presidency, Burruss made the case to the Board of Visitors, a successful case, that women (white women, or at least not black women) should also be permitted to enroll as degree candidates at his new institution. He referred to women's service during the Great War, to their recent enfranchisement through the Nineteenth Amendment, and to the fact that the College of William and Mary had recently begun admitting female students, as had the law, medical, and graduate programs at the University of Virginia. His strongest argument, the one that went the farthest to convince himself and the Board of Visitors, may well have been the

implications of the Smith–Hughes Act, which offered money for training home economics teachers that VPI could not accept because it had yet to begin admitting women as students during the regular school year (even though some women had been attending summer institutes). Women were promptly permitted to enroll in all but military courses and thus the Corps of Cadets.<sup>30</sup>

Beginning in 1921, five female full-time degree candidates enrolled at VPI, as did a few part-time students. An iconic photograph dating from commencement 1925 can be taken in general as displaying the first five women to graduate, though the actual story is a bit more complex. After two years one of the original five, Billie Kent Kabrich, married and dropped out of the college; transfer student Louise Jacobs took her place and graduated right on schedule in 1925. But another one of those five, Mary Brumfield, had already earned her bachelor's degree in 1923 and was receiving her master's in 1925. Her cohort, and the women students who followed, had to create their own campus cultural life. Excluded as they were from the men's activities, they not only started a women's basketball team and a women's theatrical troupe, they also started their own yearbook, the *Tin Horn* (a play on the men's yearbook, the *Bugle*).<sup>31</sup>

The institution, like the state and indeed the nation, came on hard times in the 1930s, and yet any number of new buildings went up on Burruss's watch, especially during the years of the Great Depression or, rather, New Deal. The Teaching and Administration Building, as it was first known, is now, appropriately, Burruss Hall; and its auditorium, when it opened in 1936, could accommodate each spring's graduation exercises. But a walk around the drillfield (or sometimes a little away from the drillfield) will bring a person to a variety of additional monuments to the New Deal, among them Campbell, Eggleston, Owens, Holden, Seitz, Hutcheson, and Agnew. The list goes on, including Squires Student Center and, up the hill in the other direction back across the drillfield, Hillcrest, known widely as the "skirt barn" when it opened in 1940 to house considerably more women students than could previously live on campus.<sup>32</sup>

Three other important features of the Burruss presidency must be mentioned here. A much more expansive graduate program came along, including a collection of doctoral programs, with the first Ph.D. awarded, in 1942, to Nathan Sugarman in chemistry.<sup>33</sup> In 1924, after so many students had fought in an actual war and thus

were exempted from participation in the Corps of Cadets, a new policy exempted all upper-division male students who had been required previously to remain in the Corps for all four years. Driving the change in large part was a need to cut back on the number of cadets, for whom the barracks had too little space, as enrollment rose from a new all-time high of 757 in the year 1919–1920 to 1,110 four years later. After 1924, all juniors and seniors could opt out, and for some years the annual *Bugle* had two sections for graduating students—male students, that is—military and civilian.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, in 1944, the white women's college in Radford became an administrative part of the Blacksburg school, which assumed a new name, a shortened version of the previous long name (in fact the name it had long been known as anyway), Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The same act of the General Assembly made Mary Washington College, located in Fredericksburg, the coordinate women's undergraduate school to the University of Virginia, thus deflecting women undergraduates from the home campus of an institution that had begun admitting a few white women to its law school and graduate programs as early as 1920 but not to the arts and sciences undergraduate curriculum.<sup>35</sup>

In 1954, a few years after President Burruss stepped down, the school recruited a new chair of the physics department, a 27-year-old full professor at the University of Kentucky named T. Marshall Hahn Jr. Hahn passed through one after another in the greater constellation of land-grant schools: his undergraduate degree at Kentucky, his Ph.D. from MIT, his earliest teaching back at Kentucky, before coming to VPI. He left VPI after five years to become dean of arts and sciences at yet another land-grant school—Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science, just as it was taking on the new name Kansas State University—before being asked in 1962 to return to western Virginia, this time as president of VPI.<sup>36</sup> Like his notable predecessors McBryde and Burruss, Hahn took the school as it was, reinforced its strengths, and built upon them—in fact built a comprehensive, multiracial, coeducational research university on the foundation that previous presidents had constructed. Neither VPI nor the University of Virginia had ever previously come close to featuring that combination of characteristics.

Among the changes on Hahn's watch, one was a vast expansion of physical infrastructure, including the new McBryde,

an expanded Burruss, and such high-rise residence halls as Slusher, Lee, and Ambler Johnston, all perched on a hill overlooking the central campus.<sup>37</sup> Another was the College of Arts and Sciences, from which students could emerge for the first time with undergraduate degrees in such fields as English, philosophy, music, theater, political science, and history—and not just undergraduate degrees but, in most of these fields, a master's degree as well.<sup>38</sup> In 1964, Hahn extended the Burruss innovation dating from 40 years earlier when he spearheaded a vigorously contested end to the requirement that virtually all male underclassmen be members of the Corps of Cadets; members of the class of 1969 who in 2012 filled the roles of university president, head football coach, and vice-president for alumni relations all enrolled in 1965 as civilians.<sup>39</sup>

Also in 1964, Hahn broke the administrative connection with Radford. The two schools went their separate ways, and women no longer faced curricular restrictions as to what they could major in or what classes they could take at VPI, as had been the case since the merger in 1944. Yet space remained a constraint until lots of new places in the residence halls could at last accommodate huge numbers of women students. By the end of the 1960s, finally the school became coeducational in reality as well as policy. In fact by then far more women were enrolled at VPI than there were members of the all-male Corps of Cadets.<sup>40</sup>

Among those women, six black undergraduates enrolled in 1966, most of them attracted by scholarship money under a grant to VPI from the Rockefeller Foundation. By 1966 the school was actually recruiting dozens of black students, whereas the very first, Irving L. Peddrew III, had been reluctantly admitted in 1953 as a day student on the basis that he wished to study electrical engineering, a curriculum unavailable at the state's black land-grant school, Virginia State College. Peddrew could not live on campus, nor eat in a dining hall, or, unlike his classmates, change majors out of engineering. Nor could any of the other black students admitted through the end of the decade, never more than four of whom were enrolled at any one time. Such obstacles all came down in the 1960s, especially after the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned segregated institutions from receiving federal funds, and the Higher Education Act of 1965, which substantially increased such funds.<sup>41</sup>

Thus the land-grant institution in Blacksburg became far more fully a *public* institution, one supported in large part by state

funds (especially in the 1960s) as well as the Morrill Act money and, at the same time, more fully open to the entire public. Although the greatest changes took place during the first half—even the first third—of Marshall Hahn’s presidency (1962–1974), big changes came in the early 1970s as well. Long before Hahn’s presidency was up, black players were representing their institution in track and field, basketball, and football, and the school had recruited its first black faculty. Speaking of athletics, Hahn perceived, as he put it early in his presidency: “Nothing can be more successful in solidifying support from all our publics than a successful intercollegiate program.”<sup>42</sup> In another big change, in 1970 VPI became Virginia Polytechnic Institute *and State University*.<sup>43</sup>

As Tech grew ever larger, and became a comprehensive university as well—not to mention coeducational and largely civilian—it diverged ever more from Virginia Military Institute. Tech ended its annual big football contest with VMI on Thanksgiving Day—at Victory Stadium in Roanoke, at a mid-point between Blacksburg and Lexington—and came to view as its primary in-state rival the school that it increasingly resembled, the University of Virginia, even as that school was itself becoming desegregated and coeducational.<sup>44</sup> Following along a path that VPI had already taken, the University of Virginia was recruiting black male undergraduates by 1970 and admitting women, both black and white, on an equal basis into the College of Arts and Sciences not long afterwards.

Another marker of Tech’s continuing development was yet another big change in the unfolding history of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets. In spring 1973 the Corps accepted its first female members—one white, Deborah Noss, the other black, Cheryl Butler—and more joined that fall.<sup>45</sup> The Corps of Cadets continued to play important roles in the life of Virginia’s largest land-grant school, but at last all undergraduates—upper division or lower, men or women, black or white—could enroll as cadets *or* civilians: their choice.

## CONCLUSION

As with race and gender, VPI’s military history more or less tracked the general tendencies among the South’s historically-white land-grant institutions, as did the school’s emergence as a comprehensive research university. Federal legislation from the

1860s fostered an emphasis on military organization; regional cultural politics required segregation and delayed coeducation. By the 1960s, however, these regional tendencies became ever less dominant; their historical connections grew increasingly attenuated or, rather, those three features formed a new pattern. Texas A&M, at the far western end of the former Confederacy, also depicted the South's evolution on race and gender as well as military organization, not to mention the development of a comprehensive research university out of an agricultural and mechanical college. Under the leadership of President James Earl Rudder (1960–1970), Texas A&M took a first step toward coeducation in 1963, admitted its first African American students that same year, and, against the opponents of what one of them termed the “curriculum-broadeners,” attained university status that year and ended mandatory participation by male freshmen in the Corps of Cadets in 1965.<sup>46</sup>

Abraham Lincoln and Justin Morrill both grew up in a world where a college education was hardly crucial to personal or professional success in life, but during their lifetimes higher education became both more highly utilitarian and more universally available. The vagaries of national politics thwarted enactment of a college land-grant bill in the late 1850s, but then facilitated enactment in 1862, not so much because so many southern Democrats left when their states seceded as that the president in office signed a bill when Congress passed it. The outcome of the Civil War in 1865 soon made a United States law applicable, and its benefits available, to every state that had recently identified with the Confederate States of America. Another kind of war, the “war of the colleges,” led to the awarding of Virginia's land-grant funds—the bulk of them, at any rate—to a school that, had it not been for the war, would have continued as a Methodist academy for white boys, in a world in which public education had little place at any level, and almost every college, whether public or private, was closed to all people except white young men.

Today, the land-grant money, whether from the original 1862 act of Congress or even counting the funding that originated in the later laws through the 1910s, comprises but a minuscule portion of the institution's budget; and the state itself supplies an every diminishing proportion of the costs of running the place. One effect of changes in recent decades is that, with a selective admissions policy, Tech can no longer practice open enrollment, and with ever greater reliance on private funds, no longer can students attend

tuition-free. But the school's land-grant designation continues, even if its name long ago shed the "agricultural and mechanical" characterization. Regardless of the dollars in question, or the name, most Virginians hardly identify the university in Blacksburg with the sixteenth president of the United States. Moreover, when Morrill's name is called upon at all, it is often mispronounced, with the emphasis on the second syllable, rather than on the first, as its owner pronounced it.

Most students, staff, and faculty alike can scarcely envision a past that is so different, a series of pasts all of them so different, from today's institution—its sheer size, its demography, its curriculum, its physical infrastructure, the cultural environment, the emphasis on research. Nonetheless with its own history, its own change as well as continuity over time, the institution's ethos continues to reflect the service/outreach dimension that dates its origins from one of those pasts. As for the congressman from Vermont, Virginia Tech, unlike a number of land-grant schools, has no building that carries his name.<sup>47</sup> But if you drive in toward the stadium from Route 460 on Southgate Drive, you will likely see, on the hill on which sits the baseball field, the postal code letters VT.

Federal law established the preconditions for establishing what originated as Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and came, several changes later, to be Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Federal law also propelled a series of changes, from the addition of a research dimension to the growth of an outreach mission and identity, and on to an end to categorical exclusion of African Americans. Federal research dollars, during and after the Cold War, had a great deal to do with the school's development as a research institution.

Yet while federal law provided a framework and nudged the institution in new directions, it did not fill in the details of institutional development. At Virginia Tech, as elsewhere throughout the land-grant constellation, institutional leadership played a very important role at every step of the way, even if the school's participation in larger patterns, whether regional or national, revealed that school leaders worked within contexts that channeled their behavior. In the South in general, and Virginia in particular, state laws always and everywhere—especially between 1890 and 1935—mandated a strict racial segregation.<sup>48</sup> So it was that not until well after World War II did black citizens begin to enroll at VPI, and not until 1966 could black applicants enroll

without restrictions or might black students even be recruited to come to campus. The further recruitment of black athletes, black faculty, and black administrators brought Tech, like other historically-white land-grant institutions in the South, into line with a new regime under which a major shift in federal law, as well as larger changes in the politics and culture of America at large, brought into being a new institution, different from any of its predecessors.

Together these various stakeholders brought forth—a century after the Civil War; more than one hundred years after passage of the Morrill Land-Grant College Act—a new institution, one that built upon its history but worked in a combination of new ways. Together they finally “reconstructed the college campus to serve new constituents and new educational purposes” in ways that went far beyond the innovations of the 1860s and 1870s. In contrast with all previous incarnations, certainly at Virginia Tech and also at Texas A&M, the new institutions of the land-grant system’s third half-century admitted members of all social groups, regardless of class, race, or gender, and offered a very wide range of curricular programs. As a comprehensive research institution, multiracial and coeducational even in the continuing Corps of Cadets, Virginia Tech exemplified what manner of school the Morrill Act could eventually produce. America’s “best idea” had grown to maturity.

## ENDNOTES

1. Dayton Duncan, *The National Parks: America’s Best Idea—An Illustrated History* (New York: Knopf, 2009); Rededication of the Morrill Act Conference, University of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign, Illinois, October 2009. The term actually originated in an essay by Wallace Stegner, “The Best Idea We Ever Had,” *Wilderness* 46 (Spring 1983): 4–13, a quotation from which is often featured at national park visitor centers.
2. Michael David Cohen, *Reconstructing the Campus: Higher Education and the American Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012), 2, 195.
3. *Ibid.*, 14–16, 54–57.

4. Rod Andrew Jr., *Long Gray Lines: The Southern Military School Tradition, 1839–1915* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 1, 40, 116, 145–48.

5. Andrew, *Long Gray Lines*, 6, 115, 118–19; Cohen, *Reconstructing the Campus*, 16, 61–65, 195.

6. Roy P. Basler et al., eds., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (9 vols.; New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953–55), 2: 364. For similar language, on the eve of the Morrill Act, see *ibid.*, 5: 51–53.

7. One leading biography of Lincoln is David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995); a generally fine overview of the era is Orville Vernon Burton, *The Age of Lincoln* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007).

8. William Belmont Parker, *The Life and Public Services of Justin Smith Morrill* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924; reprint New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), 1–62; Coy F. Cross II, *Justin Smith Morrill, Father of the Land-Grant Colleges* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1999).

9. Edward G. Bourne, *The History of the Surplus Revenue of 1837* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1885); Peter Wallenstein, “Reintegrating the American Past: Revisiting the West, Frederick Jackson Turner, and the Early Republic,” *Virginia Social Science Journal* 47 (2012): 86–102.

10. Roger L. Williams, *The Origins of Federal Support for Higher Education: George W. Atherton and the Land-Grant College Movement* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991), 1–39; Williamjames Hull Hoffer, *To Enlarge the Machinery of Government: Congressional Debates and the Growth of the American State, 1858–1891* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 14–62; John Y. Simon, “The Politics of the Morrill Act,” *Agricultural History* 37 (1963): 103–11; Sarah T. Phillips, “Antebellum Agricultural Reform, Republican Ideology, and Sectional Tension,” *Agricultural History* 74 (2000): 799–822; Heather Cox Richardson, *The Greatest Nation of the Earth: Republican Economic Policies during the Civil War* (Cambridge,

MA: Harvard University Press, 1997), 154–60; Harold M. Hyman, *American Singularity: The 1787 Northwest Ordinance, the 1862 Homestead and Morrill Acts, and the 1944 G.I. Bill* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986).

11. Peter Wallenstein, “Higher Education in Civil War Virginia,” in *Virginia at War, 1864*, ed. William C. Davis and James I. Robertson Jr. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2009), 99–119; Cohen, *Reconstructing the Campus*, 19–50.

12. Olivier Frayssé, *Lincoln, Land, and Labor, 1809–60*, trans. Sylvia Neely (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 179; Richardson, *The Greatest Nation of the Earth*, 160.

13. Peter Wallenstein, *Cradle of America: Four Centuries of Virginia History* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 217–24.

14. Duncan Lyle Kinnear, *The First 100 Years: A History of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University* (Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute Educational Foundation, 1972), 27–41, quotation at 30; Peter Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech, Land-Grant University, 1872–1997: History of a School, a State, a Nation* (Blacksburg: Pocahontas Press, 1997), 38–44.

15. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 38–42.

16. When I published a short history of Virginia Tech in 1997, the year the school celebrated its 125th anniversary, the book had an orange cover. Even then, I had in mind that I might publish a revised and updated edition—with a maroon cover this time, of course—seven years later (or even as early as 2001), marking Tech’s 150th anniversary. See *ibid.*, 43.

17. Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 43–79; Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 47–50. In view of men with such names as John McLaren McBryde, the former Methodist school would for an extended later time be known wryly in some circles as Virginia Presbyterian Institute (still VPI).

18. Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 91–95; Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 64–65; Andrew, *Long Gray Lines*, 42.

19. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 19, 44–46.

20. Buchanan would appear, then, to have been not only the second president but also the fourth, after Ship. If we count at least either or both of those two additional presidencies, then the current incumbent is at least number 16, or 17, rather than 15; see *ibid.*, 273. According to Harry Downing Temple, *The Bugle's Echo: A Chronicle of Cadet Life at the Military College at Blacksburg, Virginia, The Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and The Virginia Polytechnic Institute* (6 vols.; Blacksburg: Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets Alumni, 1996–2001), 1: 153, Ship kept his post for four days before retreating.

21. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 40–44. Hampton Institute is one of the black schools Andrew looks at, though he is uncertain whether (or how) to treat it as Virginia's first black land-grant institution: *Long Gray Lines*, 40, 90, 96, 118, 125n11, 140n4, 140n14. Nor does he note that the black schools were coeducational regardless of whether they were run on a military basis: *ibid.*, 40, 89–104.

22. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 74–79. The act had as its primary purpose upgrading the funding of all land-grant colleges across the nation; an important secondary purpose was to insist that African Americans also benefit, even if under a form of “separate but equal,” so that states (unlike Virginia) that had yet to take steps along those lines would have to in order to obtain the new funding; but see Andrew, *Long Gray Lines*, 90.

23. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 116–17; Wallenstein, *Cradle of America*, 262–65. Andrew, *Long Gray Lines*, 140n4, states that the land-grant subsidy went to Hampton only “for several years beginning in 1872,” a limitation as to time not found in his cited source, Robert Francis Engs, *Freedom's First Generation: Black Hampton, Virginia, 1861–1890* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 148 (see also 153).

24. So, for example, the school that is now Mississippi State University long ago came to characterize itself as the “people's

university”: John K. Bettersworth, *People’s University: The Centennial History of Mississippi State* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1980).

25. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 72–73, 78; Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 124, 131, 147.

26. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 87, 110–13; Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 229, 244–45.

27. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 71–72, 79–85, 92–93; Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 143–82.

28. Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 253–335; Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 120–67; Nancy Bondurant Jones, *Rooted on Blue Stone Hill: A History of James Madison University* (Santa Fe, NM: Center for American Places, 2004), 1–39.

29. Peter Wallenstein, “Identity, Marriage, and Schools: Life along the Color Line/s in the Era of *Plessy v. Ferguson*,” in *The Folly of Jim Crow: Rethinking the Segregated South*, ed. Stephanie Cole and Natalie Ring (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2012), 17–53, at 30.

30. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 125–32; Leslie Ogg Williams, “Access and Inclusion: Women Students at VPI, 1914–1964” (M.A. thesis, Virginia Tech, 2006), especially 71–87.

31. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 133–38, 153–56; for a detailed treatment see Williams, “Access and Inclusion.” On women, colleges, and basketball in the 1920s, see Pamela Grundy and Susan Shackelford, *Shattering the Glass: The Remarkable History of Women’s Basketball* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005). Housed in Newman Library’s Special Collections, and accessible on the library’s website, are four volumes of the *Tin Horn*.

32. Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 306–8; Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 141–53.

33. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 149.

34. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 146–47; Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 275–76; Temple, *The Bugle's Echo*, 4: 2810–11, 2954–56.
35. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 163–67; Kinnear, *The First 100 Years*, 330–32.
36. Warren H. Strother and Peter Wallenstein, *From VPI to State University: President T. Marshall Hahn Jr. and the Transformation of Virginia Tech, 1962–1974* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004), 5–21.
37. *Ibid.*, 217–32.
38. *Ibid.*, 60–61, 379–85.
39. *Ibid.*, 151–69.
40. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 199–200, 205; Strother and Wallenstein, *From VPI to State University*, 114–15, 169, 230, 289–90, 310–11, 367.
41. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 177–93; Wallenstein, *From VPI to State University*, 292–96; Peter Wallenstein, ed., *Higher Education and the Civil Rights Movement: White Supremacy, Black Southerners, and College Campuses* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2008), 36–41, 241.
42. Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech*, 204; Strother and Wallenstein, *From VPI to State University*, 315, 317; Timeline of Black History at Virginia Tech, <http://spec.lib.vt.edu/archives/blackhistory/timeline/1960s.htm>. Regarding the significance of athletic integration see Charles H. Martin, *Benching Jim Crow: The Rise and Fall of the Color Line in Southern College Sports, 1890–1980* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010).
43. Strother and Wallenstein, *From VPI to State University*, 376–77.
44. *Ibid.*, chapters 7 and 17, especially 133 (quotation) and 316–17.
45. *Ibid.*, 308–11.

46. Henry C. Dethloff, *A Centennial History of Texas A&M University, 1876–1976* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1975), 555–79, quotation 571; Wallenstein, *Higher Education and the Civil Rights Movement*, 45. Dethloff is silent on race, whether on black exclusion or racial integration (see 568).

47. Land-grant schools each with a campus building called Morrill Hall include Cornell, Illinois, Iowa State, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, Oklahoma State, Tennessee, and of course the University of Vermont.

48. Almost everywhere, colleges across the South were segregated at all times (the University of South Carolina, which was integrated from 1873 to 1877, was a notable exception among public institutions); the narrower dates, 1890–1935, relate solely to the law school in Maryland. More typical was the University of Missouri, a southern land-grant school (as well as flagship university) that admitted its very first few African Americans under a 1950 court order that permitted the school to continue excluding most prospective black students. See Wallenstein, *Higher Education and the Civil Rights Movement*, 2, 266–69.

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# ADS THAT SUBTRACT: THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL ADVERTISEMENTS ON NEWS MEDIA CREDIBILITY

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## ABSTRACT

*The impact of campaign ads on the electorate is a topic of controversy in the American political behavior literature, with different findings and expectations. In this study we assess the impact of campaign ads on the perceived credibility of news broadcasts. Utilizing an experimental research design, we find the presence of campaign commercials undermines the credibility of news broadcasts, and these adverse effects hold irrespective of whether the viewer supports the candidate featured in the advertisement.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2009, Fox News personality Glenn Beck charged on air that President Barack Obama is a racist, one with a “deep-seated hatred of white people.” In response, Van Jones, co-founder of the organization “Color of Change” called for a boycott of companies advertising on Beck’s program. The boycott prompted numerous companies, including Wal-Mart, Best Buy and Procter & Gamble, to pull their ads from Beck’s show. The logic underlying these corporate moves seems clear: the companies feared that if their ads aired during Beck’s program, consumers would link their antipathy toward Beck with the advertisers. In short, the companies were concerned about a form of guilt by association, one that presupposes that buyers would fail to differentiate between the content of programming and the sponsors of ads.

This paper focuses on a similar possibility of guilt by association. If viewers fail to distinguish between the content of

programming and the content of ads, what might this imply for perceptions of news credibility in scenarios when advertisements center on unpopular “products”? Our more specific focus is mass response to political campaign ads. If a viewer holds a negative opinion about the candidate who has sponsored an ad, might this create a spill-over effect, a form of guilt by association, undermining the perceived credibility of the news broadcast and its anchor? If campaign ads can indeed subtract from news credibility, this would suggest that political advertisements potentially bring indirect negative effects well beyond the sorts of consequences recognized thus far in the literature.

We begin with a discussion of the theoretical rationale underlying our expectation that a guilt-by-association process may mean that campaign ads adversely affect perceptions of news credibility. This discussion is grounded in contemporary research on political psychology, research that contemplates the sorts of associations citizens form when processing political information. We then devise a laboratory experiment designed to test whether campaign ads produce spill-over effects harmful to judgments concerning news programs and news anchors. Following a report on the results of our experiment, we will end with a discussion of the implications of our findings both for citizen competence and the significance of campaign advertisements.

## **THE LOGIC OF GUILT BY ASSOCIATION**

Campaign advertisements are a vital part of the American political system. At their best, these ads provide voters with valuable information with which to make their voting decision. At their worst, they can outrage voters by featuring half-truths and sleazy innuendo about politicians. In recent election cycles, the broadcast networks and major cable news networks such as CNN, Fox News, and MSNBC have aired many campaign ads during their news broadcasts. According to a 2009 study from the Pew Research Center<sup>1</sup>, the amount spent on ads airing on these networks exceeded \$35 million in 2008, the most ever spent on political ads on cable news outlets and more than three times the amount spent on ads on these networks in 2004. Given the news media’s role of political informant to the responsible democratic citizen, it is important to evaluate whether the presence of political ads influences how people evaluate television news. There is the

potential for the mass public to discern that these campaign commercials undercut media credibility, which could prevent some viewers from properly acquiring and processing the information presented. Were the media to lose significant credibility from the presence of these commercials, it could severely hinder, if not completely prevent, the news media from performing a key function: informing the American public about politics. Therefore, the goal of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between political advertising and public perceptions of news media credibility.

Research on credibility has generally focused on source and medium credibility. We will focus on source credibility because we hold medium constant in our examination. Studies of source credibility examine how different characteristics of the news outlet influences information processing (Addington, 1971; Markham, 1968; Mulac and Sherman, 1975; O'Keefe, 1990). Early research determined that the characteristics that exerted the most significant influence on perceptions of media credibility were expertise and trustworthiness (Hovland, Janis, and Kelley, 1953; Hovland, Lumsdaine, and Sheffield, 1949; Hovland and Weiss, 1951; Kelman and Hovland, 1953; Osgood, Suci, and Tanenbaum, 1957). Later scholars criticized this as too simplistic (Markham, 1968) and argued that measures of source credibility needed additional nuance (Berlo, Lemert, and Mertz 1970). Recent studies of source credibility have considered the influence of politicians, prominent journalists, and online sources on perceptions of credibility (Andsager, 1990; Pfau, and Kang, 1991). In addition, message characteristics, such as presentation style, have been found to influence perceptions of source credibility (Chartprasert, 1993; Slater and Rouner 1996). In our current media environment, news networks have perhaps an even bigger hurdle to overcome because of the belief held by many in the mass public that these cable news outlets are ideologically biased (ASNE 1999; Gallup 2003; Pew Research Center 2005; Goldberg 2002; Turner 2007; Groseclose and Milyo 2007; Morris and Francia 2005), which often results in a perceived lack of credibility among the American public.

A considerable body of research has also examined the influence political advertisements have on viewers. Marketing and political science research demonstrates that commercials have an impact on the attitudes and beliefs of consumers (Rohloff 1966; Johnson-Cartee and Copeland 1997), or in our case, viewers.

Although campaign managers and marketing executives agree that advertisements are highly influential, political science scholars have struggled to reach a consensus on the extent of the influence of campaign commercials. Some research on electoral effects fails to acknowledge any positive campaign influences whatsoever (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Ansolabehere et al 1994; Meadow and Sigelman 1982).

Scholars have also cited negative commercials for low turnout (Ansolabehere et al 1994, Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). However, political ads have also been triumphed as a source of information (Freedman, Franz and Goldstein 2004), in some instances providing more information than news broadcasts when run in conjunction with a hotly contested political race (Zhao and Chaffee, 1995). These scholars argue that campaign ads produce better democratic citizens by encouraging citizens to become more engaged and interested in politics (Freedman, Franz and Goldstein 2004).

Research focusing specifically on negative ads has also failed to reach a consensus, as there is disagreement over the influence this specific type of ad has on turnout, vote choice, opinion on the candidates, and trust in government (see Lau, Sigelman, and Rovner 2007). Ultimately, because there is disagreement over the effects of commercials, many scholars simply take the compromise position by advocating the minimal effects theory with regard to campaign impact. For instance, in an examination of the effect of negative ads on Independent voters, Finkel and Geer (1998) found that there was little, if any, reason to believe that these ads demobilize the electorate, and any effects that do occur are likely conditioned on the context of the election.

These various research streams have been productive, but we see them as incomplete. Television news broadcasts are aired within a broader information context. Ads are part of that context. At question is whether inclusion of campaign ads during a news broadcast shapes viewers' perceptions of the broadcast. Our initial intuition is that perceptions of ads do not cross over to influence assessments of the news broadcasts. After all, a network's selection of ads is beyond their control due to federal regulation, and the typical anchor generally has no say in—and perhaps no knowledge of—what airs during commercial breaks. However, we should not assume that all viewers differentiate between news broadcasts and ads. If we allow for the possibility of cross-over effects, then the

question that arises concerns what cognitive processes may be at work.

Research on cognitive heuristics provides three potential answers to this question. Heuristics are efficient tools that allow the individual to evaluate information without having to engage the information in an in-depth manner (Chaiken 1980; 1987; Chaiken, Liberman and Eagly 1989; Tversky and Kahneman 1974; Sniderman 1991). In this case, there appear to be three heuristic processes which could be at play. The first, which we will call the “partisan balance” heuristic, speaks to a viewer’s desire to have the media cover the news in an unbiased manner. Here, the viewer is assumed to believe that the public is best served by a news media that is considered to be objective, or to have partisan balance. The viewer may infer that balance is best achieved by a news media that does not show political ads. When imbalance is detected, this may lead the viewer to perceive the outlet as biased and, as a result, not credible. Therefore, we would expect that a situation in which imbalance was evident (i.e. either an Obama or McCain ad appearing) would reduce credibility, and expect a situation wherein balance was evident (i.e. an ad for both candidates appearing) would either increase or have no effect on credibility.

The second heuristic potentially at work is what we refer to as the “guilt-by-association” heuristic. In this situation, the presence of an ad in any context, even if candidates were given equal time, would undercut media credibility. Whether such guilt-by-association exists is an open question. After all, viewers surely do not infer from ads that anchors eat a particular brand of cereal to help lower their cholesterol, or zip around their newsrooms on Medicare-funded scooters. But news broadcasts during election campaigns include reports on the candidates, and it is conceivable that the campaign ads run on those very same broadcasts signal viewers, whether consciously or not, about where the news organization stands on the election. Although perhaps unfair, any such signaling effect would suggest this “guilt by association” phenomenon, rooted in a previously-unrecognized interplay between viewer response to news and ad content.

The third heuristic potentially at play here is simple voter preferences. If a viewer’s preferred candidate is Obama, it stands to reason that this person will see a broadcast featuring an Obama ad as being more credible than one featuring a McCain ad. Likewise, viewers that prefer McCain should see a broadcast featuring a

McCain ad as more credible than one featuring an ad for Obama. Perhaps the most intriguing possibility here is for what happens if the network shows an ad for both candidates. The ads could cancel each other out, the viewer could simply dismiss the ad for one of the candidates, or the viewer could think the network is in the tank for both candidates, which may in fact be the worst scenario possible for outlet credibility.

Finally, the inclusion of the campaign commercials may also influence the citizens' perception of the news anchor. Citizens obviously attribute the content of much of the political news to the person they see before them at the news desk, otherwise the public debates about how the ideological underpinnings of anchors influence broadcasts would not occur. Given this, we do not believe that it is unreasonable to think political ads may have a similar impact. Therefore, it is not just the perception of the broadcast that is influenced by the campaign commercial, but also how credible the voters find the individual anchor. Viewers may be attaching the views of the commercials to news anchors. Therefore, when watching a political commercial during a broadcast, viewers may associate that ideological perspective to the anchor.

This review indicates that a gap exists in the literature on the influence of campaign ads on perceptions of news credibility, which we believe our research nicely fills. First, although scholars have examined the influence of a variety of factors on perceptions of media credibility as well as myriad potential ways in which campaign ads can impact the electorate, there has not been a study of the influence that the presence of campaign ads has on perceived media credibility. In addition, we also know that because Americans perceive some media outlets to be ideologically biased they seek out sources they believe are consistent with their beliefs (Neuman 1986; Bartels 2002). Citizens are exposed to various sources of information throughout their daily interactions and this is incorporated into their decision-making and cognitive processing. However, when citizens watch news networks with a particular ideological slant, the commercials during these broadcasts are paramount to how citizens judge broadcasts. These ads, particularly when they contribute to information dissemination like political ads, have an impact on these broadcasts. Perceived ideological consistency between the broadcast and campaign ad provides a basis for assumptions about the news anchor. Viewers will attach the position of commercials to the news anchor because they see the

commercial as part of the news broadcast and endorsed by the anchor. Ultimately, we believe that these campaign ads exert a significant influence on the credibility of news networks that include them during their broadcasts, and we believe our study will permit us to gain insight into whether this actually is the case.

## **EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN**

We employed an experimental design to determine whether the presence of political advertisements negatively influenced viewer's perceptions of news credibility. In this experiment, we selected five news stories and created versions of the stories wherein the content remained constant but the network attribution and the presence of a political advertisement was manipulated. The core of the experimental design is a three by four factorial, which resulted in the creation of twelve treatment groups. There are twelve treatment groups because the actual news content was attributed to CNN, Fox News, or MSNBC<sup>2</sup>, and the broadcast contained either no political advertisement, an Obama campaign commercial, a McCain campaign commercial, or both an Obama and a McCain campaign commercial.

It was first necessary to decide which news stories to present to our research subjects. This was done by choosing five political news stories covered during September and October of 2008. Admittedly, the choice of which stories to present our research subject was a subjective one, as there were stories not chosen that could have easily been substituted for the ones that were selected. Ultimately, those chosen were ones that closely mimicked the nature of political coverage one would see on a broadcast during the 2008 Presidential election. The five stories that were included were about John McCain's mortgage rescue plan, Barack Obama's tax plan, the latest poll numbers on the Presidential election, a meeting between Sarah Palin and the President of Pakistan, and a story on the health care proposals of both presidential candidates.<sup>3</sup>

The second stage of this experimental design involved selecting a political advertisement from each candidate to show. Obviously, there were a finite number of potential political advertisements from which to choose. However, we ultimately chose a negative ad presented by each candidate because they have been such a focus in the literature on campaign ads.<sup>4</sup> The pro-McCain advertisement that was chosen was called "Tax Cutter;" in

this ad McCain challenged Obama's public claims that he has a record of cutting taxes. The pro-Obama advertisement that was chosen was called "No Maverick;" in this ad Obama challenged the "maverick" status of both McCain and Palin. In order to lessen the extent to which these commercials "stood out," the ads were paired with a commercial for a national home improvement store, which we felt one could reasonably expect to see on a cable news channel.

Next, to maximize the validity of the study, it was necessary to create believable news broadcasts. To achieve this end, the broadcasts were created at a professional television studio, relying on the assistance of a professional anchor with twenty years of television news broadcast experience. In addition, using a professional television studio gave the videos a more authentic appearance, and thus lessened the level of artificiality that often plagues experimental research. The anchor read from a teleprompter in order to replicate the exact language in each version of the stories. Each broadcast had a running time of roughly twelve minutes.<sup>5</sup> Manipulating network attribution was achieved through both audio and visual cues. First, the broadcaster vocally identified with which news organization she was affiliated at the beginning of the broadcast. Also, during the broadcast, the anchor would make references that clearly identified which network produced the stories, but did not alter the ideological tone of the story, such as "CNN has learned", "sources have told Fox News", or "MSNBC can now report." Finally, the anchor signed off using the network's slogan; "the most trusted name in news" for CNN, "the place for politics" for MSNBC, and "where you always get fair and balanced coverage" for Fox News. In addition, graphics were shown on-screen during the broadcast which illustrated the anchor's network affiliation. Manipulating the presence or absence of the political advertisements was achieved by inserting no ad, an Obama ad, a McCain ad, or an ad for both between the third and fourth stories in the broadcast. Ultimately, the broadcaster recorded each set of stories four times per network attribution. First, a version with no advertisement was attributed to CNN, FNC, and MSNBC. In addition, a version with the Obama ad, a version with the McCain ad, and a version with both ads were also attributed to CNN, FNC, and MSNBC.

The next stage consisted of conducting the experiment and collecting the data. 400 undergraduates<sup>6</sup> enrolled in political science courses at a major state university participated in this

experiment in October of 2008. Participants were recruited from various introductory and upper-level undergraduate political science courses. When recruited, potential subjects were told they would be participating in a media focus group. In keeping with review board policy, respondents had the ability to opt out of the study at any time for any reason. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the aforementioned experimental conditions. In this instance, randomization was successful, as the experimental conditions in this analysis were roughly equal with regard to the gender, party identification, and political ideology of respondents. This randomization process also ensured that the size of each experimental cell was roughly the same.

After viewing the news stories, participants completed a survey instrument. This instrument contained questions that achieved a number of goals. The most important aspect of the survey was that it provided a measure of the dependent variable under examination. It also provided a substantial amount of useful background information by administering a battery of questions regarding socio-demographic and personality characteristics. The survey instrument was not administered until after the subjects had viewed the entire video. Finally, the survey helped mask the actual purpose of the study. If you recall, participants were told that they were participating in a media focus group. By including questions related to a variety of media-related topics, we were able to hide the actual purpose of the study within a broad survey instrument.

## **VARIABLE MEASURES**

There are four dependent variables used for this analysis. The first is the perceived credibility of the news. This measured whether respondents thought the individual news reports given by the anchor were credible. In this study respondents viewed the five stories and then were asked to rank them on a zero to ten scale, with zero representing a story with no perceived credibility, and ten representing a story with the highest level of perceived credibility. Because we are interested in the overall evaluation of credibility in the news, the scores of each story were summed in order to get a summary measure of media credibility.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, credibility is measured on a zero to fifty scale, with zero representing no perceived credibility whatsoever, and fifty representing the highest attainable level of perceived credibility.

The other three dependent variables measure perceived characteristics of the news anchor. We are interested in whether the presence of political advertisements in news broadcasts influenced the perceptions viewers held of several political characteristics of the news anchor. First, we are interested in whether the presence of a political ad influenced viewer perceptions of the anchor's partisanship. This was measured by asking respondents whether they thought the anchor was a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent. Secondly, we tested whether the presence of a political ad influenced viewer perceptions of the anchor's political ideology. This was measured by asking respondents whether they thought the anchor was a conservative, a liberal, or a moderate. Finally, we examined whether the presence of a political ad influenced viewer perceptions of which political candidate the anchor would support. This was analyzed by asking respondents whether they thought the anchor would vote for John McCain or Barack Obama in the upcoming presidential election.

There are several additional variables that need to be explained. Two dichotomous variables were created to account for presence or absence of an Obama and McCain political advertisements. The "Obama ad" variable was coded 0 if the broadcast did not obtain an Obama commercial and coded 1 if the broadcast did contain such a commercial. The "McCain ad" variable was coded 0 if the broadcast did not obtain a McCain commercial and coded 1 if it did contain such a commercial. The variable "McCainxObama" was created to account for situations wherein both commercials were shown during the broadcast. This variable is an interaction between the McCain ad and Obama ad variables, and is coded 0 if both ads were not shown and 1 if both ads were shown.

We were also curious as to whether participants responded differently if their favored political candidate was featured in the ad. This was measured by asking respondents whether they were going to vote for McCain, Obama, or were undecided. A dichotomous variable referred to as "favored" indicated whether the participant's preferred candidate was in the political advertisement. In addition, party identification was included in order to determine whether people were simply responding along party lines. This was measured on the traditional one (strong democrat) to seven (strong republican) scale.

It was also necessary to control for the attribution of the stories to determine if this alone was driving assessments of credibility. Three dichotomous variables were created to account for whether the stories were attributed to CNN, MSNBC, or FNC. The CNN attribution variable is coded zero if the stories are not attributed to CNN and one if they are. Likewise, the FNC attribution variable is coded zero if the stories are not attributed to FNC and one if they are. Attribution to MSNBC was utilized as the comparison group. Finally, network attribution was interaction with the various ad variables, and network attribution was interacted with the favored candidate variable to complete the model.

## RESULTS

The model in Table One serves as the key test of the effect of campaign ads on perceptions of news media credibility. Because news media credibility was measured on a 50 point scale, we utilized a regression analysis.

**Table 1. Media Credibility by Presence of Campaign Ads**

	<b>B</b>	<b>SE</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
Constant	34.331**	1.572	0
Obama Ad	-14.082**	2.243	0
McCain Ad	-13.008**	1.939	0
McCainxObama	5.057*	2.749	0.067
Favored	6.417**	2.13	0.003
FNC Attribution	0.997	1.899	0.6
CNN Attribution	0.694	1.898	0.715
Party Identification	0.174	0.203	0.394
McCain Ad*FNC	-1.144	2.754	0.678
McCain Ad*CNN	-0.74	2.755	0.788
Obama Ad*FNC	-2.826	3.192	0.376
Obama Ad*CNN	-2.281	3.191	0.475
Both Ad*FNC	3.971	3.863	0.305
Both Ad*CNN	3.698	3.872	0.34
Favored*FNC	-1.471	3.02	0.661
Favored*CNN	-1.314	2.991	0.582

N = 382 F = 18.738 Prob>F = .0000 Adj. R2 = 0.4062 \*p<.10 \*\*p<.05

The findings presented in Table One provide support for the effects of guilt-by-association and voter preferences heuristics. Holding everything else constant, stories that do not feature any political advertisements register a score of roughly 34 on our news credibility scale. The negative coefficient for both the Obama ad and McCain ad variables confirms our suspicion that viewers perceive news broadcasts featuring a political advertisement to be less credible, as the presence of an Obama or McCain ad results in a 14 and 13 point decline in credibility, respectively. These differences are impressive substantively, especially when one considers that credibility is measured on a 50 point scale. The “favored” variable is positive and significant, which indicates that perceived credibility takes less of a hit when the participant favors the candidate advertising during the broadcast. However, the fact that the coefficient for this variable is small in comparison to the McCain and Obama ad variables indicates that, even if the viewer likes the candidate running the ad, the network still takes a credibility hit. The findings with regard to the presence of multiple political advertisements are also surprising. The interpretation of “McCainxObama” variable indicates that credibility suffers the most when networks run ads for both candidates. In this situation, the credibility rating given by viewers with a preferred candidate falls to roughly 19, which is a decline of roughly 20 points from the broadcast wherein no political ads were shown. If the viewer has no preferred candidate, the rating plummets further to roughly 13. The insignificant source variables illustrates that there was no difference in perceived credibility resulting from network attribution. The insignificant party identification variable indicated that no significant difference existed in perceived credibility among partisans. In addition, the interactions between advertisement and network attribution as well as favored candidate and network attribution are statistically insignificant. Taken as a whole, these results reveal that the presence of political advertisements has a significant detrimental effect on viewer evaluations of news media credibility.

The models presented in Table Two and Figures One through Three present the key results with regard to anchor perceptions. We used an ordered logit model to investigate the perceived political ideology and party identification of the anchor, and we used a binomial logit model to investigate the perceived vote choice of the anchor.

**Table 2. Anchor Ideology, Party ID, and Vote Choice by Presence of Campaign Advertisements**

	<b>Ideology</b>	<b>Party ID</b>	<b>Vote Choice</b>
Cut 1	-0.141 (-0.383)	-0.704 (-0.429)	-
Cut 2	0.82 (-0.386)	1.894 (-0.446)	-
Constant	-	-	0.264 (-0.44)
Obama Ad	-2.610* (-0.741)	2.028* (-0.64)	-2.205* (-0.841)
McCain Ad	-1.132* (-0.509)	-3.055* (-0.71)	2.385* (-0.822)
McCainxObama	-0.707 (-0.801)	2.924* (-0.888)	-0.278 (-1.042)
Favored	-0.44 (-0.747)	-0.767 (-0.676)	0.444 (-0.919)
FNC Attribution	0.296 (-0.443)	0.688 (-0.504)	-0.125 (-0.503)
CNN Attribution	0.384 (-0.453)	-0.075 (-0.5)	0.128 (-0.507)
Party Identification	0.04 (-0.055)	0.047 (-0.057)	-0.003 (-0.064)
McCain Ad*FNC	-0.301 (-0.722)	-0.281 (-0.96)	-0.211 (-1.096)
McCain Ad*CNN	-0.68 (-0.742)	0.628 (-0.934)	-0.516 (-1.096)
Obama Ad*FNC	-0.337 (-1.04)	0.377 (-0.974)	0.987 (-1.089)
Obama Ad*CNN	-1.366 (-0.981)	-0.217 (-0.884)	0.337 (-1.125)
Both Ad*FNC	0.286 (-1.103)	-0.815 (-1.216)	-0.118 (-1.38)
Both Ad*CNN	0.776 (-1.01)	-1.15 (-1.185)	0.174 (-1.394)
Favored*FNC	-0.429 (-1.041)	-0.721 (-1.031)	-0.583 (-1.184)
Favored*CNN	-0.6 (-0.983)	0.19 (-0.92)	-0.341 (-1.21)
	N = 382 LR Chi2 = 121.07 Prob>Chi2 = .0000 Pseudo R2 = 0.1524 *p<.05	N = 382 LR Chi2 = 211.53 Prob>Chi2 = .0000 Pseudo R2 = 0.2571 *p<.05	N=382 LR Chi2 = 117.24 Prob>Chi2 = .0000 Pseudo R2 = 0.2249 *p<.05

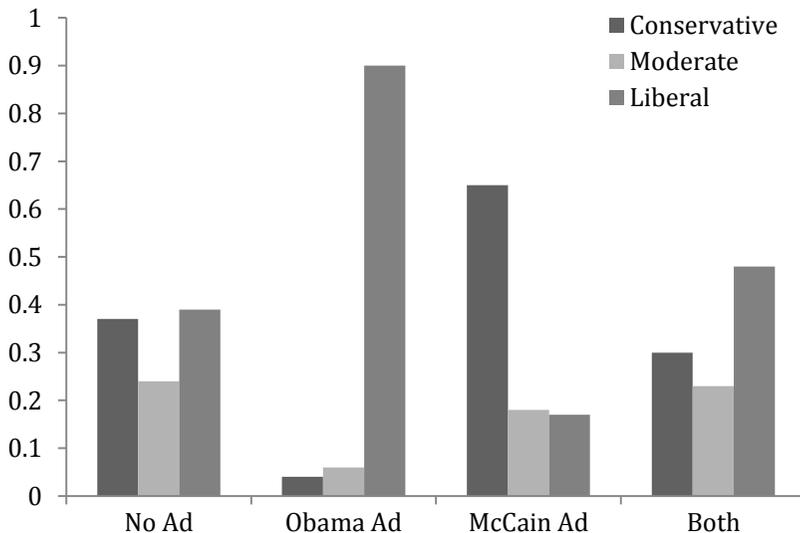
Table Two presents the results regarding the influence of the presence of a political advertisement of the viewers' perception of the anchor's political ideology, party identification, and presidential vote choice. The first column presents the results of an ordered logit regarding the influence of the presence of a political

advertisement of the viewers' perception of the anchor's political ideology. The political ideology of the anchor was coded 0-2, with zero signifying that viewers perceive the anchor to be conservative, one signifying viewer perceptions of a moderate anchor, and two signifying viewer perceptions of a liberal anchor. The significant, positive coefficient operating on Obama ad indicates that the presence of an Obama ad makes viewers significantly more likely to perceive that the anchor is politically liberal. The significant, negative coefficient operating on McCain ad indicates that the presence of a McCain ad makes viewers significantly more likely to perceive that the anchor is politically conservative. The statistically insignificant coefficient operating on "McCainxObama" indicates that the presence of an ad on behalf of each candidate exerts no significant influence on viewer perceptions of the anchor's ideology. In addition, network attribution, party identification, and interactions between campaign ad and network attribution and campaign ad and favored candidate are statistically insignificant, which indicates that those variables do not drive viewers' perceptions of anchor ideology.

The second column in Table Two presents the results of an ordered logit regarding the influence of the presence of a political advertisement of the viewers' perception of the anchor's party identification. The party identification of the anchor was coded 0-2, with zero signifying that viewers perceive the anchor to be Republican, one signifying viewer perceptions of an Independent anchor, and two signifying viewer perceptions of a Democratic anchor. The significant, positive coefficient operating on Obama ad indicates that the presence of an Obama ad makes viewers significantly more likely to perceive that the anchor is a Democrat. The significant, negative coefficient operating on McCain ad indicates that the presence of a McCain ad makes viewers significantly more likely to perceive that the anchor is a Republican. The fact that the coefficient operating on the "McCainxObama" variable is insignificant indicates that the presence of an ad on behalf of each candidate exerts no significant influence on viewer perceptions of the anchor's partisan affiliation, which is consistent with our early findings. In addition, the fact that the network attribution variables, party identification, and various interactions are statistically insignificant indicates that those variables do not drive viewers' perceptions of anchor party identification.

The third column in Table Two presents the results regarding the influence of the presence of a political advertisement of the viewers' perception of the anchor's presidential vote choice. Vote choice is a dichotomous variable, with zero signifying that viewers think the anchor will vote for Barack Obama, and one signifying that viewers think that the anchor will vote for John McCain. Because vote choice is a dichotomous variable, a logit model was estimated to investigate our hypothetical expectations. The significant, negative coefficient operating on Obama ad indicates that the presence of an Obama ad makes viewers significantly more likely to perceive that the anchor is an Obama supporter. The significant, positive coefficient operating on McCain ad indicates that the presence of a McCain ad makes viewers significantly more likely to perceive that the anchor is going to cast a ballot for McCain. The fact that the coefficient operating on the "McCainxObama" variable is insignificant indicates that the presence of an ad on behalf of each candidate exerts no significant influence on viewer perceptions of the anchor's presidential vote choice. Network attribution, party identification, and all other interactions are statistically insignificant, which indicates that those variables do not significantly influence viewers' perceptions of anchor vote choice.

**Figure 1. Predicted Probability of Perceived Anchor Political Ideology by Campaign Commercial**



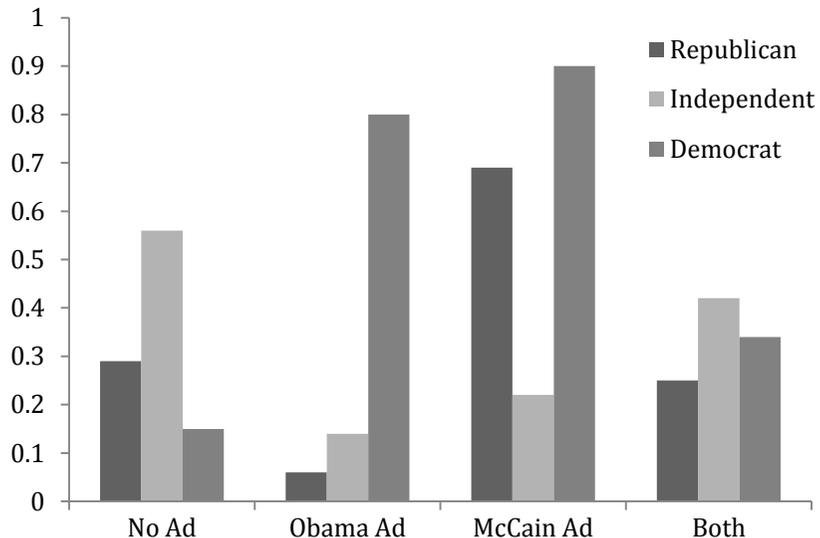
Although logit and ordered logit coefficients are useful with regard to magnitude and direction, they do not lend themselves to easy interpretation. Therefore, we calculated predicted probabilities in order to substantively demonstrate the effect of political ads on viewer perceptions of anchor political ideology, party identification, and vote choice.

As Figure One illustrates, when no political ads are featured in the broadcast, ideology is distributed fairly evenly, as the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be conservative, moderate, or liberal are .037, .024, and .039 respectively. When the broadcast features an Obama ad, the audience perceives the anchor to be much more liberal. In this scenario, there is only a 0.04 probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be conservative and a 0.06 probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be moderate. However, the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be liberal is 0.90. When a McCain ad is shown, the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be liberal or moderate is only 0.18 and 0.17, respectively. However, the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be conservative in this situation increases to 0.65, a significant turnaround from both the no ad category and the Obama ad category. Finally, when an ad for both candidates is featured, the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be conservative is 0.3, the probability the subject will perceive the anchor to be moderate is 0.23, and the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be liberal is 0.48.

As Figure Two illustrates, when no political ads are featured in the broadcast, most perceive the anchor as neutral, as the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be an Independent is 0.56, as opposed to 0.29 and 0.15 for Republican and Democrat, respectively. When an Obama ad is featured, the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be a Republican is only 0.06 and the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be an Independent is only 0.14. However, the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be a Democrat is 0.80. The opposite pattern occurs for a McCain ad. In this instance, the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be a Democrat is 0.09 and the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be an Independent is 0.22. However, the probability that the subject will perceive the anchor to be a Republican is 0.69 in this situation, a significant turnaround from

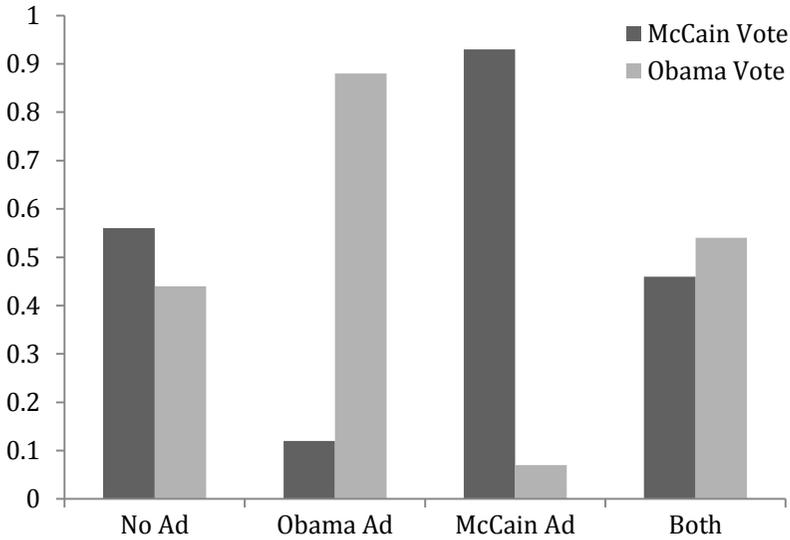
the no ad category and the Obama ad category. Finally, when an ad for both candidates is featured, the probability that the subject perceives the anchor to be a Republican is 0.25, the probability that the subject perceives the anchor to be an Independent is 0.34 and the probability that the subject perceives the anchor to be a Democrat is 0.42.

**Figure 2. Predicted Probability of Perceived Anchor Party Identification by Campaign Commercial**



As Figure Three illustrates, when no political ads are featured in the broadcast, the subjects thought that the probability the anchor would vote for John McCain was 0.56. When the broadcast features an Obama ad, the audience thinks the anchor is much more to support the Democratic candidate. In this instance, subjects thought the probability that the anchor would vote for Obama was 0.88. As expected, the opposite pattern occurs when a McCain ad is shown. In this instance, subjects believed the probability that the anchor would vote for Senator McCain is 0.93. Finally, when an ad for both candidates is featured, subjects believed the anchor slightly favored Obama, as they believed the probability the anchor would vote for the Democratic candidate was 0.54. This confirms and strengthens our earlier findings.

**Figure 3. Predicted Probability of Perceived Anchor Vote Choice by Campaign Commercial**



## CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

News media credibility is one of the more discussed yet least understood phenomena for observers of contemporary politics. Our research has attempted to shed light on this important topic. We have argued that the presence of political advertisements during news broadcasts will result in a decrease in perceived news media credibility. Our findings have largely supported this argument; at least in this instance, the presence of one (or more) political advertisements in a news broadcast leads to a significant decrease in news credibility.

Utilizing an experimental approach permitted us to hold news content constant, while manipulating network attribution and the presence of political ads. Our results demonstrate that people react strongly to the presence of political advertisements in news broadcasts. Irrespective of network attribution, the presence of political ads in a news broadcast result in a sharp decline in perceived news credibility. Furthermore, these perceptions persist even if the viewer supports the candidate featured in the advertisement. In addition, we were able to demonstrate that these ads influenced the viewers' political judgments with regard to the anchor. Specifically, the Obama commercial made viewers

significantly more likely to think the anchor was liberal, a Democrat, and an Obama supporter, and a McCain advertisement made viewers significantly more likely to think the anchor was conservative, a Republican, and a McCain supporter.

What are the potential implications of the findings? First, it was interesting to see that there are consequences in credibility when networks air campaign ads, regardless of the political preferences of the viewer. Clearly, perceptions of media credibility among voters who favor Barack Obama will decline when networks run ads for John McCain, and likewise McCain supporters naturally have a similar response to ads run by news networks on behalf of Barack Obama. However, while the decline in credibility is not as great, viewers perceive a significant decrease in credibility when an ad is run on behalf of their favored candidate. At least on some level this registers with the public as a concern regardless of their opinion of the candidate featured in the ad.

However, it does appear as though individuals are not differentiating as they should, as viewers do not appear to be separating the legal and business ends of news from the news end of news. Basically, the decision regarding whether to air political ads, and if so, which candidate's ads to air, is out of the hands of the network. The FCC dictates that networks must provide reasonable access to federal candidates at a favorable rate.<sup>8</sup> A powerful case could actually be made that many network executives would rather sell that time to their business advertisers because it is a more profitable endeavor. However, that fact is lost upon (or more likely unknown to) the American public, and as a result these networks are paying a significant cost as far as credibility is concerned. The mere presence of these ads makes us more likely to make partisan political judgments about these broadcasters and less likely to believe what these media outlets report, which, in the worst case, prevents them from fulfilling their longstanding role as political informant to the American public.

That campaign ads would produce spill-over effects operating on viewers' perceptions of news credibility was hardly self-evident, yet our empirical results reveal a striking "guilt by association" effect. Viewers apparently do not compartmentalize their judgments.<sup>9</sup> Past research has studied news credibility and ad effects in isolation, without consideration of the critical interplay between the two. Present findings are highly suggestive, raising numerous questions about the nature and significance of the spill-

over effects we have identified. For instance, repeated exposure to the same news anchor may lead the viewer to develop a perceived personal relationship with that anchor. If so, does this inoculate the anchor against the sort of ad-based diminishment of credibility found here?<sup>10</sup> Also, if ad content adversely affects perceptions of credibility, are these effects limited to news coverage concerning the campaign, or do they extend to other topics as well? Additionally, do effects such as those identified here emerge even when ads are positive rather than negative? Can such effects be triggered by ads from sub-presidential campaigns? What these questions reveal is that we have a tremendous opportunity to enrich our accounts of perceived news credibility via further attention to the interplay between how viewers react to ads and how those viewers judge the news programs on which those ads are aired.

## ENDNOTES

1. State of the News Media 2009.
2. We are in no way saying the broadcast outlets are not important. They are indeed the most important for 30 minutes every day. However, there are an additional 23½ hours where the cable outlets are the influential providers of news.
3. One might reasonably ask what the potential implications of showing only political stories are. While we do not possess a way within our dataset to definitively answer this question, we argue that from a theoretical perspective we do not believe that the results would be vastly different were the ads shown during a mix of political and non-political news. The results potentially would be different if the viewer were exposed to an ad when the broadcast featured no political news. However, we contend that it would be highly unusual for someone to watch a hard news broadcast which featured a political ad and not have any political news.
4. We felt it would add too much complexity to manipulate ad type in addition to everything else. As a result, we utilized negative ads in this study because they have been such a focus in the literature on campaign ads. However, we would welcome follow-up research that examines whether the effects hold with different types of ads.

5. It is reasonable to contend that this design would not account for the possibility of the viewer to “graze”, or change the channel to another network. While we obviously could not accomplish this in our design, we argue that by making the broadcast roughly twelve minutes we at the very least ensure respondents do not participate in what may be the out of the ordinary act of watching a full thirty minute broadcast on the same network.

6. While some may contend that a student sample is not optimum, the participants in this study were similar to the American public in terms of their partisan and ideological makeup, and averaged 4 out of 5 correct responses on a political knowledge test. Therefore, we argue that these factors help moderate the extent to which this sample may be plagued by the “college sophomore problem”.

7. A reliability analysis was conducted to determine if constructing a summary variable was appropriate. The summary scale was found to reach an acceptable level of reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.88). In addition, it is important to keep in mind that we asked a separate battery of questions about different characteristics of the news anchor, so there should be no confusion among respondents about reporter credibility and broadcast credibility.

8. For more information, see section 312 (a)(7) of the 1972 Communications Act, enacted as part of the Federal Election Campaign Act.

9. Our participants in this study were college students, so there is the possibility that they may be more or less susceptible to the effects documented in this study than a pure random sample. However, given the fact that our sample is similar to the general public in a number of ways (see endnote 5) I contend that there is not reason to believe that these effects would exist in this sample and disappear in the general public.

10. It is also reasonable to assume that with the level of media fragmentation that exists and the sheer number of media options available, the likelihood of news consumers developing a relationship with an anchor such as the one many viewers had a generation ago with Walter Cronkite, for instance, is arguably not as

strong and likely would not be as influential on perceptions of credibility.

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## APPENDIX

### *McCain Story Text*

Good evening, and thank you for joining us tonight. I am Barbara Deeb reporting for Fox News. In our top story, John McCain is facing a fresh round of anger from members of his own party deeply opposed to the senator's proposal for the federal government to purchase troubled mortgage loans.

Conservative magazine *The National Review* called the plan a "gift to lenders who abandoned any sense of prudence." Prominent conservative blogger Michelle Malkin called the plan "rotten." It's a proposal that is at odds with the conservative principle of individual responsibility, and is the latest in a string of public spats conservatives have had over the years with their party's standard bearer.

Under the plan, the government would buy bad mortgages and convert them into low-interest FHA loans. To qualify, homeowners must be delinquent or near delinquency in their payments, live in the home, and have demonstrated creditworthiness when they purchased the property.

This plan, McCain argues, could be implemented quickly under existing legislation and better steers the money to Main Street, where struggling middle-class homeowners need immediate relief. Critics argue that this plan passes the burden along to the taxpayer. Barack Obama echoed this criticism yesterday, stating that under

the plan taxpayers would lose and banks and lenders would be rewarded.

For McCain, the move is another gamble for a candidate in need of a game-changer and one that lends credence to the maverick's repeated claim that he's unafraid of bucking his own party. The McCain camp believes the plan will resonate with moderate and undecided voters, many of whom viewed the bailout as a giveaway to Wall Street CEOs. However, it remains to be seen if the Arizona senator's latest roll of the dice will pay off.

According to one analyst, liberals who might support this are already going to vote for Obama, and conservatives, who view this as irresponsible, are turned off by it, which makes it both bad policy and bad politics.

### *Obama Story Text*

Senator Obama is coming under fire from critics who believe his tax policy is potentially dangerous for the market.

The economic plan proposed by Obama would raise taxes on incomes above \$250,000 and redistribute wealth to the poor and middle-class. Obama has also advocated raising the capital gains tax rate, potentially to 28%. According to Obama, this would provide 95% of working families with a tax cut, and ensure that those who are wealthier and have the capacity to contribute more do so.

Financial expert Michael Jones tell Fox News that this policy would mirror the mistakes made by Herbert Hoover during the Great Depression, when he raised income tax and corporate tax rates, which delayed the country's economic turnaround. Sam Jenkins, Chairman of the Jenkins Corporation and an Obama fundraiser, said that Obama's plan needed tweaking. Jenkins predicted Obama would lower both his proposed income tax and capital gains tax hikes.

Jones argues that the view held by investors is that if Obama's plan prevails, it would be to their detriment. While they are not huge fans of either candidate's tax plan, the numbers appear to support the notion that Obama's would be worse for Wall Street. According to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center, if you happen to be in the top 1% of income-tax payers, the Obama tax plan would boost you

average tax bill for that group by \$93,709, to a total of well over \$650,000.

Financial analyst Jim Thompson told Fox News that, because of the budget deficit and our involvement overseas, the next president will have little choice but to raise taxes and cut spending. However, Thompson states that he is worried more about Obama because his proposed tax plan points to a philosophy that historically has worried market pros, as raising taxes on the investor class historically hasn't helped economic development.

### *Polling Data Text*

In a sign that the race for president has returned to about where it was before the first presidential debate, the Obama-Biden ticket leads the McCain-Palin ticket 47 percent to 43 percent among registered voters in a new FOX News poll.

The Obama led by a wider margin, nine percentage points, in a FOX News poll released before Joe Biden and Sarah Palin faced off in the vice presidential debate. Obama ticket led by five percentage points on Sept. 25.

Making things even more interesting is that, in the new FOX poll, the Democratic ticket only leads their Republican opponents by 3 percentage points, 48 percent to 45 percent, among likely voters.

Although these poll numbers indicate a very tight race overall, a significant difference exists between candidates with regard to how enthusiastic their support is. In this category Barack Obama holds a 20 point lead, as fifty-eight percent of his supporters say they are very enthusiastic about his candidacy, while only 38 percent of John McCain supporters say the same about the Arizona senator's candidacy.

It is also important to note that roughly one in five registered voters have yet to firmly commit to a candidate. This indicates that the last month of campaigning will go a long way toward determining who will ultimately win the presidency.

*International Incident Text*

In international news today, Fox News has learned that Islamic religious leaders in Pakistan have issued a fatwa against President Asif Ali Zardari for allegedly flirting with Sarah Palin when the two met at the United Nations during her meet-and-greet with foreign leaders.

Cleric Maulana Abdul Ghafar, a prayer leader at a radical mosque, condemned Zardari's "indecent gestures" toward Palin as a disgrace to the nation of Pakistan.

During a sermon, Ghafar harshly criticized Zardari for what he characterized as "filthy remarks and repeated praise of a non-Muslim woman wearing a short skirt". According to Ghafar, Zardari's statements were "unbecoming of the head of state of a Muslim country."

Zardari has also drawn criticism from the Pakistani press and the nation's feminists, who blasted the Pakistani president for calling Palin "gorgeous" and telling her that "I now know why the whole of America is crazy about you."

Ghafar said the Pakistani president's actions were particularly shameful in a time when "we are fighting the American war in our country and thousands of our people have been killed just to please Uncle Sam." Thankfully for the Pakistani president, the fatwa is largely symbolic as it does not call for any action of violence.

*Health Care Story Text*

Finally, according to several prominent health care economists, John McCain's health plan won't lower the ranks of the uninsured, and Barack Obama's plan will not curb the soaring cost of health care. The critiques reflect the disagreements over how to improve access to health coverage and also sound warnings about potential problems with each candidate's plan.

McCain would dramatically reshape the way people get health insurance. His plan would treat health insurance payments as taxable wages, and then provide a \$2,500 tax credit for individuals

or a \$5,000 tax credit for families that buy health insurance. The tax credit could be use to buy insurance through their employer or providers in the market, and they could select from insurers licensed in any state.

McCain argues that increased competition will lead to lower prices and better quality. However, analysts warn that employers would be less likely to offer coverage if they knew their workers could get it elsewhere. In addition, they contend the financial gains made by the tax cuts would erode as premiums rise. Also, analysts are concerned that insurers would locate in states with less strict coverage requirements.

Obama wants the government to subsidize the cost of health coverage for those who have trouble affording it on their own. He would set up a system that resembles a government-run shopping mall that would negotiate prices and benefits with private insurers, with one of the choices being a government-run plan. In addition, no participating company could turn someone away of charge a higher monthly premium due to a pre-existing condition.

Obama contends that his plan will help millions get health coverage. However, analysts tell Fox News that using third parties to subsidize cost will exacerbate health care inflation, as consumers and providers will likely act as if any service that might yield value be covered. In addition, any major expansion of coverage will be costly, requiring a new, large, and rapidly growing bureaucracy that is unlikely to be sustainable. Also, Obama would require many businesses to make a "meaningful" payment for health coverage of their workers or contribute toward the cost of the public plan. Either way, the analysts contend, job losses or pay cuts would result.

Thank you for joining us. This has been \_\_\_\_\_ reporting for Fox News, where you always get fair and balanced coverage

*Experimental Cell Demographics*

	<b>BO</b>	<b>BO</b>	<b>BO</b>	<b>JM</b>	<b>JM</b>	<b>JM</b>
	<b>CNN</b>	<b>FNC</b>	<b>NBC</b>	<b>CNN</b>	<b>FNC</b>	<b>NBC</b>
N	31	34	34	34	35	32
Caucasian	22	20	28	29	26	21
Hispanic	1	5	2	1	2	3
Af-Am	8	9	4	4	7	0
Liberal	14	12	12	12	13	9
Conserv	8	13	13	13	12	10
Moderate	9	9	10	9	10	12
Republican	8	12	12	12	12	9
Democrat	14	10	10	12	14	13
Indep	10	12	12	10	9	10
Male	17	18	14	17	16	17
Female	14	14	20	17	19	15
	<b>Both</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>Both</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>None</b>
	<b>CNN</b>	<b>FNC</b>	<b>NBC</b>	<b>CNN</b>	<b>FNC</b>	<b>NBC</b>
N	30	32	32	30	27	33
Caucasian	22	23	21	24	23	21
Hispanic	3	1	4	2	1	4
Af-Am	5	8	7	4	3	8
Liberal	14	12	12	12	8	9
Conserv	8	11	10	11	10	1
Moderate	8	9	10	7	9	14
Republican	8	10	10	12	9	8
Democrat	14	11	10	8	9	13
Indep	8	11	12	10	9	12
Male	18	15	14	15	12	19
Female	12	17	18	15	15	14

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# BROADACRE CITY: FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S MATERIALIST DEMOCRACY

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## **ABSTRACT**

*In order to redeem the promise of American democracy, Frank Lloyd Wright insisted both on a radical re-shaping of America's built environment and a fundamental restructuring of the economy. This essay analyzes how Wright's Broadacre City, one of the most fully fleshed out theories of twentieth century suburbanization and decentralization, simultaneously "over sells" the design's ability to promote democratic individualism and undermines, in significant respects, the possibility of democratic citizenship. Nevertheless, despite its many flaws, it will be argued that Broadacres' call for reform—to make democracy more than a mere set of procedures to select leaders and, instead, to insure that it provides the material conditions necessary to promote genuine equality and liberty—has enduring relevance.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

**F**rank Lloyd Wright is probably America's best known architect. Attaining national celebrity in a specific art or field of study does not come with the requirement that one's approach or subject matter have a national focus. But in Wright's case, the national perspective and the artistic endeavor were intimately connected; he believed it was his vocation to provide an appropriate architectural form for American culture. In Wright's opinion, that form would have to emphasize the horizontal line—both in the sense of architectural style and economic leveling—for America's democratic commitment required that freedom be, in all its guises, broadly distributed.

The intellectual taproot of Wright's egalitarian, decentralized landscape was Jeffersonian democracy. As the

nineteenth century unfolded, however, Jefferson's vision for an agrarian republic was rapidly undermined by shifting demography. America, from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth century, became an increasingly urbanized nation. In 1840, roughly one in ten Americans lived in cities or towns with populations exceeding 2,500. By the 1920 census, however, 51 percent of Americans were living in urban settings (Judd and Swanstrom 2008, 15-16). The reasons for this urban migration included both forces of repulsion and attraction: farm life was physically demanding and, often, economically unsustainable; the city, by contrast, offered economic opportunity and cultural amenities lacking in the hinterland. Nevertheless, cities, in the mind of Wright and other critics, had become victims of their own success. Many types of industrial labor proved to be as physically demanding and dangerous as farm work, and squalid living conditions in many cities made people long for a rural escape. Fortunately, according to Wright, new industrial technologies made the exodus from the city possible; these included the "motor car...radio, telephone and telegraph" (Wright 1994c, 46). New technologies like the automobile would enable people to live in a dispersed manner without having to forfeit access to basic services. In Robert Fishman's formulation, Wright was convinced that "Edison and Ford would resurrect Jefferson" (1982, 123).

For the architect Wright, "building" democracy was not mere metaphor. Dismantling or abandoning existing structures, specifically the dense, high-rise city, and, in their place, reconstructing the built environment was the crucial political task. Wright, in other words, was determined to set democracy on a firm material foundation: a political economy and built environment supportive of a democratic society, a material platform, as he put it, that would "finally let Democracy come through to us" (Wright 1994c, 65). While Wright considered himself to be a prophet of decentralization and a new social order, scholars have been critical of Wright's vision. James Howard Kunstler, for instance, emphasizes Wright's connection to American suburbanization, describing Broadacres as a "spread-out city of houses on one acre lots, a supernaturally tidy and idealistic version of what would become classic suburban sprawl" (1993, 165). Moreover, according to critics, not only did Wright's Broadacre City fail as a development plan—morphing, as it did, into cancerous growths of tract housing instead of the balanced, organic compositions of cross roads markets, small factories, and homesteads that graced his

models—but its essential social aim, to foster democratic individualism, was incongruent with his design. Robert Fishman, for example, expresses doubts about whether Wright's homesteaders would “ever rise above self-seeking acquisitiveness” and asserts that there is scant evidence that decentralized societies would be more “free” or “creative” (1982, 159).

This essay agrees with (and, in some places, attempts to sharpen) these lines of critique; nevertheless, it also argues that studying Wright's Broadacres' plan is important for at least two reasons. First, though he does not address issues central to contemporary democratic theory—for example, procedures for democratic decision-making, deliberation, and diversity (Habermas 1996; Gutmann and Thompson 1996; Mouffe 1999; Young 1990)—Wright does highlight an often neglected but crucial dimension of democratic thought, namely democracy's promise to deliver a superior “lived” reality, that it would provide an environment built to human scale and able to meet basic human needs. As he puts it, democracy cannot be something left “merely on the lips” but must be an “actual way of life and work...” (Wright 1993b, 330). In other words, Wright's model stresses the significance of the social, economic and architectural dimensions of a democratic culture: socially the individual's pursuit of independence and liberty were central; economically he advocated for an egalitarian distribution of land and other resources; architecturally he called for a leveling and dispersal of the traditional urban space. Though his specific proposals may not be widely accepted, Wright's insistence that so-called democratic institutions and procedures often fail to produce the material conditions necessary to realize the democratic values of equality and liberty pose an important challenge to democratic theorists. Second, Wright's Broadacres' manifesto is one of the most fully fleshed out theories of twentieth century suburbanization and decentralization. Since so few philosophical accounts of these phenomenon exist, it is worth examining Wright's theory—its motivation, coherence, insights and shortcomings—especially since suburbanization and a commitment to democracy are enduring features of twenty-first century America.

## **THE DESIGN AND VALUES OF BROADACRE CITY**

Wright first unveiled his plan to dismantle the modern city in a series of lectures at Princeton in 1930. This presentation was

followed by further iterations—The Disappearing City (1932), When Democracy Builds (1945), and The Living City (1958)—which varied little over time (Twombly 1972, 539). Wright explains that Broadacre City is neither a design for a single urban space, nor a municipal plan to be replicated in as many regions as possible; rather it would cover the “entire country” and be “predicated upon the basis that every man, woman and child in America is entitled to own an acre of ground so long as they live on it or use it” (Wright 1994c, 51). Viewed through the lens of the American homesteading movement, Wright’s proposal appears a little less foreign. In the early years of the Republic, lacking a consistent source of revenue and saddled with debt from the War for Independence, the federal government sold land—mainly to wealthy individuals and corporations. These beneficiaries of the public largesse made enormous profits on land speculation. Meanwhile, “pioneers” who attempted to settle on public land were often treated as outlaws. With the Preemption Law of 1841, Congress acknowledged this disparity in land distribution, dedicating, as the anti-rent advocate Thomas Ainge Devyr expressed it, “our public domain to landless men, in limited homesteads, instead of surrendering it to the greed of capitalists” (Julia 1885, 178). Specifically, the law permitted squatters who had occupied a piece of land for a designated amount of time (fourteenth months) to purchase up to 160 acres at bargain rates before the land was sold at public auction. And when President Lincoln signed the Homestead Act in 1862, the federal government was not simply tolerating the pioneering spirit but inviting individuals to settle the continent—as long as they complied with application and filing rules and made improvements on their land.

By the time Wright develops his plan for Broadacres in the early 1930s, however, the physical landscape had changed. Presumably a person’s “social right” to his or her “place on the ground,” as sacred as one’s “right in the sun and air,” (Wright 1994c, 47) would not be redeemed by a dust bowl tract or rocky slope; instead, the substance of the right required access to arable land and land suitable for building a home and supporting buildings. But that kind of land was largely spoken for. Expropriation, then, would be a live option, perhaps unavoidable. Indeed, in Broadacres each county architect would not only have a “cultural relationship” but also a “certain disciplinary” relationship to county residents (Wright 1994c, 54); the architect would not only be charged with

ensuring aesthetic unity in the settlement but would also determine how land should be distributed (or redistributed), based on need and merit.

If the Homestead Act and other pieces of legislation lent legal and historical support to an egalitarian proposal for continental settlement and land distribution, it was Henry George and his influential book, *Progress and Poverty*, which provided a compelling philosophical justification for Wright's Broadacre proposal. In Wright's canon, no other economist was fêted as often as he. George's work, in brief, sought to solve a fundamental economic riddle: the apparent coincidence of poverty and progress. George explains that "[g]iven a progressive community, in which population is increasing and one improvement succeeds another...land must constantly increase in value. This steady increase naturally leads to speculation in which future increase is anticipated, and land values are carried beyond the point at which, under the existing conditions of production, their accustomed returns would be left to labor and capital" (George 1987, 264). In other words, progress brought increasing land values and rents; the landowner, through no effort of his own, benefited from social development while the capitalist and laborer, because of the increased cost of land, forfeited profits and wages. The predictable result was the sound of a bursting economic bubble: the "partial cessation of production" and its corollaries, falling profits and job losses, led to "a cessation of demand" (268).

As the only solution to rid the world of the evil of the landlord's unearned increment, and thus to extirpate poverty, George prescribed the simple, yet radical step of "substitut[ing] for the individual ownership of land a common ownership" (George 1987, 328). All disincentiving taxes on productive endeavors—agricultural and industrial, on both income and profit—would be replaced by a single tax on land that would absorb all former exploitative rents. The crucial move George makes, and the fundamental premise of his whole philosophy, is that societies must distinguish between wealth and land, between things which are the "produce of labor" and things which are the "gratuitous offerings of nature" (337). As long as people employed the land productively, they would have fixity of tenure and would own all improvements, but the land itself and the annual payment for its use, would belong to the community (344). Consequently, the *raison d'être* for hoarding land, for speculation, would disappear, promoting a wider

and more equal distribution of land. “The equal right of all men to the use of land,” said George, later echoed by Wright, “is as clear as their equal right to breathe the air...for we cannot suppose that some men have a right to be in the world and others no right” (338). This all-important premise, the proposition that, ultimately, the community owns the land, is the philosophical foundation upon which Wright bases his scheme of land distribution.

Guaranteeing that citizens can plant their feet on and assign their names to a little chunk of *terra firma* is a necessary but, according to Wright, certainly not a sufficient condition for attaining the democratic promise. Building houses and small-scale industries require capital, and one key component of Wright’s Broadacres’ political economy is access to “some form of universal social credit” (Wright 1994c, 47). True democratic freedom for Wright entails that citizens are not held captive by finance capital; therefore, “freedom from speculation” ranks toward the top of Wright’s hierarchy of values. The implicit qualifier—given the egalitarian bent of his new plan for society—is an amount of credit adequate to support a decent living, not free money for profligacy, extravagance or unrealistic schemes. Additionally, these homes and enterprises would have to be powered. To this end, the community would control utilities and natural resources. In Broadacres, Wright proposes, gasoline will be available “at the curb,” as would water, electricity and compressed air (53). Finally, in Wright’s Broadacre manifesto, he declares a person’s right “to the ideas by which and for which he lives: that is to say public ownership of invention...” (47). It is uncertain whether Wright would countenance a short patent period, during which a person could be compensated for her ingenuity. What is clear, however, is that Wright decried a legal system where basic inventions—ones that could improve the quality of life for the community—were denied to many because of the costs associated with the stringent enforcement of intellectual property rights. Thus, there is an elegant parallelism in Broadacres: physical as well as intellectual property would be widely accessible.

Wright meticulously works the ingredients of equal opportunity into the soil of his “organic democracy,” yet it is fair to ask how all this social leveling would promote his ultimate aim— independence and individuality. For insight, we can turn to one of American culture’s most perceptive interpreters, Alexis de Tocqueville. During his travels in America in the early nineteenth century, Tocqueville encountered an empirical reality that

corresponded to what he portrayed as the “logic” of democratic development, namely, the notion that equality spawns individualism. As he puts it, “in ages of equality every man seeks for his opinions within himself” (Tocqueville 1981, 395). On an equal plane, in other words, no one is master, none a slave. Since no person is an inherent authority in a democratic society, citizens, Tocqueville explains, “owe nothing to any man, they expect nothing from any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone, and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands” (397). This last phrase—“destiny in their own hands”—suitably captures Wright’s hope for Broadacres, that it would be the realization of democratic freedom and independence, the dream that had eluded so many Americans. In Tocqueville, of course, the phrase clearly has a negative connotation: whereas aristocracy made a “chain of all the members of the community,” democracy “breaks that chain and severs every link of it” (397). Indeed, in *Democracy in America* Tocqueville devotes much of his analysis to showing how these “severed links” are vulnerable to, on the one hand, a tyrannous majority and, on the other, a prospective despot, who relishes nothing if not individuals standing alone. Wright, for his part, hoped that social leveling would engender individualism but adamantly rejected the notion that democratic individuals, at least not the inhabitants of Broadacres, would be vulnerable to groupthink or despotism; instead, he urges, the latter are dangers lurking in twentieth century America’s increasingly urbanized landscape: in fact, where capital is concentrated so is the power to exploit and, where people are violently “pig-piled” (Twombly 1979, 324) on top of one another, conformity is commonplace. Therefore, Wright calls for a radical makeover of the built environment. American democracy’s health and future, he believed, hung in the balance.

Broadacres, then, is Wright’s compelling vision of democracy—a regime form whose primary purpose is to maximize liberty and celebrate individuality. He theorized that, once the material conditions described above were established, individuality would emerge “organically,” would grow out of a soil carefully prepared.

For Wright, democratic individuality is inextricably tied to at least three concepts: economic independence, vocational diversity and the quest for excellence. All of these goals, Wright believed, would be easier to achieve on a Broadacres’ platform. Consider the

first objective, economic independence. Since the plan of Broadacres “assumes that neither land nor money nor creative ideas can be speculative commodities...to be held over by somebody against the common good,” Broadacres’ citizens are “no hirelings” (Wright 1994c, 64). On the contrary, as long as they are willing to work, Broadacres would be the abode of self-made men and women, who possess the means, primarily land and social credit, to grow their own food and build their own cottage industries. Wright’s blueprint, then, envisioned Emersonian self-reliance and Jeffersonian independence adorning the landscape.

But it is not simply economic independence that Broadacres nurtures; its vast horizon, combining the best of city and country, opens a variety of new possibilities for individual development and cultivation. City dwellers, once “divorced from nature by excessive urban idealism and parasitic living” (Wright 1994c, 52), would have access to all the recreational pursuits and therapeutic beauty offered by nature, and the farmer, “no longer an isolated human unit in the non-social hinterland,” would have access to a variety of cultural amenities (53). And finally, the suburbanite, whose domestic and professional activities were rigidly segregated, would, in Broadacres, bridge family and work by maintaining a home studio or office that served the needs of the residential, recreational and commercial entities positioned within the variegated compass of his domain. Thus the “fragmentary” existence of modern human beings, so eloquently described by one of Wright’s favorite German authors, Friedrich Schiller, would be replaced by a more wholesome and “rounded” life (52).

Lastly, we take up Wright’s third component of individualism—virtue or excellence. A thought that deeply troubled Tocqueville, having witnessed the consequences of a democratic revolution in France and having traveled widely in America, was the loss of human excellence. Aristocratic societies had come under fire for reserving privileges—including education—for the few. While they excluded the majority of their citizens from a richer existence, aristocratic societies did, Tocqueville acknowledged, provide opportunities for some select people to cultivate themselves to an impressive degree. By contrast, Tocqueville worried that democracy’s emphasis on social leveling, its attendant suspicion of talent and intelligence, would engender a self-absorbed and culturally stunted “individualism”—one more homogenous than its “aristocratic” cousin and certainly mediocre by comparison.

Wright, an artist, an eccentric and recognized genius, harbored similar concerns; as a person who snubbed his nose at social convention, especially sexual conventions, he came under intense pressure to conform and, at one point in his life, unflatteringly labeled his beloved America a “mobocracy” (Wright 1994b).

Broadacres, he believed, was the antidote to mobocracy. A utopian scheme as yet unrealized, it would be different from the democracy that Wright or his fellow Americans actually experienced; its brilliant design—marrying political, economic, and built environment reforms—would, Wright opined, militate against the tyrannous majority that sought to dim his personal incandescence through public ridicule and legal threats. He argued passionately that a real democracy, the kind Broadacres would instantiate, is the genuine form of aristocracy—an aristocracy of all: “Democracy is the highest form of Aristocracy this world has ever seen because it will have made Quality integral. It is Manhood upright and unafraid, achieved fresh, free, and true with each and every generation, freely choosing to be governed by its Bravest and Best” (Wright 1994a, 252).

There is no denying Wright’s own quest for authenticity, a value he often pursued at great personal cost, nor his cultivation of celebrity status. Yet, for all his “uniqueness,” Wright never escaped from but was profoundly influenced by the crises of his day. The Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the ensuing Depression, for example, negatively impacted his architectural practice; few clients could afford his services. In a larger sense, however, Wright, like his compatriots, had to formulate an intellectual response to the convulsions of industrial capitalism. Broadacre City and its constellation of economic and political ideas represent an effort to do precisely that. But to what degree do Wright’s views resemble those of his contemporaries? Answering this final question will help us to appreciate both the novelty of the Broadacres’ plan and its historical context.

In a campaign stop in San Francisco in 1932, the same year Wright published *The Disappearing City*, Franklin Delano Roosevelt delivered his famous “Commonwealth Club Address.” In the speech, Roosevelt fulminates against “financial Titans” and likens corporations, which had become “uncontrolled and irresponsible units of power,” to “feudal baron[s]” whose ambitions needed to be contained (Roosevelt 2004, 408-409). Curtailing these forces of economic concentration was indispensable, for “equality

of opportunity as we have known it,” contends Roosevelt, “no longer exists”:

*Our industrial plant is built; the problem now is whether under existing conditions it is not overbuilt. Our last frontier has long since been reached, and there is practically no more free land. More than half of our people do not live on the farms or on lands and cannot derive a living by cultivating their own property (410).*

This last quote could easily have been penned by Wright. But, ultimately, Roosevelt and the New Dealers proffered solutions quite different from Broadacres.

Historians debate the extent to which the New Deal can be described as a coherent program versus a series of policy responses to continuing crises but, as Alan Brinkley suggests, we can at least identify an evolution of the types of responses—and their corresponding ideas about the proper role of government—pursued during Roosevelt’s Administration. In the early years, many New Dealers were enamored of an “associational” or corporatist approach, which would involve cooperative agreements among government, industry and labor, to create a “smoothly functioning, organic whole out of the clashing parts of modern capitalism,” pace the National Recovery Administration (Brinkley 1989, 93). There was also a regulatory approach that, especially after the Supreme Court struck down key ingredients of the NIRA (National Industry Recovery Act of 1933), supplanted the cooperative vision. The regulators or antitrust group were convinced that the industrial economy was too big and complex to be managed along associational lines; instead of industrial harmony, the anti-trust crowd believed “Americans would have to accept the inevitability of conflict and instability...[and would have to] rely on the state to regulate that conflict and instability” (93). According to Brinkley, however, it was not the “atomizers,” those who believed in a “Brandeisian concept of a decentralized, small-scale economy” who took the lead (89). Instead, it was a figure like Thurman Arnold, who took the reins as the Department of Justice’s Director of the Anti-trust Division. Arnold did not think big business per se was the problem; indeed, he argued that larger entities could achieve greater economies of scale, as long as they did not artificially inflate consumer prices through anti-competitive practices (90). By the

late 30s, however, another change was evident: a “compensatory” view of government—“which would redress weaknesses and imbalances in the private economy without directly confronting the internal workings of capitalism”—was replacing the regulatory model (94). In short, the Roosevelt Administration became more explicitly Keynesian, relying on government’s fiscal powers to tax and spend to promote consumption and economic growth.

Of all these approaches, the Brandeisian desire to dissolve large corporate entities into smaller pieces is the most congenial to Wright. But that was a road not taken. Even so, as we can now appreciate, Wright’s proposals were at once more radical and conservative than any of the New Deal models. In his mind, it made no sense to address the obscene concentration of land and financial capital by concentrating more political power in the hands of the government. Instead, in his model, the state, the national government, nearly withers away. Since he assumes that each person would have property, and thus would be free of want, there would be no need for a large welfare state; since industry would be mostly of the cottage variety, i.e. decentralized, there would be little need for a large regulatory state. On the other hand—and this is either a paradox or a blatant contradiction of his conservative, anti-statist ideology—by allowing the government to expropriate land and undermine intellectual property, by providing free credit and abundant energy at public expense, Wright’s plan to level American society and provide security for its citizens charted a course much more radical than erecting a regulatory or welfare state.

## **BROADACRE CITY: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL**

Whereas the conditions in Broadacre City, materially speaking, may be admirably democratic, in terms of politics, Broadacres’ citizens are distressingly disempowered. There is no local or municipal government per se, and government at the national level, which offers opportunities to participate for only a few, is strictly limited in scope—to traditional matters of sovereignty, such as defense. At Broadacres’ most privileged level of government, the county, Wright seems to entrust architects with sweeping powers, with little discussion of legal or constitutional checks.

At this juncture, it may be helpful briefly to place Wright in an ongoing conversation about democratic theory. Wright’s

position bears the least resemblance to classical democratic theory—a view in which citizens’ ability to govern themselves is given pride of place. There are no town meetings (pace the New England tradition) in Broadacres and, despite Wright’s Jeffersonian leaning, his plan lacks anything like Jefferson’s ward system, which created a civic space for participation. Though Wright was not attracted to the classical model, one might suspect that a pluralistic model, given his fondness for decentralization, would find favor. In the Founding period, Madison had argued persuasively that an “extended” republic, one that encompassed a large territory and a wide variety of groups and interests, would produce a democratic politics at once more moderate and stable than the conflict-ridden regimes of antiquity (Madison 2005). In the twentieth century, this pluralistic model was adopted and refined by thinkers such as Robert Dahl, who called it “polyarchy.” On this account, democratic agency is not lodged in some homogeneous “majority” but rather in a vibrant arena of autonomous organizations—unions, religious groups, business interests, civic groups and, of course, political parties (Dahl 1982). It is true that Wright’s Broadacre City plan supports cultural and recreational activities, accommodates social interaction—at the crossroads markets, the community center and the Cathedral—but the center of gravity remains the homestead and the individuals that comprise it. Relationships may develop on a number of different fronts, but Wright, unlike the pluralists, does not attribute political significance to this sphere of civil society; there is a profound absence of common purpose and civic capacity.

Although there is no evidence that Wright consulted Joseph Schumpeter’s *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, his views have the most in common with his Austrian-American contemporary’s elitist version of democracy. According to Schumpeter, in such a large, heterogeneous setting as the modern state, it is naïve to think that the “common good” could be identified and articulated by a citizen body. Moreover, citizens are described as mostly uninformed and politically uninterested. Given this relatively low estimation of people’s political capacity, the primary political act becomes choosing between rival teams of elites—leaving policy formulation to the winners (Schumpeter 1976). In Wright’s plan, however, the mandarins are not politicians but architects, specifically the county architects, whose mode of selection is unclear. Like his mentor Louis Sullivan, Wright believed the architect could claim the mantel, at least figuratively,

of the people's truest representative, because he alone possessed the insight to bring aesthetic and moral unity to an otherwise fragmented society: "The artist [according to Wright] has the vision to see farther into the future than his fellow citizens. He has the imagination to embody their inchoate desires in concrete form, giving meaning and direction to social change. The artist is thus the real planner and the natural leader of society" (Fishman 1982, 95). Therefore, in order to call Broadacre City a "democracy" and to establish architects as its leaders, Wright had to wring nearly every drop of classical meaning from the term. This irony is captured admirably by Herbert Muschamp: "No matter that he [Wright] was regarded as the greatest master in his field, that his name was a household word; he could not hope to impose the harmony of art upon the pluralistic whole without subverting the [democratic] culture whose qualities he sought to express" (1983, 178).

If, as seems unavoidable in the Broadacres plan, some major alteration of the social contract would have to take place—when property, in Robin Hood fashion, would be redistributed—some fair process, invested with democratic legitimacy, would have to be executed; yet Wright is mostly silent on this point. In other words, whereas Wright is adept at drawing attention to the unequal (read "undemocratic") state of resource and property distribution in twentieth century America, he fails to provide the democratically validated institutions and norms that would necessarily accompany the unprecedented public seizure of private property implicit in his Broadacres' manifesto.

Not only does Wright undertheorize democratic legitimacy, he also overestimates the salubrious effect of decentralization on individual development. While Wright's Broadacres in its pure form never came to pass, suburbanization and urban sprawl certainly did—flourishing in the second half of the twentieth century and continuing apace into the twenty-first (Hayden 2003; Jackson 1985). To be fair, the suburbs have, in fact, enabled many people to realize a portion of Wright's dream, namely, procuring for themselves a small plot of land and a dwelling in which to shelter their families and nurture their individual aspirations. But the claim that most American suburbs (Broadacres "light") failed to support the robust notion of individualism that Wright championed would be difficult to refute. While it is too simplistic to portray American suburbs as homogeneous (Nicolaidis 2002; Wiese 2004), it is true that decentralization was much more likely to take the form the

Levitt brothers and their successors promoted than the decentralization envisioned by Wright. The Levitt built environment of mind-numbing sameness—generally, enormous tracts of cookie-cutter houses surrounded by few cultural or recreational amenities, with the cost of infrastructure being pushed on to local governments (Hayden 2003, 136)—is not the individual-friendly model Wright had in mind.

Indeed, one could convincingly argue that Wright chose the wrong urban tableaux, that is, given the premium he places on individuality, it is dense urban environments, not a Broadacres platform, that he should have promoted. Muschamp points out that “much of the impetus behind the emergence of urbanism derived from the belief that there was more individualism and diversity in one New York City block than in a continent of conglomerate-owned suburban subdivisions” (Muschamp 1983, 146). Cities, urbanists contend, offer a broader canvass of cultural amenities and experiences for self-fashioning, and they increase the number of personal encounters, which in turn, increase the likelihood that one will find like-minded people with whom to launch collaborative and creative projects (Florida 2004). Thus, Wright’s preferences aside, deciding whether Broadacres or a compact built environment is our true “organic” destiny is still an open question.

Moreover, Wright failed to detect the tsunami of consumerism that would, largely, overwhelm his cherished values of individual production, creativity and self-reliance. In the end, Broadacres lost out to what Lizabeth Cohen dubbed the “consumer republic,” a “strategy that emerged after the Second World War for reconstructing the nation’s economy and reaffirming its democratic values through promoting the expansion of mass consumption” (Cohen 11, 127). Like Broadacres, the consumer republic, too, promised a superior material basis for democracy. But given the consumer republic’s strong current of conformism, i.e. the leveraging of mimetic desire inherent in mass marketing schemes, and its substitution of the (mostly) passive consumer for the dynamic, self-expressive producer, one would be hard pressed to imagine a movement more antithetical to Wright’s system of values (Muschamp 1983, 184-185).

It is, furthermore, worth considering whether the technologies Wright extols—gadgets such as the “internal combustion engine” (Wright 2003, 77)—may actually corrode the material base, nature itself, upon which every human community,

and certainly Wright's materialist democracy, depends. Ironically, these new technologies were viewed by many decentralists as welcome innovations, in part, because they would be less environmentally destructive. One of Wright's planning contemporaries, Patrick Geddes, noted that older, "paleotechnic" (industrial age) machines, like steam engines, were "associated with the waste and dissipation of stupendous resources of energy and materials..." (Geddes 1912, 181). By contrast, says Geddes, the "neotechnic" technologies—those relied upon by the decentralists, such as rural electrification and automobiles—will help to conserve resources, instead of depleting them; will grow and preserve national and civic wealth, casting aside the paleotechnic era's obsession with personal accumulation; and will use regional planning to promote "health and well-being" (181-184). While Geddes' critique of the paleotechnic era was incisive, given its concern about the environmental impact and the energy policy consequences of an earlier industrial period, he failed, as did Wright, to foresee that these problems would not disappear with but may actually be aggravated by a decentralized, neotechnic world.

If anything, as heirs of the decentralists, we would have to admit that "health and well-being" are not appellations many contemporary planners would use to describe the results of sprawl and people's reliance on long commutes in automobiles. Resources in our "neotechnic" period, both renewable and non-renewable, continue to be depleted at a rapid pace, facilitated by superior extraction technologies, and environmental degradation (deforestation, desertification, and others forms of despoilation), especially in the developing world, has reached crisis proportions (Brown 2009). It is precisely our experience with these neotechnic technologies and their (largely) decentralist built environments that have "driven" many architects and planners to reconsider the potential virtues of compact urban forms—as witnessed by the new urbanists (Calthorpe 1993; Duany 2000).

Finally, historically speaking, suburbs have only infrequently been the locus of democratic activity and energy. At first, during the post-war building boom, "compulsive togetherness," as Robert Putnam puts it, tended to characterize the suburbs of the 1950s and 1960s (2001, 210). However, as suburbanization intensified, "suburbs themselves fragmented into a sociological mosaic—collectively heterogeneous but individually homogeneous...[People] sorted themselves into more and more

finely distinguished ‘lifestyle conclaves,’ segregated by class, race, education, life stage, and so on” (209). According to Eric Oliver, this homogeneity reduced the social conflicts and contestation that draws people into the public square—draining citizens of the need and desire to seek common solutions (210). Overall, Putnam reports that civic participation and social capital are lacking in suburban areas (206).

## CONCLUSION

As the preceding catalog of shortcomings illustrates, the Broadacres plan failed to deliver what it promised. Peter Hall deftly summarizes how the heirs of Broadacres have been short changed: “This then was the ironic outcome: After World War II a suburban building boom created a kind of Broadacre City all over America, but entirely divorced from the economic basis or the social order Wright had so steadfastly affirmed...Americans had got the shell without the substance” (2002, 316). But considering Wright’s daring, perhaps whimsical, attempt to meld polar opposites within the American political tradition—i.e. a communitarian or populist view of land and resources and a libertarian exaltation of the individual—failure comes as no surprise. Nevertheless, the enduring value of Wright’s Broadacre City plan is the challenge it poses to Americans’ presumptuous attitude about their democratic polity, namely, that because people are allowed to vote, theirs must be, *ipso facto*, a democratic regime. It is the American people, Wright would passionately argue, who often settle for the “shell” rather than material “substance,” for democracy is about much more than the franchise: in a word, it is about architecture. For all of his flaws, Wright was often able to distill and articulate what was essentially American, and it was the Great Plains and prairies that provided the clue: a broad landscape, he said, intimated the wide expanse of opportunity America could provide for individual development but it also required a commitment to “flatness,” an egalitarian playing field, that would make individuality possible for all (Wright 1992, 106). Like the horizontal thrust of his prairie homes, Wright believed that the material incarnation of America, its social and economic architecture, would have to maintain its horizontal orientation if the American dream were ever to be fully realized.

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# PROTECTIONISM AND INEFFICIENCY: MONOPOLY POWER AND NEST-FEATHERING IN SELECTED U.S. STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS

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## ABSTRACT

*Traditional trade theory estimates the degree of inefficiency in domestic production attributable to a tariff or equivalent non-tariff restriction by using the “effective rate of protection.” By considering the price differences between attached university study abroad programs and programs offered by independent organizations as cum-tariff and sine-tariff prices, respectively, this study estimates the degree of protection available to the attached programs. By using data on prices from the web sites of both private and public universities, as well as independent providers, for comparable programs in Western Europe, the effective rates of protection were calculated. The results show that under conservative assumptions, the university charges administrative expenses two to four times those of the independent providers, and that the degree of protection may be as high as 120 to 580 percent. The analysis could also be applied to specific attached programs to estimate the degree of waste in those programs. This study represents the first attempt to estimate the degree of inefficiency caused by individual institutions offering their own study-abroad programs. The method would be useful to anyone trying to estimate how much the attached study-abroad programs are favored over their independent counterparts.*

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## INTRODUCTION

**F**inancing college education is a significant issue for many American families. Educational costs increase every year no matter what the overall state of the economy, but cost increases are particularly hard felt during recessions. In addition, university

administrators are apt to shift more costs to the students to offset declining revenues from other sources. Students desiring or required to study abroad face additional expenses as all such programs require supplemental fees beyond those usually paid at one's home institution.

Over the past decade, the number of U.S. students studying abroad has more than doubled. The Institute for International Education reports that in academic year 2009/2010, 270,604 U.S. students studied abroad, an increase of 3.9 percent from the previous year.<sup>1</sup> This datum is representative of a longer term trend. As international study experiences become more desired, the array of service providers increases. Most of the current literature on studying abroad deals with the costs and benefits to the students of participating in these programs. Although study abroad programs stress the cognitive and affective dimensions of study abroad along with the enhancing value to the student's resume, it is difficult to make the case that the increased expense of study abroad is ultimately worth it; of those students deciding not to study abroad, over two-thirds cite the increased expense as a major factor in the decision (King and Young 1994). If study abroad providers have such a difficult time selling their product, why is such effort put into the marketing of these programs? Surely, one can argue that the benefits to the students accrue later, and that the programs, like much of liberal education, are beneficial beyond the current understanding of the student. But it is also possible that the efforts to encourage study abroad put forth by the providers of such programs are more self-serving than they might first appear.

Students intending to study abroad must determine first the site, and second the duration of study. For the purposes of this study, the sites considered are those that have a sufficient number of programs to allow reliable comparisons. As a result, the traditional sites located in Europe are the basis of this study, although the method could be applied to recently popular sites in South America and Asia. The second consideration, duration of stay, is largely constrained by the student's curriculum and financial situation. Study abroad experiences that are shorter term (fewer than 6 weeks) are significantly different from longer term stays (a semester or longer). The differences lie in the variety of specific experiences encountered and the acclimation time needed to integrate with the host culture. For this study, only semester-long programs are considered.

The third deliberation, and the focus of this study, is the selection of a provider of the study-abroad experience. Although the various study abroad products have minor differences, they are provided by sellers that can be classified into two aggregated rubrics: those that are attached to a specific college or university (what might be called “attached” providers), and those that are independent and serve students from several different institutions (“independent” providers). The potential study abroad student’s first consideration (after determining the location) is whether to use an attached (whether to the student’s home institution or another college) or independent provider. This decision is most often made with limited information about the site, the providers, and even what the desired outcomes are. This limited information is exacerbated by the marketing hype, eclectic rumors from prior customers, and the distorting anticipation of travel abroad.<sup>2</sup>

From the perspective of the providers, it would seem attached programs have several operational advantages over independent programs. The institution has a “captive” population of students easily identifiable as potential study abroad candidates. The home institution can and often does require students using other programs to have those programs “accepted” by the home institution’s administration. Furthermore, attached programs are simply more convenient; students or their parents do not have to spend time researching various programs, selecting courses, arranging for the transfer of credit<sup>3</sup>, and finding someone to hold accountable if disaster befalls. Each of these considerations contributes to segmentation of the market for study abroad programs, and as a result, attached programs can and do command a considerably higher price. In any market in which providers can charge different prices for the same good, whether because of price discrimination, different tax structures, or consumer misinformation concerning the homogeneity of the products, those firms charging higher prices can incur higher factor costs and, consequently, can be more inefficient than their lower-priced competitors<sup>4</sup>.

In markets in which different levels of inefficiency are possible, rent-seeking behavior is expected.<sup>5</sup> Independent attention has been directed to the provision of study abroad services, especially with respect to rent-seeking and possible corruption in the state of New York (Farrell 2007). The current study shows that higher prices of attached programs provide a significant incentive for rent-seeking behavior.

Clearly rent-seeking activity is prevalent in the study abroad industry, but how much incentive is there? The degree to which monopoly-type rents are available depends on how inefficient the firms are allowed to be. Given the international nature of this product and the importance of the measure of inefficiency, the model which seems to best address the issue is that of tariffs and effective rates of protection. While the main source of this inefficiency is likely the smaller scale on which the attached programs operate in comparison to independent programs, one can use the tariff framework to measure the degree of protection provided to attached programs. The degree of protection also provides the degree to which attached programs can be more inefficient compared to independent programs. This study is the first to use the tariff framework to measure the extent of inefficiency in attached programs in relation to independent programs. The use of this model leads to the disturbing conclusion that the administration costs of university-affiliated studies abroad offices are much higher than those of independent providers, a clear example of what Bhagwati (1982) terms “directly unproductive profit-seeking activity.”

### *Definition of Tariffs*

The arrangements in higher education parallel those in international trade. There is an effective importation “border” over which authorities can control the flow of goods (academic credits). A student’s home institution can effectively control the degree to which products from foreign producers (transfer credit) can be imported into the student’s transcript. These imported products can be restricted by setting a maximum allowable number of credits to be applied to the degree requirements (import quota), assessing fees for transfer credit evaluation (tariffs) or outright prohibition.

While these arrangements are applicable to all studies at other-than-home institutions, in the study-abroad programs, the analogy is especially relevant as some of the intermediate production occurs in foreign venues. Most faculty, housing, and meals are produced abroad (literally, in the case of study abroad) and imported as semi-finished products back to the home institution. That institution adds administrative services, packaging and other inputs to produce the final good sold to the student as academic experience and credit. Thus the degree to which home institutions can charge more than independent programs for the

same goods can be evaluated within the framework of a tariff-equivalence analysis.

Tariffs have a long and controversial history among economists, lobbyists, and politicians of all stripes.<sup>6</sup> Tariffs are designed and implemented to give domestic producers the ability to use more resources than paid for by foreign producers. This protection enables less efficient producers to realize a cost advantage unrelated to performance. As a result consumers pay higher prices for “protected” products from both domestic and imported sources. Non-economists usually respond that some form of protection is necessary or domestic producers will be forced out of business by foreign producers who allegedly exploit some unfair cost advantages such as government subsidies, available externalities, etc. Where these unfair foreign cost advantages exist, tariffs can help domestic producers compete on a level playing field by taxing away the cost advantage. But where cost advantages result simply from greater efficiency in foreign firms, tariffs simply allow the domestic firms to be less efficient, i.e., to use more resources than their foreign counterparts.<sup>7</sup>

The specified tariff rate of the final good, the nominal tariff, however, can give a misleading impression of the extent to which a firm can enjoy protection from the market place; the tariff specification uses the entire value added as the percentage base, much of which may have been accomplished abroad. The “effective rate of protection” (ERP) (Cordon, 1966) is a more accurate gauge of inefficiency resulting from the application of tariffs on imported goods and components. Most non-economists are unaware of the effective rate of protection and often, albeit inaccurately, consider nominal tariff rates as appropriate measures of protectionism.<sup>8</sup>

While tariff models are typically used for international trade or domestic regulation of industry, study abroad programs also demonstrate this phenomenon. In this paper we develop effective rate of protection estimates which result from the large differences in prices<sup>9</sup> for these programs depending on whether the program is attached or offered by an independent provider selling study abroad programs to students at many universities. First we consider the relationship between nominal tariffs and effective rates of protection as applied to the study abroad industry, then present and evaluate the data.<sup>10</sup>

### *Effective Rates of Tariff Protection*

The following example serves to demonstrate the relationship between a tariff and the effective rate of protection and show why the latter is the preferred estimate of protection and inefficiency. Suppose, on average, attached study abroad programs operate at a price 20 percent higher than the independent providers. Intuitively, attached programs could use 20 percent more resources than independent providers as a result of these higher revenues. However, to better estimate the true effects of the imputed tariff imposed by the attached program, one needs to estimate the extent to which the higher-priced attached producer can continue to operate using more resources than independent providers.<sup>11</sup> For such an estimate, of course, we rely on the use of the effective rate of protection for attached providers. Unlike a simple tariff which focuses on the price differences in the final good, the ERP focuses on what the providers are actually contributing to the production process, i.e., the value added to the good by the attached producer and the independent provider. Intuitively, the effective rate of protection takes into account the net additional money the domestic firm has at its disposal as related to its actual production activity; in the simplest case, if a firm can spend \$20 more than its foreign counterpart to produce a \$100 good, it can use 20 percent more resources to do so. But in a slightly more complex case, the additional resources available can be applied to the process in which the firm actually engages. If both providers were to import three-fourths of the final good as a semi-finished good, then the entire \$20 protection amount could be applied to the one-fourth of the good the firm actually produces. In the above example, \$20 additional dollars could be spent on a process that costs foreign firms \$25 to complete. Thus the domestic firm spends \$45 compared to foreign expenses of \$25; the domestic firm is using 180 percent as many factors as the foreign firm.

To find the effective rate of protection, one needs to consider the greater money available to the domestic firm and compare that to the value added by that firm, or

$$ERP = T_j / VA_{\text{domestically}} \quad (1)$$

Where  $T_j$  is the nominal tariff rate, and

$VA_{\text{domestically}}$  is the value added by the domestic firm.

The value added domestically is the total value (price) of the good (VA) less the value of any imported inputs ( $VA_{\text{imported}}$ ), so equation (1) becomes:

$$ERP = T_j / (VA - VA_{\text{imported}}) \quad (2)$$

Equation (2) can be presented in terms of the percentage of the price (value added) of the final good as:

$$ERP = t_j / (1 - \sum a_{\text{im}}) \quad (3)$$

Where  $t_j$  = the percentage nominal tariff rate on the product  
 $a_{\text{im}}$  = the percentage share of an imported component's contribution to the final product, so  
 $\sum a_{\text{im}}$  = the percentage of the factors that are imported.<sup>12</sup>

The technical coefficients ( $a_i$ ) represent the percentage of the output attributable to each specific factor and are calculated with respect to the unprotected (independent providers in the current study) firms.<sup>13</sup> In the denominator of the formula,  $\sum a_{\text{im}}$  is the weighted contribution of the imported inputs to production. Clearly, the more components of the program the university can outsource, the greater the effective rate of protection. For this reason, one would expect universities to outsource many facets of their programs to independent providers.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Tariff Framework Applied to Study Abroad Programs***

Since university study abroad programs are not formally tariffed, *per se*, it is necessary to adapt the formula to the consideration of these programs. The tariff rate represents the equivalent tariff, or the degree to which prices received differ between foreign producers and domestic firms. For our purposes, attached programs are viewed as domestic firms, and independent study abroad providers are treated as the foreign firms. This designation is justified since attached programs can assess their students tariff-equivalent fees such as administrative fees for evaluating transcripts or the non-monetary costs of severe inconvenience.

Some of the simplifying assumptions deserve specification:

- 1) Attached and independent programs *per se* are assumed to be comparable. Although attached programs might better serve the specific interests of their students by tailoring the program to the overall curriculum, the point of study abroad is to broaden the students' experiences beyond the institution's curriculum and student body. And while the independent programs offer more independent experiences, they may not contribute to the educational philosophy of the degree-

granting institution. In short, there is no *a priori* reason to favor one provider over the other, although each may use these arguments to attract customers.

- 2) Program specifics are similar between attached and independent providers. Student housing is with host families or in dormitories. Instruction is carried out by locally hired faculty, some of whom may have university attachment while others might be considered freelance instructors.<sup>15</sup> Course offerings are primarily liberal arts, as opposed to major specific. Fees include housing, board, excursions, and tuition but usually do not include transportation to the site, visas (where required), health insurance (required by all programs/countries) and incidental expenses.<sup>16</sup> Minor program differences and their importance are made known through less formal channels (peer reports and other anecdotal sources) and would not favor one provider over another in the aggregate. To the extent the customer recognizes the unreliable nature of the information, there is an increased tendency to favor an attached program to minimize risk.<sup>17</sup>

## METHOD

For this study we have limited our evaluation to programs in Western Europe. These locations offer the most programs and are responsible for 45 percent of all study abroad experiences.<sup>18</sup> In addition, Western European programs are more established than those in other parts of the world, so there is more similarity among the programs, and information available to the students concerning the various programs is more reliable. Cost data from several study abroad programs are used in the study. The sample size ranges from 7 to 12 observations for attached programs, and from 2 to 3 for the independent providers.<sup>19</sup> The reason for the small sample size is that many programs had to be excluded due to irreconcilable differences among the programs. Although the sample size is small, the consideration of the three independent programs includes a large percentage of independent study abroad experiences; nevertheless, the findings of this study may be indicative of the issues specific to the selected programs rather than being generalized to all U.S. study abroad programs.<sup>20</sup>

Institutions considered in the first stage of the study were chosen randomly, dependent on current online information, program similarity and the ability to disaggregate cost data where necessary. Attention was given to including a wide variety (private and public, large and small, etc.) of institutions. Generally, institutions that presented their information in a form significantly different from the “norm” were excluded if the specific comparable data were not easily identified. Generally, the program fees cited all of the included services, including tuition. If the tuition charge were not included in the program fee, tuition was added; for state institutions out-of-state tuition was used on the assumption that the student would still be enrolled in the university and the university would receive the regular allotment from the state legislature.

Programs for this study were semester programs, not including summer offerings. Summer programs were excluded since they are not comparable to regular semester programs: regular semester programs are usually in liberal arts while summer programs are more discipline specific. Foreign universities, third party providers, and career/vocational schools were not considered. Sites were selected based on having ten or more separate attached providers at the sites. Given this list, institutional web sites were accessed for the actual data used. Programs were omitted from the study if the information on the web site was not current, the program was demonstrably dissimilar from the norm (as specified in the respective parts of the lettered tables), or relevant data were incomplete.

In order to facilitate comparisons, we further limited the data to include only those providers which offer programs at the same site.<sup>21</sup> The prices used reflect basic program fees, including housing, tuition and excursions for 2010.<sup>22</sup> In cases in which programs identified easily disaggregated additional services, the data for these sites were adjusted, and the programs were included in the study. Programs with a significantly different menu of services were excluded from the study.

Table 1 provides the data used in this study. The table shows the cost per semester and the number of weeks in the semester for specific programs operating in the destinations considered. Sites were selected based on the number of programs offered and the compatibility of the data available. Where data were not comparable and could be adjusted, they were adjusted and included. See the notes to the table for specific adjustments.<sup>23</sup>

**Table 1: Program Costs and Duration per Semester**

	London		Paris		Madrid		Spain (not Madrid)		Florence	
	Cost	Wks	Cost	Wks	Cost	Wks	Cost	Wks	Cost	Wks
1 pvt	14,340	14	20,879	16	22,940 <sup>b</sup>	15			22,295	15
2 pvt	21,015 <sup>b</sup>	15	14,400	14	19,698	14			25,834 <sup>c</sup>	15
3 pvt	13,723	15	17,450	13	21,242	20			20,682	15 <sup>a</sup>
4 pvt	25,380 <sup>b</sup>	15 <sup>a</sup>	21,563	15	22,218	15			24,641	16
5 pvt	22,217	15	15,000	14	14,668	14			23,411 <sup>c</sup>	14
6 pvt	22,025	14	18,175 <sup>b</sup>	16	22,635	15			22,635	16
7 pvt	23,049	12	23,049	18	23,049	14				
8 pvt			17,315	15	20,717	15				
9 pvt					21,800 <sup>b</sup>	20				
1 pub			29,724 <sup>b</sup>	15 <sup>a</sup>	15,269	20	14,766 <sup>d</sup>	15	17,777	14
2 pub			24,274	13			8,260 <sup>d</sup>	12	15,711	16
3 pub			17,375	17			16,575 <sup>d</sup>	17	14,143	14
4 pub							9,907 <sup>e</sup>	9	33,177 <sup>c</sup>	15
5 pub							13,585 <sup>f</sup>	15 <sup>a</sup>	15,872 <sup>c</sup>	13
6 pub							13,646 <sup>bf</sup>	12	17,845	15 <sup>a</sup>
A	15,250	13	11,000	14	10,775	16	7,900 <sup>d</sup>	12	14,950	17
B	14,995	11	12,995	16	12,595	21	8,075 <sup>b</sup>	14	12,495	15.5
C	8,680	13					8,995 <sup>d</sup>	17	10,863	15

Notes: Programs were chosen because the available data included tuition, housing, and excursions. Numbered programs are attached, while lettered programs are those of independent providers. For colleges and universities, “pvt” refers to private and “pub” refers to public institutions. Since the study looks at average data, specific institutions are not identified in the table, but data can be confirmed from the sources below. The program length was an estimate based on the calendar dates listed for a program. Each calendar month counted as four weeks and remaining weeks and days were added in accordingly for partial months. Few university sites actually expressed the length of the program in weeks. If the program listed both spring and fall dates, the fall dates were used, as these data were more reliable at the time the data were gathered (the week of December 14-18, 2010).

<sup>a</sup> Where the number of weeks was cited as “a semester,” 15 weeks was used. <sup>b</sup> In cases in which air fare was included in the program cost, \$1000 was deducted to make the data more comparable. <sup>c</sup> Where meals were included, the available cost of \$2,059 (from the second private institution) was applied to the program. <sup>d</sup> Program located in Granada. <sup>e</sup> Program located in Toledo. <sup>f</sup> Program located in Valencia.

Boston College	<a href="http://www.bc.edu/offices/interindependent">www.bc.edu/offices/interindependent</a>
Hollins College	<a href="http://www.hollins.edu/abroad/paris">www.hollins.edu/abroad/paris</a>
New York University	<a href="http://www.nyu.edu/studyabroad">www.nyu.edu/studyabroad</a>
Sweetbriar College	<a href="http://www.jyf.sbc.edu/studybroadarchive.syr.edu/programs">www.jyf.sbc.edu/studybroadarchive.syr.edu/programs</a>
Weslyan University	<a href="http://www.wesleyan.edu/ois">www.wesleyan.edu/ois</a>
Pepperdine University	<a href="http://seaver.pepperdine.edu/interindependentprogras">seaver.pepperdine.edu/interindependentprogras</a>
Sarah Lawrence College	<a href="http://www.sl.c.edu/undergraduate/interindependent-xchange">www.sl.c.edu/undergraduate/interindependent-xchange</a>
Vanderbilt University	<a href="http://vanderbilt.edu/studiesabroad">vanderbilt.edu/studiesabroad</a>
Duke University	<a href="http://studyabroad.duke.edu/home/Programs">studyabroad.duke.edu/home/Programs</a>
Gonzaga University	<a href="http://www.gonzaga.edu/Academics">www.gonzaga.edu/Academics</a>
Tufts University	<a href="http://uss.tufts.edu/studyabroad">uss.tufts.edu/studyabroad</a>
James Madison University	<a href="http://www.jmu.edu">www.jmu.edu</a>
University of Delaware	<a href="http://interindependent.udel.edu/studyabroad">interindependent.udel.edu/studyabroad</a>
Florida State University	<a href="http://interindependent.fsu.edu">interindependent.fsu.edu</a>
University of North Carolina	<a href="http://studyabroad.unc.edu">studyabroad.unc.edu</a>
University of Connecticut	<a href="http://studyabroad.uconn.edu">studyabroad.uconn.edu</a>
University of Wisconsin	<a href="http://www.studyabroad.wisc.edu">www.studyabroad.wisc.edu</a>
George Mason University	<a href="http://gloaled.gmu.edu/programs">gloaled.gmu.edu/programs</a>
University of Southern Mississippi	<a href="http://www.usm.edu/interindependentedu">www.usm.edu/interindependentedu</a>

## RESULTS

Table 2 provides data on average cost per week calculated by averaging the weekly costs of attached programs and the independent providers operating at the same site. By aggregating the data and using averages, minor program variations within each group (e.g., the number of excursions or the number of meals) are minimized and the figures between groups are more comparable. The difference between the price of attached services and those of independent providers corresponds to the nominal tariff equivalent attached programs assess on their students. These tariffs range from 18 to 87 percent.

**Table 2: Effective Rates of Protection**

Program	Costs per Week		Nominal Tariff	Effective Rates of Protection				
	Indep.	Attached		55%	65%	70%	75%	85%
London	1,142	1,343	18%	40%	51%	60%	72%	120%
Paris	933	1,374	47%	104%	134%	157%	188%	313%
Madrid	827	1,543	87%	193%	249%	290%	348%	580%
Granada	628	1,022	63%	140%	180%	210%	252%	420%
Florence	918	1,126	23%	51%	66%	76%	92%	153%

The estimates of the effective rate of protection (i.e., the rate of inefficiency or waste) are based on price differences (nominal tariff)

and cost structure. On-site costs would include payments for faculty, housing, excursions and food. The relevant cost structure concerns how many of these inputs are procured on site (abroad). These inputs cost both attached and independent providers the same and correspond to imported inputs. The remainder of the costs is part of the value added domestically, and is composed primarily of administrative overhead. Reliable data concerning the share of foreign inputs is difficult to confirm but several alternatives are possible. Table 2 provides estimates of effective rates of protection based upon alternative estimates of onsite expenditures ( $\sum a_{im}$ ) as a percentage of total costs ranging from 55 to 85 percent.

The data in Table 2 reveal that attached providers charge a much higher price *for their services* than independent providers. For example, the first entry under "London" specifies that if an attached provider retains as overhead or administrative costs 45 percent ( $1 - \sum a_{im}$ ) of the fees paid by students, their office receives 40 percent more revenue than the administrative offices of the independent providers. That is, the attached provider can pay its factors, including its personnel, 40 percent more than the independent providers. If an attached provider claims the estimate of overhead and administrative costs of 45 percent is too high, and that they would always keep these administrative expenses to a minimum, say 25 percent of the total, the attached program can expend 72 percent more on salaries, perks, and other administrative costs than its independent-provider counterpart. This scenario confirms a "catch-22" position for the protected programs: while most programs contend they retain a minimal percentage of the students' expenditures to cover administrative costs, the lower the percentage going to administrative costs, the higher the degree of inefficiency.

Estimates for overhead costs as a percentage of total expenses vary for non-profit organizations, but for institutions of higher education, the allowable overhead costs for federal grant proposals are often determined by formula through the Department of Education. Currently the allowance for overhead costs for programs administered under the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) is 8 percent.

Since wages and salaries represent only a portion of total expenditures on study abroad programs, using a value added domestically rate ( $1 - \sum a_{im}$ ) of 15 percent will understate the actual rate of protection by about half. For example, if wages and salaries account for 77 percent of total expenses, a value added domestically

percentage of 15 percent is not unreasonably small. Applying this figure to the data in Table 2, we find that an efficiently run studies abroad program would extract effective rates of protection estimated in the last column of each entry. Under these conditions, the administrators at university-run studies abroad offices are receiving 120-580 percent *more* in salary and perks than their more competitive counterparts in the private sector.<sup>24</sup>

## DISCUSSION

The data confirm that the attached programs are more expensive than those of independent providers. Presumably students are willing to pay the higher price due to misinformation concerning the availability and comparability of the programs, the convenience of dealing with an on campus program (including the ability to apply the courses toward the degree), or real differences in the programs. In this study we tried to account for differences in program costs related to housing, meals and excursions. Other differences in programs such as the quality of courses are not readily apparent and even if they were, it is unlikely students would be aware of them *a priori*.

This study examined five of the most popular study abroad sites with the intention of estimating the degree of competitiveness between attached and independent providers. The ability of attached providers to charge higher prices allows them to use more resources in providing the services, but these additional costs are highly concentrated in the administrative activities of the program. By using effective rates of protection rather than simple cost differences, the available data reveal a disturbing pattern of waste on the part of attached providers. Although, as future research, one may augment the study by expanding the number of sites considered or more accurately disaggregating the expenses of independent providers to identify the actual on-site costs, there is no way of escaping the vastly higher charges levied by the attached programs. A more appropriate use of the method might be to compare the independent providers' cost to a specific institution's programs; by adjusting for real program-specific differences, an accurate accounting of inefficiency would be available. Attached program administrators may defend the higher cost of their programs on the basis of satisfying university-specific needs or unique student requirements. Nevertheless, the differences in cost,

especially when considering the much greater administrative costs estimated through the effective rate of protection concept, require additional justification.

Since more and more colleges and universities are recommending and requiring student participation in studies abroad, the cost of the undergraduate degree is being further inflated by the excessive fees of the attached programs. While some students can easily afford to subsidize university administrative offices to this extent, it is unfortunate others may be deprived of this educational experience. Some costs of higher education will continue to grow beyond the control of the institution; attached study abroad offices, however, are one area in which costs can be contained as attached programs either become more efficient or outsource their entire operation to the more efficient independent providers. Given the degree of market power exploitation universities seem to be imposing on their own students, it is difficult to imagine attached programs can be justified on any grounds other than institutional chauvinism and the administrations' desires to feather their own nests.

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## ENDNOTES

1. <http://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors>
2. For a discussion of what factors influence the decision to study abroad, see King and Young (1997).
3. Transfer of credit between accredited institutions of higher education is generally easier than making the case for acceptance and determining the course equivalent of work done at a commercial program.
4. If there are true cost differences between the firms, those would be reflected in price and would not necessarily allow inefficiencies. Thus, if attached programs are required to "internationalize" the domestic, campus, hire better faculty, serve better food, etc., those higher costs would come from higher prices without allowing additional inefficiency.
5. *Rent seeking* here is defined as expenditures which are socially unproductive efforts to acquire, or exercise, monopoly power. For a definitive account of socially unproductive expenditures, see Tullock (1967).

6. For examples of polar views, see Block and McGee (1997) on the right and Cullenberg and DeMartino (1994) on the left.
7. The ability to be more inefficient need not imply a goal of inefficiency; the additional revenues made available through the use of tariffs could be applied to other activities of the firm, e.g., administrator perks, subsidizing other operational areas, off-setting cyclical fluctuations, etc.
8. The errors introduced by using nominal rather than effective rates of protection can also be present in many non-tariff applications, as forms of market protection need not be limited solely to international transactions involving tangible goods. Protection is apparent any time a producer receives a higher price for its product or pays a lower price for its inputs than other producers of the same product. Irrespective of the source of the protection, the inefficiency that results is the same; any time markets are segregated and sellers experience different costs or prices, some economic protection and inefficiency usually results.
9. The difference between world price and domestic price can come from a tariff directly or from market distortions. If quotas are imposed, the effects are equivalent to a tariff that would affect the same world: domestic price difference. This concept of an equivalent tariff is the basis for treating the attached: independent-provider price difference as equivalent to a tariff.
10. While an argument could be made that other models of market power could be used to explain the price difference, the ERP model is singularly appropriate due to the large percentage of the good that is produced abroad and the fact that the ERP model specifically identifies the degree of inefficiency allowed the domestic (attached) operations.
11. In every case, all of the independent programs were less expensive than attached programs with the exception of programs in London, considering the two most expensive independent programs compared to the two least expensive attached programs.
12. Traditional interdependent trade literature provides the following formula to estimate the effective rate of protection (Sawyer and Sprinkle 2009):
- $$ERP = (t_j - \sum a_i t_i) / (1 - \sum a_{im})$$
- Where
- $t_j$  = the nominal tariff rate on the product
  - $t_i$  = the tariff on the imported component
  - $a_i$  = the technical coefficient for the  $i^{\text{th}}$  input, and
  - $a_{im}$  = the percentage share of an imported component's contribution to the final product, so
  - $\sum a_i t_i$  = the weighted tariff rate on the imported components, and
  - $\sum a_{im}$  = the percentage of the factors that are imported.

For this application, we assume there are no cost differences on inputs procured from abroad. If the attached programs are required to pay higher prices for their imported inputs (e.g., faculty, excursions, housing, etc.) due to poor negotiation skills, lack of familiarity of foreign markets and customs, etc., it would be appropriate to identify these higher costs here. For this study, we found no *a priori* justification to assume attached administrators would be less capable than their counterparts in independent firms. Since many of the attached administrators are chosen from the university's staff, based on a preexisting interest and familiarity with the region, the attached providers may actually have an advantage from this source. If there is an advantage from this stock of expertise,  $\Sigma_i t_i$  would be negative.

13. This practice follows the traditional approach of using unprotected industries as the basis for percentage differences. It also uses the more reliable data in this study.

14. In August 2007, such kick-back schemes were the subject of investigation on the part of several attorneys general offices (Pappano, 2007). The pay-off for the university from outsourcing significantly exceeds any financial incentives the independent providers might make available to the university, providing incentive for rent-seeking on the part of the university.

15. There is a uniquely large "reserve army" of teachers living in large cities where foreigners come to study.

16. Of course there are differences within these categories. Some program fees might include two meals per day, others three, etc; some may include excursions in the program fee while others offer excursions for a supplemental charge.

17. For a discussion of risks associated with study abroad, including those cited in the text, see Luethge (2004).

18. <http://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors>

19. A list of the specific programs considered for this study are contained in the notes to Table 1.

20. In fact, one possible obvious application of this method would be to compare two very similar specific programs (one attached, the other independent) to determine whether the effective rate of protection cost difference can be justified or the higher price program eliminated (and outsourced to the more efficient provider).

21. In countries where sites are dispersed, we aggregated data from sites with similar environments (e.g., non-capital cities, small towns) to minimize differences in local costs for housing and food. Where site locations differ, the sites are identified.
22. Programs in Spain and Italy generally do not include excursions.
23. Data that were suspected of inconsistencies with the rest of the sample that could not be adjusted were not included.
24. Actually, universities are receiving this much more on all of their operation. To the extent they can reduce other costs to be comparable to those of the independent providers, they can further enhance their personnel compensation packages.

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# HAS 30 YEARS MADE A DIFFERENCE? ATTITUDES OF MALE CRIMINAL JUSTICE MAJORS TOWARDS FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS REVISITED (AGAIN)

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## ABSTRACT

*Male criminal justice students' attitudes towards female police officers are compared with those reported by Golden (1981) and Austin and Hummer (1994), the most recent researchers to study this topic. Overall there has been no change in support for female police officers since those other studies were conducted.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Police work has traditionally been defined as a masculine occupation. The general image and perception of policing has focused on the aspects of the profession that are "stereotypically male" (Lord & Friday, 2003, p, 63) such as agility, physical strength, control and power.

In 1981, Kathryn Golden published *Women as Patrol Officers: A Study of Attitudes*. Golden cited that although performance studies of female police officers demonstrated that women police officers were "supportive of their overall ability to do the job" (p. 29), many male police officers still doubted "the ability of women to do the job" (p. 29). Her purpose was to examine the attitudes of male criminal justice students who were preparing to enter law enforcement careers. She stated that "the impetus towards educating police officers" was to provide a "liberalizing influence" for law enforcement officers entering the field and to help them be "more adaptable and open to innovation" (p. 29).

Using a random sample of 134 male students enrolled in a law enforcement administration program, Golden administered a 15 item Likert type survey "reflective of opinions of the abilities of

female patrol officers” (1981, p. 30) that covered the physical capabilities of women officers, their emotional stability, and perceived community acceptance of female police officers (to name a few). Golden found that while the men in her sample held unfavorable attitudes to women police officers in a few areas (physical strength, emotional stability and problems with co-worker acceptance), they also had favorable attitudes towards female officers in other areas (women should be given an equal opportunity to perform patrol work and they would not mind having a female partner). The results were that overall male law enforcement students held more favorable attitudes towards women as patrol officers than current officers as measured by other research (Golden, 1981).

Golden also analyzed her data by class level and found that the seniors in her sample held more favorable attitudes towards female officers than freshmen. This led Golden to conclude, despite the limitations of her study, that there is a “possibility that progress through a university program may mean a liberalization of attitudes on the part of male students” (1981, p. 33). She concluded by saying “However slowly women are being assimilated into local enforcement agencies, their presence has indeed generated a new and important area of study in criminal justice” (p. 33).

With that thought in mind, Austin and Hummer (1994) replicated Golden’s original research. They hypothesized that “the attitudes of male criminal justice students today might be more supportive of female police officers” (p. 230) than students were in 1981, mainly due to (1) the increased number of female police officers (the number more than doubled in the 1980s), (2) the increased media attention given to female police officers, and (3) the increase in the number of female criminal justice majors since Golden conducted her study (Austin & Hummer, 1994).

To test their hypothesis Austin and Hummer constructed a self-administered questionnaire that measured attitudinal items on a Likert scale with most of the items identical to those used by Golden. They also collected demographic information on respondent’s sex, class standing, and major. They sampled undergraduate students at a rural residential university in the northeast, and 835 surveys were returned for analysis.

Austin and Hummer found that “support for females in law enforcement has shown little change among male criminal justice students” since Golden conducted her research a decade earlier

(1994, p. 234). While they did find, like Golden, that upperclassmen were more positive towards female patrol officers than underclassmen, the level of support was “only slightly greater” (1994, p. 234). Austin and Hummer were left to conclude that “support...has remained relatively unchanged since Golden’s study” (p. 234).

## **WOMEN IN POLICING**

The proportion of women police officers during the 1990s and 2000s increased (Langton, 2010). According to Uniform Crime Report data, between 1995 and 2008 the number of female police officers increased by almost 27,000 (2.1%), while the total female law enforcement employees increased by almost 81,000 (2.9%). By 2007, 20% of federal law enforcement agents were women. In 2006 female officers accounted for almost 13 percent of sworn officers (Seklecki & Paynich, 2007) which was higher than in 1990 (9%). Zhao, He and Lovrich stated that “One of the most noticeable changes in American police organizations during the 1990s” was the hiring of female officers” (2006, p. 463).

A significant reason for the entrance of women into policing was the passage of the 1972 amendment (Title VII) of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (Austin & Hummer, 1999) which made it illegal for an employer:

1. To fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual’s race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or
2. To limit, segregate, or classify employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his employment status as an employee, because of such individual’s race, color, religion, sex or national origin in advertisements relating to employment (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 1972, p. 3).

In the beginning of 1972, women comprised around two percent of the uniformed police in the United States. By 1978 the

percentage increased to 4.2 percent, and by 1986 it was 8.8 percent (Thistlethwaite & Wooldredge, 2010).

The changes in law and policy, however, merely provided women with “paper advancement” in that the legislation failed to provide adequate legal sanctions for departments that did not follow (Gossett & Williams, 1998, p. 55). Martin (1990) found that implementation of the Equal Employment Opportunity Act occurred gradually in the 1970s, mainly due to the large number of civil cases filed against police departments for sex discrimination. By the end of the 1970s, most police departments had abandoned the minimum weight and height requirements for officers, and many had affirmative action plans (Thistlethwaite & Wooldredge, 2010). Research conducted during the 1970s and 1980s consistently found that women performed as well as males in all police tasks (Bloch & Anderson, 1974; Charles, 1982; Heidensohn, 1992; Towney, 1982). In 2001 women made up about 13 percent of law enforcement personnel in the United States, which represented a four percent increase since 1990 (National Center for Women and Policing, 2002).

Another reason cited for the increase of women in policing has been the shift in police work to community policing (Greene, 2000; Skogan, 2004). This is due to the fact that the skills associated with community policing are not decidedly male traits: empathy, listening, and communication skills (Dowler & Arai, 2008). As Dejong stated, “the current policing philosophy stresses more ‘feminine’ ideals, such as creating and maintaining between citizens and the police” (2005, p.3). However, Miller (1999) sees this shift as the feminization of policing and argues that community policing will not become legitimate until the skills associated with it can be masculinized. Even to this day, there are questions over whether women are welcome in the law enforcement field. Policing has always been seen as a man’s job. The acceptance of women into the field would diminish the thought that the job required strength and prestige that only a man could offer. Also, some male officers reject the acceptance of female officers because it weakens the reputation of their profession and their status as an officer (Balkin, as cited in Seklecki & Paynich, 1988). Since there are so few women in the field, they are often under a spotlight. One would assume that they are under constant pressure and have high amounts of stress because they have no room to make mistakes (Gossett & Williams, 1998; Haarr & Morash, 1999).

Unfortunately, despite the increase in the number of women police officers research has demonstrated that male police officers continue to hold negative attitudes toward them, despite the aforementioned research that demonstrates that women perform the job duties just as well as men. In 1998 Gosett and Williams interviewed female police officers in a large metropolitan area of the Southwest and found that over 60% experienced some form of discrimination. Those who had not experienced any discrimination stated that they knew female officers who had and that it is a real issue. While the majority of discrimination came from male coworkers, these female officers were also discriminated against by administrators, male supervisors, and citizens in the community (Gossett & Williams, 1998).

In 2000 Grant found that public perceptions of police officers reflect “gender stereotyped expectations” (p. 53) which was consistent with previous research conducted outside of criminal justice that demonstrated that both men and women typically evaluate women as less competent than men despite no difference in performance (see Eagly & Mldinic, 1989; Heilman, 1983; Wood & Karten, 1986). Grant found that citizens’ expectations of gender differences influence their reaction to police officers, especially female officers. It stands to reason that “negative perceptual bias is particularly likely in the context of police work, given that its status as a prototypically masculine occupation” (2000, p. 57).

While 13% of police officers in this country are women, females only account for 7.3% of top command positions, including chiefs, assistant chiefs, commanders, and captains (Archbold & Hassell, 2009). When it comes to job promotions, there are both internal and external factors that prevent women from seizing the opportunity. One of the internal factors preventing women from seeking a promotion is the fear of not being valued. Once women do get promoted to a higher status, they do not feel respected by male officers (Archbold, Hassell, & Stichman, 2010). They may feel this way because they are discriminated against or looked down upon by the men in the department. Women also said that they did not want to go for a promotion because they would have to change their shift schedules and it would interfere with their marriages and family (Archbold & Hassell, 2009). Women feel a stronger pressure to accommodate their schedules for their families because they are traditionally the main caregiver.

Interestingly, many female officers are encouraged by male supervisors to apply for promotion opportunities, but they choose not to pursue the promotion because they feel that women are promoted regardless of her accomplishments or qualifications. The department wants to place minorities in higher ranking positions because this will prevent them from being accused of discrimination. This goes to show that there can be slight advantages to being a minority in regards to getting a promotion. However, getting a promotion on those terms is not seen as an accomplishment. This is why women often refuse the promotion.

### **ATTITUDES OF MALE POLICE OFFICERS TOWARDS FEMALE OFFICERS**

Despite numerical increases, females are still underrepresented (as a percentage of the population) in police work (Dowler & Arai, 2008) and female officers report that they have encountered resentment and resistance from their male officers (Gratch, 1995; Morash & Haar, 1995; Segrave 1995). Harrington and Lonsway (2004) discovered 61 percent of female police officers in Florida experienced sexual harassment, while 40 percent reported that sexually oriented jokes were a daily occurrence. Women still face many challenges due to their gender. Many times, women are seen as the weaker sex and deemed incapable of performing duties as well as their male counterparts. Some think that females have to use more force in order to be as effective as a male officer. Stereotypes such as these put female officers at a disadvantage for job promotions and make it more difficult for women to succeed in the field. Female police officers work in a male dominated, masculine occupation where being female is oftentimes a liability (Cowan & Bochantin, 2009).

Since women are a minority within the department, they are often subject to jokes, ridicule, and inappropriate remarks. They even admit to being called homosexuals by the public. The way they handle and interpret these suggestive comments has a direct correlation to their overall attitude of their job. The less bothered the female officers are, the happier they find themselves within their career. The women who are accepting of these jokes tend to be more liked by the male officers. Although the commentary is not ok, women are generally afraid to speak up about it. If they voice their disapproval, they will face further ridicule and be excluded

from future social interaction with the other officers. The females will be viewed with distrust and resentment and be ostracized by fellow coworkers (Seklecki & Paynich, 2007).

In a study by Seklecki and Paynich (2007), 39% of female officers reported to feeling less welcome than their male counterparts. An additional 32% felt as if they were treated worse than the male officers. These findings support the idea that there is inequality within the department. Women, however, reported that they feel they do their job equally well or better than their male coworkers. The only area in which they felt they could improve upon was in use of force and high speed pursuits. Almost one third (32.7%) of respondents thought they were not as effective as male officers in this area (Seklecki & Paynich, 2007). This causes a significant amount of strain in the workplace because women feel they can perform at the same level as the men, but are treated unequally.

Surprisingly, black female officers report feeling that they are racially discriminated against by fellow officers more than the public, but this is largely dependent on the geographical location of the department. If the station is located in an urban setting with a heavy minority population, there is less likely to be discrimination from the public. It is also important to keep in mind that black women only represent 4.5% of all police officers (Price, 1996). Since they comprise of such a small percentage, it is not a surprise that they feel isolated. African American women have a higher rate of stress and burnout than any other officers (McCarty, Zhao, & Garland, 2007). This stress is probably caused from the high levels of discrimination they face. They have a “double minority” status, meaning that they are in the minority because of their race and gender. Not only are they African American, but female as well. The combination of the two makes them a prime target for harassment from their colleagues and the community.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The setting for this study is a rural residential university and a rural residential college in the northeast; one a public institution and one private. The private college has almost 5,000 undergraduate students and the public university has over 7,000 undergraduate students. We collected data through a self-administered questionnaire. One section consisted of attitudinal items measured

using a Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree). The items were identical to those used by Austin and Hummer (1994) in their study of students' attitudes toward women in law enforcement. Another section consisted of demographic information, including age, sex, class standing, and academic major.

The population from which the sample was derived consisted of undergraduate and graduate students attending classes during the fall 2011 semester. We used a convenience sample by administering the questionnaire on SurveyMonkey. An email with the link to the survey was sent from an administrative assistant and one professor to students of different majors asking them to complete the survey. A total of 651 people responded and completed the survey.

## **ANALYTIC PLAN AND HYPOTHESES**

The first part of our analysis will display the demographic variables for our study. The next step of our analysis will be to compare all three studies in three areas: the overall mean of scores on the survey, the mean of the questions that indicate the respondents' personal feelings toward female police officers (questions 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 and 8), and the mean score of the questions that measured respondents' perceptions of others' feelings toward female police officers (questions 3 and 6). Since we are comparing three means simultaneously and wish to keep our error rate at .05 (Williams III, 2009), we will conduct a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) test for each research question

The next step in our plan is to compare the underclass and upperclass students in our sample to see if class standing has any effect on attitude toward female police officers. Golden (1981) conducted a similar analysis in her study and found that upperclass students held more favorable attitudes toward female police officers than did underclass students. We will compare our upperclass and underclass students on their overall responses to the survey, their personal feelings toward female police officers, and their perceptions of others' feelings about female police officers.

We wished to learn how the attitudes of our sample compare to Austin and Hummer (1994) as well as Golden (1981). For a more accurate comparison we will report the percentages that agreed and disagreed with an item by collapsing the categories "strongly agree/agree" and "strongly disagree/disagree," and

omitting the neutral responses, just as was done in the previous studies. We compared findings of the male criminal justice majors with the male criminal justice majors in the Golden and Austin and Hummer studies. The male non-criminal justice majors were excluded from analysis (Austin and Hummer included them) for two reasons. One, Golden did not include non-criminal justice majors in her analysis and, two, we only had 26 male non-criminal justice majors respond to our survey.<sup>1</sup>

## FINDINGS

The demographic characteristics of our sample are included in Table 1. As can be seen our sample was predominately made up of female underclassmen (freshmen and sophomores) who were criminal justice majors. The average age of our sample is 20.14 years.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1. Demographic Variables for our (2011) Sample**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N(%)</b>
Gender	
<i>Female</i>	406 (62.4)
<i>Male</i>	245 (37.6)
Major	
<i>Criminal Justice</i>	424 (65.1)
<i>Psychology</i>	144 (22.1)
<i>Sociology</i>	26 (4.0)
<i>Other</i>	57 (8.8)
Grade	
<i>Freshman</i>	198 (30.4)
<i>Sophomore</i>	196 (30.8)
<i>Junior</i>	90 (13.8)
<i>Senior</i>	138 (21.2)
<i>Graduate</i>	29 (4.5)

On the first research question, the total mean for all three samples were compared using a one-way ANOVA. No significant difference was found ( $F(2,21)=.64, p>.05$ ). Respondents from each sample did not differ significantly on their responses to all eight questions in the survey. Golden's sample had an overall mean of 49

( $sd=18.77$ ), while Austin and Hummer had a mean of 54 ( $sd=19.65$ ) and our overall sample mean was 42 ( $sd=21.33$ ). Our hypothesis for the first research question is not supported.

On the second research question, the means for the questions measuring respondents' attitudes toward female police officers were compared using a one-way ANOVA. No significant difference was found ( $F(2,15)=1.20$ ,  $p>.05$ ). Respondents from each sample did not differ significantly on their responses to these six questions in the survey. Golden's sample had mean of 57 ( $sd=13.93$ ), while Austin and Hummer had a mean of 64 ( $sd=11.23$ ), and our sample mean on these six questions was 42 ( $sd=21.30$ ). Our second hypothesis is not supported.

On the third research question, the means for the questions measuring respondents' perceptions of others toward female police officers were measured using a one-way ANOVA. No significant difference was found ( $F(2,3)=.023$ ,  $p>.05$ ). Respondents from each sample did not differ significantly on their responses to these two questions in the survey. Golden's sample had a mean of 49 ( $sd=5.5$ ), while Austin and Hummer had a mean of 49 ( $sd=2.5$ ), and our sample mean on these two questions was 47 ( $sd=2.69$ ). Our third hypothesis is not supported.

An independent samples t-test was calculated comparing the overall mean score of our underclassmen and upperclassmen. A significant difference was found ( $t(649)=-21.184$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The mean of our upperclass students ( $m=20.79$ ,  $sd=1.85$ ) was significantly higher than the mean of our underclass students ( $m=17.95$ ,  $sd=1.54$ ).

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Since the title of this paper is *Has 30 Years Made a Difference?* it appears that the short answer is no. Statistically speaking there is no difference in college students' attitudes toward female police officers in 2011 than there was in 1981 (or 1994 for that matter). This is not only discouraging because we expected that over 30 years having more women in policing and more women teaching criminal justice classes (more on that to follow) would have had a positive effect on male criminal justice student's attitudes toward female police officers, but also because it appears that modest strides were being made when Austin and Hummer conducted their research. Overall they found an eight percent

increase in support for female police officers between 1981 and 1992, while our study showed a decline of seven percent since 1981 (and a discouraging 21% decrease since 1992). It is also discouraging considering that our sample was predominately female (62.4%) and not representative of the schools from where the sample was drawn (roughly 57% female). However, these results may not be surprising considering the previously cited research (Gosset & Williams, 1998; Grant, 2000) which found that women in society discriminate against female police officers just as much as men do. One possible area of hope may be our findings when we compared our upperclass and underclass students. There was a clear difference between the two groups with the upperclassmen demonstrating more positive attitudes toward female police officers than the underclassmen. Maybe Golden's notion of liberalization of attitudes through a university program is supported by these findings.

#### Implications for Education

More police departments across the country started requiring that new recruits possess either a two- or four-year college degree. As such, "the pool of applicants for law enforcement positions is now centered on our nation's colleges and universities" (Austin & Hummer, 1999, p. 1). If change in attitudes toward female police officers is going to happen, it has to start with higher education.

As Austin and Hummer asked, "What, if anything, should and can be done to improve male criminal justice students' attitudes towards women as police officers...?" (1994, p.237). We are asking the same question eighteen years later. It is discouraging that our sample made up of (mostly) people who will enter the criminal justice field hold such bias against women police officers. If change is to happen one would expect it would happen from within the system, but these results are not encouraging.

Austin and Hummer suggested that "greater exposure of criminal justice students to female instructors, especially in law enforcement and policing classes, may lead to an improvement in attitudes" (1994, p.237) and we would concur. While the number of female instructors at both the university and college where this study took place has increased since 1981, they have not been teaching the policing classes. At the college there is one woman who teaches a policing class, but she does not have any policing experience and at the university the policing classes are staffed by

men. Perhaps the key to changing attitudes is to have females with policing experience teaching law enforcement classes. While we agree with Austin and Hummer that “it would be unrealistic and unreasonable to place the total burden of changing male attitudes toward female police officers on our colleges and universities” (1994, p. 237), it seems like the change should start with us. Other suggestions from Austin and Hummer with which we agree are having female police officers as guest speakers, and placing greater weight on diverse roles in policing classes.

## LIMITATIONS

Both the college and university where this study took place are in rural settings, and perhaps the results would be different at an urban or suburban school. In addition, since we used a convenience sample representativeness is an issue, which is compounded when one considers that the students self-selected to complete the survey.

Whenever someone completes a survey they are being asked what they think. It is possible that when these students get to work with female police officers (as they undoubtedly will) their attitudes would become more favorable. An interesting follow up to this study would be to have seasoned police officers answer the same questions (with the tense of the question changing, of course).

Whatever the future course of this research, our findings are cause for concern regarding the future of female police officers. Our results indicate that male criminal justice students’ attitudes toward female police officers have gone unchanged over 30 years. Austin and Hummer suggested that “some time may pass before men’s attitudes towards women in policing improve” (1994, p. 239). Unfortunately this was not the case.

## ENDNOTES

1. On top of that, they uniformly answered neutral to five of the eight questions.
2. 13.1% of the sample (85) did not indicate an age.

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# FREE BLACKS OF RURAL MECKLENBURG COUNTY, VIRGINIA

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## ABSTRACT

*This article examines free black and white interactions in rural Mecklenburg County, Virginia, during the antebellum period. It originates from the premise that smaller studies of localities like Mecklenburg allow for a better understanding of the complex ways that black and white individuals interacted with and reacted to each other in a southern slave society. This article focuses specifically on two areas of the free black experience in Mecklenburg. First, free black experiences within the local legal system are examined in an effort to determine how free black individuals were treated when they went before the white-run county court. This article also examines the ways that state laws, which regulated the freedoms and movement of Virginia's free black population, were implemented at the local level. Overall this study provides a counterpoint to previous scholarship that argues that free blacks lived miserable, oppressed lives regulated by discriminatory laws and white racism. Instead, a more intimate environment created by the circumstances of everyday life that encouraged person-to-person contact, allowed for individual knowledge of community members. This in turn had a greater influence on the free black experience in Mecklenburg.*

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## INTRODUCTION

During the antebellum period, the Virginia General Assembly passed statute after statute designed to restrict the freedoms of Virginia's free black population. Moreover, white Virginians frequently expressed their dislike for those free people of color who resided within the state's borders. For example, in 1831 following the Nat Turner rebellion, one man wrote to the *Richmond Enquirer*

and described the free black population as “a degraded race, incapable of any honorable exertion to improve their situation...prone to idleness and all manner of dissipation.”<sup>1</sup> Such anti-free black rhetoric, combined with the oppressive laws passed by state legislatures, led historian Ira Berlin and several other scholars to conclude that free blacks lived lives that were only slightly better than those of slaves. However, more recent work on the free black experience has begun to move in a different direction. This newer scholarship demonstrates that black and white interactions in the counties and cities throughout Virginia were much more complex than state laws or racist language may indicate.

Until more recently the general consensus among scholars has been that prosperity outside of slavery during the antebellum era was restricted to a limited number of free black men and women. The debate centered on determining why free blacks as a whole were prevented from fully exercising the privileges and rights that should have accompanied their freedom. From the body of scholarship concerning free blacks, four dominant arguments emerged to explain the circumstances that allowed or impeded free black individuals from maintaining and then utilizing their status as free men and women to create lives for themselves outside of slavery. One of the earliest works to address the subject was Ulrich B. Phillips’ 1918 *American Negro Slavery*. Consistent with the prevailing early twentieth century view that the black race was naturally inclined to degeneration and helplessness, Phillips argues that free black success was rare during the antebellum period and altogether impossible without the help of benevolent whites. While he acknowledges the negative effect that discriminatory state laws had on free blacks throughout America, he also argues that in the South “racial antipathy was there mitigated by the sympathetic ties of slavery which promoted an attitude of amiable patronage even toward the freedmen and their descendants.”<sup>2</sup> Benefiting from the existence of slavery because it created more personal connections between whites and blacks, some free black individuals were able to overcome the obstacles before them to become prosperous. Nevertheless, Phillips asserts that generally free blacks were unable to thrive outside the institution of slavery.

Later works by scholars such as John Hope Franklin, Ira Berlin, and Tommy Bogger built upon the assertion that free black success was rare during the antebellum period. However, unlike Phillips, these scholars do not support the premise that the

difficulties free blacks experienced originated from a natural ineptitude or laziness prevalent in the black race. They instead argue that the success experienced by free blacks is a testament to their perseverance and the incredible agency they demonstrated in the face of extreme racism and legal discrimination. While Franklin's work on North Carolina was one of the first to change the dialogue among historians, it was Berlin's 1974 *Slaves Without Masters* that created a new working paradigm for scholars.<sup>3</sup> In his work, Berlin argues for a life of legal, social, and economic discrimination for the South's free black population that became progressively worse. The works of historians Brenda Stevenson, Suzanne Lebsock, and Tommy Bogger, whose more detailed studies of specific localities like Loudon County, Petersburg, and Norfolk, Virginia fit easily with Berlin's declension model. According to these scholars, most free black men and women were free in name only because whites "could not conceive of a society in which whites and blacks lived as equals."<sup>4</sup> This analysis, however, leaves little room for the possibility that as complex human beings, whites and blacks reacted to and interacted with each other in ways that may not always fit modern day perceptions of a slave society.

Within the historiography there is also a third argument made by scholars whose works came both before and after Berlin's *Slaves Without Masters*. Historians such as Luther Porter Jackson, Michael P. Johnson, and James L. Roark, among others, agree with the premise that the free black experience was generally a negative one; however, they shifted the conversation again by emphasizing the importance of community knowledge and local context in black and white interactions.<sup>5</sup> These scholars find that prior to the American Civil War whites tried to limit the freedom of the free black population through state level laws, yet they find discrepancies between the requirements of those laws and local practice.

In areas of Virginia, South Carolina, and Louisiana free black men and women routinely defied the restrictions that state laws placed on them by becoming property owners, starting successful businesses, and using the court system to defend their rights. The works of these scholars suggest that these connections free blacks made within their communities allowed whites to assess them as individuals rather than as members of a large unwanted group, and this played a much larger role in determining the treatment that free blacks received at the hands of whites. While

this argument is a significant step away from Berlin's, these scholars do not break completely from his model because they still assert that the typical free black individual was not one who lived a prosperous, unencumbered life. Yet, their suggestion that local context and community knowledge accounted for the discrepancies they found between state law and local practice provided a starting point for the scholars below to challenge more thoroughly the model established by Berlin.

The works of Melvin Patrick Ely on Prince Edward County, Virginia and Kirt von Daacke on Albemarle County, Virginia represent the most recent development in free black historiography.<sup>6</sup> Both scholars argue that laws and anti-free black rhetoric definitely do not reveal a complete picture of the free black experience, and the only way to grasp fully the complexities of free black and white interactions is to thoroughly examine life at the local level. Ely finds in Prince Edward County a free black community that owned and sold property, interacted with whites daily, became successful entrepreneurs, and utilized the county courts to their benefit. Von Daacke's examination of Albemarle County also finds free black men and women who were prosperous and well-connected to the communities of the county. Both works emphasize that a person's reputation and participation in the local community mattered much more than laws passed by a distant legislature in Richmond. By creating a web of family, friends, and business contacts in the community among its free black, white, and slave populations, free blacks created a "comfortable" life for themselves. And breaking away from the scholars who came before them, von Daacke and Ely suggest that rather than the free black populations of Albemarle and Prince Edward counties representing another case of exceptional free black agency, perhaps this was indeed the typical free black experience.

A detailed study of Mecklenburg County, Virginia, which is the focus of this article, reveals a picture of free black and white interactions that is very similar to those in Prince Edward and Albemarle. Like Ely's and von Daacke's works, this study provides a counterpoint to previous scholarship that argues that free blacks lived miserable, oppressed lives regulated by discriminatory laws and white racism. Mecklenburg is located in Southside Virginia, along the Virginia-North Carolina border. Like many areas of Virginia during the antebellum period, Mecklenburg was an agricultural community in which white residents depended on the

labor of enslaved black men and women. The census records reveal that throughout the antebellum period, Mecklenburg's population generally hovered slightly below 21,000 residents with the majority of those being black individuals, both slave and free.<sup>7</sup> In a community where the elevated social, economic, and legal status of one race was based on the oppression of another, one would expect perpetually antagonistic interactions between the two races. The information left behind in Mecklenburg's official county documents does not support this conclusion. The discussion that follows focuses on the treatment of free blacks within the local legal system and the compliance with state laws by white authorities and free black residents in Mecklenburg. Free black individuals from Mecklenburg, through their own assertiveness and with the laxity of white authorities, found room to maneuver within a racist society in ways that challenge the traditional picture of free blacks as an anomalous class struggling, often unsuccessfully, to maintain their freedom.

In March 1858, ten-year-old Samuel Quinichett and twelve-year-old John Quinichett, both of whom were free boys of color, appeared before the Mecklenburg County Court with William Quinichett acting as their representative. The two boys alleged that R.H. Moss & Bros, a tobacco manufacturing company, held them as apprentices illegally. According to the petition filed by William Quinichett, in December 1857, the court bound the two boys as apprentices to Reuben F. and John A. Moss, owners of the tobacco company. The contract stipulated that the boys serve as apprentices until they reached the age of twenty-one, and as compensation they would receive \$15 per year and \$150 when they turned twenty-one. The Quinichetts argued that in January 1858, they successfully petitioned the court to have their indenture quashed. Despite Reuben and John Moss' assertion that they still had a legal right to hold Samuel and John Quinichett, the court decided in favor of the two boys and ordered their immediate release.<sup>8</sup>

On the surface this story is rather unremarkable---it was simply a contract dispute between two parties. However, the two Quinichett boys and their representative William Quinichett were free people of color, and they filed a suit against two of Mecklenburg County's prominent white businessmen. Because state law placed restrictions on free blacks using the courts particularly in cases against whites, Samuel and John Quinichett faced a major uphill battle in filing a suit of this nature where they

publicly challenged the authority and integrity of two white men. Yet they filed not one but two complaints against R.H. Moss & Bros and both times the court ruled in the boys' favor.

The use of the local court house by free blacks and the free black and white interactions recorded in the court documents provide possibly the best insight into the complexities of life at the local level. Historian Ira Berlin argues that laws like those passed in Virginia regarding free blacks structured the legal system so as to "strip them of their liberty" and ultimately "pushed free Negroes into a place of permanent legal inferiority."<sup>9</sup> Yet, an examination of the county court records from Mecklenburg indicates that the local legal system did not necessarily function the way state legislators intended. In Mecklenburg, free black women and men frequently sought redress for their grievances in the county courts and did so without apparent concern for the race of their antagonists. In particular, their actions make it clear that they vigorously defended their economic rights. More significantly, the outcomes of their cases indicate that when white judges and juries heard a case involving a free black individual, they did not view these men and women simply as members of a larger, hated free black class. Instead, they saw free black men and women who belonged to the Mecklenburg community, and while not viewed as equals, they at least deserved to have their complaints heard and acted upon.

Many scholars argue that Virginia's laws placed the free black population at a huge disadvantage, particularly within the state's white-run court system. Indeed, in 1785 the Virginia General Assembly passed a statute that read, "No negro or mulatto shall be a witness, except in pleas of commonwealth against negroes or mulattoes, or in civil pleas wherein negroes or mulattoes alone shall be parties."<sup>10</sup> Given this obstacle one might conclude that Virginia's free blacks had few legal options and altogether none when it came to pursuing a civil or criminal matter against a white defendant. However, as the Quinichett case indicates, free blacks found ways to use the legal system to their benefit. In fact, Ely argues that rather than free blacks passively accepting the restrictions that laws placed upon their use of the courts, free black individuals "defended their persons and their interest in much the same way that white men, including members of the upper crust, often did---except that the blacks concentrated their efforts in the civil rather than the criminal realm."<sup>11</sup> In Mecklenburg County, free black individuals and families behaved in much the same way. The

routine use of the chancery courts by Mecklenburg's free black women and men not only demonstrates their willingness to use the courts, but the outcomes indicate that the justices' decisions were not based solely upon the color of the defendants' and plaintiffs' skin.

This point is illustrated by a civil case filed in 1830 by a free black man named George Ivey. Ivey was the son of Frederick and Priscilla Ivey, an interracial couple who had resided in Mecklenburg since the late 1700s. As a family, the Ivey's had a long history as active participants in the Mecklenburg community; buying and selling land, filing lawsuits, and training apprentices. Thus when Ivey used the courts to file a suit against Alexander Field, the white man who served as administrator of his father Frederick Ivey's estate, he did not come as a stranger to the court but as a member of one of Mecklenburg's well-known and established free black families. In his complaint, Ivey alleged that during Field's time as administrator he failed to complete a full inventory of the estate. Additionally, in nine years Field had only produced one partial account of his administration of the Ivey estate. Consequently, George Ivey asked that the court compel Field to render a complete account before one of the commissioners of the court. The court responded by ordering Field to give an account of his administration, which he did, and the new account showed a balance of \$234.95 was due to each of Frederick Ivey's legatees.<sup>12</sup>

In filing this suit, George Ivey came to the court for a solution to problems surrounding the administration of his father's estate because he saw the court as a reasonable venue for handling grievances of this kind. With this action, he was not doing so as someone unknown to the white residents of the county. Neither was he an individual who was unaware of the way the local legal system worked. Both his mother and his father had filed civil suits in the chancery court and both experienced success with their cases.<sup>13</sup> It is not unreasonable to suggest that Ivey knew of his parents' successes and expected he would see a similar result with his civil case. The suit filed by George Ivey demonstrates that in Mecklenburg's white-run courts it was still possible for cases involving free black plaintiffs and white defendants to receive a relatively fair hearing despite any impediments state laws placed in the way.

In a similar case filed almost a decade later, Wyatt Brandom used the court to settle a dispute between his family and a

white man named David Middaugh. Like the Iveys, Wyatt Brandom's family had resided in Mecklenburg since the late eighteenth century and frequently made their presence known to the county's white officials while registering wills and land deeds at the local courthouse. And as in the Ivey case, this free black family did not allow state law to prevent them from successfully using the courts to assert their property rights. In May 1838, Brandom filed a chancery suit against Middaugh, one of the executor's of Randolph Davis' estate, a white resident of Mecklenburg. Brandom claimed that in a will left by Davis, Brandom's wife Sally Moon and his two children Betsey and Harry were promised \$33 each. He alleged that despite these instructions, the executors of Davis' estate refused to hand over the money. Although Brandom does not specifically say what type of connection existed between his family and the white Randolph Davis, in filing this suit he does make it clear that his family was entitled to the inheritance, and he fully expected the executors to comply with the terms of the will. In October 1839, the judge ruled in favor of Brandom and ordered the executors of Davis' estate to pay Brandom's wife and two children the \$33 plus interest.<sup>14</sup> Again, like George Ivey's suit, this case demonstrates that for members of the Mecklenburg community, the local courthouse represented a reasonable source for solutions for their grievances with their fellow community members, even in cases where those filing the suits were black and the defendants white.

The court records also show that free blacks did not limit their use of the civil courts to filing suits only against whites. They also sued fellow free blacks for failing to repay debts. In August 1832 Elizabeth Chavous, a free black woman, filed a suit against James Drew for failure to repay a \$159 loan. Chavous also asked that she receive \$20 in damages. The court sided with Chavous and a lien was placed on Drew's personal property. To cover his debt, Drew was to turn over one-hundred barrels of corn for the sheriff to sell. However, because Drew wanted to retain possession of his property until the sheriff could sell it, he entered into a bond with Chavous in which he promised to pay her the amount of the original debt plus the damages the court awarded her. Caleb H. Turner, a white man, served as Drew's surety in case he failed to turn over his personal property. Although the case closed in October 1832, this did not end the troubles between Chavous and Drew.<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately for Chavous, Drew failed to turn over his personal property for the sheriff to sell so in April 1833 she filed

another suit. She alleged that the bond she entered into with Drew guaranteed she would receive the \$179 the court awarded her. If, however, payment was not forthcoming she would receive \$358.36 because both Drew and Turner failed to honor the bond. That same April, Chavous sent notice to Drew and Turner indicating she had asked the judge to award her the full \$358.36 because they failed to pay the original debt.<sup>16</sup> This case, along with the others discussed above, demonstrates that the white-run court system was not necessarily a place that free blacks needed to avoid because they feared the treatment they would receive at the hands of white authorities. Nor did they only use the courts because they were forced to do so by antagonistic whites. Instead, like their white counterparts, Mecklenburg's free blacks viewed the local courthouse as a venue to settle disputes with their neighbors of either race.

Although the legal system was structured in a way that benefited propertied white men the most, in Mecklenburg this ultimately had little impact on the free black population's ability to file civil suits against members of either race. Like other Virginians they too proved intolerant of those individuals who failed to repay their debts or prevented them from enjoying the full benefits of their property ownership. The outcomes of the cases discussed above indicate that the judges viewed each case on an individual basis and did not let the race of those involved unjustly influence their decisions. The Mecklenburg County court records show free black men, women, and even children actively using every legal mean available to them to pursue anyone who infringed upon their property rights and their freedom. However, the use of the chancery court by Mecklenburg's free black population only reveals a partial picture of their experiences with the local legal system.

A discussion that looks at the treatment free blacks received within the white-run courts should also include an assessment of their experiences as defendants in criminal cases filed by the commonwealth, when much more hung in the balance than covering court costs if they did not prevail. Several of the criminal cases examined for this work involved accusations that free blacks stole or broke into the property of whites. In these seven cases, nine different men were charged, and of those nine men, five were acquitted and four were convicted.<sup>17</sup> This acquittal rate suggests that the courts did not automatically convict free blacks and may have given them a relatively fair hearing. Mecklenburg County is

not the only location in Virginia where whites demonstrated an ability to assess objectively the guilt or innocence of free black individuals. Von Daacke also addresses the fate of free blacks in Albemarle who appeared in the court to answer charges related to various criminal offences. His discussion focuses on free black individuals charged with physically assaulting white citizens, and he finds that some of these individuals were cleared of those charges and released. Being black and charged with a crime in Albemarle did not automatically result in a conviction in a court of law or even in the eyes of the white community.<sup>18</sup> In Mecklenburg as in Albemarle County, it appears white judges involved in these cases were not overly eager to convict free black individuals even when their accusers were white.

In Mecklenburg County, white judges demonstrated an ability to assess the cases before them using the evidence presented to the court and possibly community knowledge of the individuals on trial rather than simply rushing to convict “dangerous” free blacks. For example, in July 1859, the commonwealth’s attorney presented two separate but related cases involving a free black man and a slave charged with stealing. According to Edwin M. Speakes, a white man, a slave named Buck stole a pocket book from him that contained several banknotes valued at approximately \$500. He further alleged that Buck proceeded to pass one of those banknotes, valued at \$50, to a free black man named John Guy. Speakes asserted that Guy knew the banknote did not belong to Buck, yet he willingly accepted the stolen property anyway.<sup>19</sup> According to state law, free blacks accused of stealing property valued at \$20 or more faced charges of grand larceny. If convicted they received a punishment of no less than a year and no more than five years in the public penitentiary.<sup>20</sup> Both men, however, pled not guilty, and after hearing evidence for and against them the justices acquitted both of all charges and ordered their release.<sup>21</sup> None of the witness testimony survives for this case so the court documents give no indication as to why the justices decided in favor of the two black men instead of the white man lodging the allegations. One thing is certain however, the justices of this court had the opportunity to convict a free black man and a slave of grand larceny, which carried stiff penalties for both men, yet they did not do so.

In a similar case brought before the justices in 1857, Bob Chavous, a free black man, faced accusations that on August 1, 1857, he broke into the barn of Sarah Whitt a resident of

neighboring Halifax County. Whitt also alleged that upon entering her barn Chavous stole one container of tobacco valued at \$100 which he then carried to Clarksville. Chavous, like Guy, faced grand larceny charges and if convicted faced a maximum sentence of five years in prison. Although witnesses were summoned in September to provide testimony for the commonwealth, the court docket indicates that the witnesses failed to appear and with no evidence presented against him, Chavous was acquitted of all charges in December 1857.<sup>22</sup> By the time both of these cases were argued, the country was moving steadily towards civil war as its citizens argued over the future of slavery in America. Yet these two cases demonstrate that even in this tense climate, when free blacks were accused of stealing from white individuals, a guilty verdict was by no means guaranteed.

Ely argues that although white officials and legislators designed the legal system to treat free blacks and slaves unfairly, in reality “the legal establishment did not work as arbitrarily as it threatened to; the frequent acquittals of black defendants, both slave and free, testify to that.”<sup>23</sup> Historian Laura Edwards makes a similar argument in her work on Southern legal culture during the post-Revolutionary period in North and South Carolina. She argues that at the local level, the court system operated under an un-written body of common law that emphasized community knowledge of plaintiffs, defendants, and witnesses. Thus, this highly formalized practice at times produced contradictory verdicts that did not necessarily reflect state law. Edwards argues that this allowed groups like slaves, women, children, and free blacks, who traditionally held few if any rights according to the state, to experience some success within the local legal system.<sup>24</sup> Although the incomplete nature of the court records from Mecklenburg prevents one from confidently asserting that reputation played a central role in determining the outcome of every criminal case, Edwards’ work does provide a plausible explanation for the inconsistent nature of the verdicts that emerged particularly in the cases discussed below.

On January 19, 1858, William G. Cheathan complained that Ned Durham and William Soward stole 450 pounds of tobacco from him, which he valued at \$36. Durham and Soward were two free black men who shared a house together located on the plantation belonging to J.D. Smith. The court documents state that Durham was a ditcher by trade, while there is no mention of Soward’s

occupation. In giving their testimony, G.W. Cleaton and Thomas P. Cleaton stated that when Cheathan noticed the tobacco missing on January 17, they all went to the home shared by Soward and Durham on Smith's property. They found Durham and Soward in the process of stripping approximately 300 pounds of tobacco, and the next day they found the rest of the stolen tobacco at L. H. Vaughan's place. Although found at different locations, the witnesses stated that they thought the two men simply could not carry all of the tobacco at once and intended to return for the rest at a later date. Furthermore, the witnesses made it clear that prior to this incident, neither of the two free black men had any tobacco of their own, which made their possession of such a large quantity of tobacco much more incriminating.<sup>25</sup>

Although each of the witnesses for the commonwealth identified both men as responsible for stealing the tobacco, the two men received very different verdicts. The court docket indicates that in March 1858, Ned Durham was found not guilty and discharged while William Soward was sentenced to six months in jail. Furthermore, while it is not certain the rest of his sentence was enforced, the justices also ordered that Soward receive thirty-nine lashes and then twenty additional lashes to his back each month he remained in prison.<sup>26</sup> The most significant aspect of this case, however, is that these free black men clearly came into the possession of stolen tobacco and the justices had the testimony of five white men who all accused both Soward and Durham of the theft. Yet after dispassionately hearing the evidence both for and against the defendants, the justices ultimately decided that only one of the men was guilty.

In April 1837, five justices from the Mecklenburg County Court delivered similar verdicts in a case against George Garnes and two brothers named Frederick and George Ivey. In this particular case the three free black men were charged with receiving stolen cattle from two slaves named Silas and Henry. The cattle, worth one hundred dollars, belonged to a white man named Beverly Sydnor. Once charged, the men employed the services of a lawyer and at their trial all three men pled not guilty. After hearing witness testimony, the justices found Frederick Ivey not guilty and ordered his discharge. Unfortunately for George Ivey and George Garnes, they were found guilty and sentenced to five years each in the public jail. Surviving court papers do not indicate why the court ruled the way it did, however, the justices did make note that prior

to this incident George Ivey was thought to be a man of good character by members of the community, whereas little was known about his accomplice George Garnes. In this instance Ivey's reputation did not save him from conviction, but the different outcomes for the three men suggest that the court did not rush to convict these free black men based on the testimony of a white man.<sup>27</sup> They easily could have convicted all three men, and yet they acquitted and discharged Frederick Ivey. This indicates that even in criminal cases, guilt or innocence was not simply a black or white issue easily decided according to the requirements of state law.

The criminal cases discussed thus far have only involved free blacks who were charged with stealing or receiving stolen goods, but Mecklenburg County's free blacks were also charged with various other crimes including kidnapping. As with the cases discussed above, a guilty verdict did not always emerge from court proceedings even if the central witness or instigator of the case was white. For example, in 1831 James Drew, a free black man, and Caleb H. Turner, a white man, were both accused of selling liquor out of James Drew's home in Clarksville. The charges filed against these two men and several other white individuals originated from a complaint lodged by planter Robert Hester. Drew and Turner maintained homes beside each other in Clarksville along Virginia Street, which was the main street in town, and the county records show that as neighbors these two men did business with each other and sometimes even drank together. Yet, the county officials involved in this case did not seem overly worried about the illicit business taking place between a free black man and a white man. In November 1832, the charges against Drew and Turner were dropped because the prosecution did not wish to proceed.<sup>28</sup> In this situation, Drew found himself standing alongside several white men who were all charged with the same crime, and when the attorney for the commonwealth made his decision on whether to pursue the cases, charges were dropped against each of the men accused of illegally selling liquor in Clarksville. Drew received the same treatment within the local court system that the white men did.

Free blacks in Mecklenburg were sometimes accused of committing crimes against members of their own race, and Mecklenburg's white judges considered these cases just as seriously and objectively as they did any other case. In November 1831 Granderson Cousins came before the court to answer charges that he kidnapped a free boy of color named William Cole, who also

happened to be one of his relatives, in order to sell him into slavery.<sup>29</sup> Like the Soward and Durham case, witness depositions survive with the other court documents, and they provide excellent insight into this case. Specifically, they show a free black man who not only knew how the local legal system worked but he also did not hesitate to use the white-run courts to seek justice for his family against the man who kidnapped his son. And the way in which this case unfolded reveals the thoroughness with which Mecklenburg's justices considered the crime committed against one of the county's free black families.

Ira Berlin suggests that the kidnapping of free blacks for sale into slavery presented antebellum officials and free blacks everywhere with major concerns. He also asserts that free blacks faced an immediate disadvantage because unlike whites they were more likely to be unfamiliar with the law, and they certainly could not expect their complaints to be taken seriously.<sup>30</sup> From the testimony given by Bartlett Cole, William's father, this does not appear to be the case. Apparently a boatman in the county, Cole testified that after arriving home from a boat trip down the river, he found his son missing and upon speaking with his family members immediately suspected that Cousins was responsible. Subsequently, Cole immediately went to Milton, the town where Cousins supposedly resided, and obtained a warrant for his arrest. After locating Cousins' residence, Cole found his son in an abandoned home about thirty yards from Cousins' house. Cole further testified that after Cousins' capture, the prisoner offered him \$25 to make the situation go away. Demonstrating his belief that his family was better served by the local legal system, Cole refused the bribe and instead filed charges against the man who kidnapped his son.<sup>31</sup>

Berlin argues that while whites made punishments for kidnappings stronger, "public apathy and a general reluctance to enforce kidnapping laws revealed that disdain for the free Negro's liberty was stronger."<sup>32</sup> However, the Cousins case does not support Berlin's argument. Because the court documents for this case are so well preserved, the diligence with which Mecklenburg's white authorities pursued this case is easily visible. First, Cousins was not tried in a court of Oyer and Terminer as the law required but was instead given a jury trial. Additionally, the court documents indicate that the judge and jury heard the testimony of fourteen different witnesses for the commonwealth and the defendant. Cousins called four different white men to testify on his behalf

while the commonwealth called nine free black men and women and one slave to testify.<sup>33</sup> The proceedings of this case indicate that Mecklenburg's white authorities did not rush to convict a free black man nor did they simply dismiss the complaints of a free black family who had their son stolen from them. The court instead carefully assessed the facts in this case and despite the testimony of the four white men who spoke on his behalf, the jury ultimately found Cousins guilty. Their decision resulted in a sentence of five years in the public penitentiary.

The actions of Bartlett Cole are not those of a free black man hesitant to use the local courts because he did not understand the way the legal system worked or because he feared the white justices would not take his complaint seriously. In Cole's testimony, he stressed that once he identified Cousins as the kidnapper, he immediately obtained a warrant for Cousins' arrest. When Cousins attempted to bribe him so that he would forget the incident, Cole refused and took his chances with the court. The way in which this case unfolded indicates that the white court officials involved in this case took the liberty of both William Cole and Granderson Cousins seriously. The Cole family did not meekly accept the crime perpetrated on their family because they feared the scrutiny from white court officials that would come their way. Rather than avoid the local court house, they used it successfully to seek justice for their son.

For all free individuals living in Mecklenburg County, the local courthouse was a place to conduct business and seek redress for the difficulties they encountered with their neighbors of both races. Free blacks did not avoid the courthouse because they feared they would receive unwarranted convictions, have their rights stripped away, or even draw the unwanted attention of hostile whites. The records show that when free blacks from Mecklenburg entered the courtroom, they could reasonably expect their cases to receive careful consideration and that judges would perceive them as individuals who at least deserved to be heard. Rather than being a nondescript face in the larger, despised free black population, in localities like Mecklenburg free blacks were individuals with families, homes, and occupations who deserved to have their cases carefully considered by judges before a verdict was delivered. There is no doubt that white legislators structured the legal system in a way that was most beneficial to propertied white men while it created a hostile environment meant to deter minority groups like

free black Virginians from using the courts. However, as with many of the statutes passed by the General Assembly, in Mecklenburg reality did not always accurately reflect the intentions of state laws.

Virginia's white citizens indeed proved particularly adept at drafting restrictive statutes and spreading racist propaganda against the state's free black population. For example, in 1830 a citizen of Alexandria, Virginia, wrote to the local newspaper to comment on the recent passage of a statute in the state of Louisiana requiring the removal of certain free people of color from the state. The commentator wrote that the law was "another proof that the species of population, which is the subject of it, is considered a curse wherever it is found." He further added "our own Town is much annoyed by the worthless sort of these people."<sup>34</sup> In addition to racist language like this circulating throughout the state, Virginia's free black population was also the target of state level legislation that sought to restrict their freedom in many ways. After 1830, these laws only became increasingly restrictive and harsh. Consequently, scholars such as Ira Berlin and Tommy Bogger concluded that free blacks could never shake the taint of slavery. Berlin specifically argues that "southern race relations required that Negroes be powerless, submissive, and dependent." State laws like those in Virginia provided a way to push "free Negroes closer to slavery and...keep them dependent on whites."<sup>35</sup> As demonstrated above, however, despite state laws that prevented free blacks from testifying against whites, Mecklenburg's free blacks did not let this deter them from using the courts. Thus discriminatory laws and language do not always accurately represent the interactions of white and free black individuals at the local level.

In Mecklenburg County, white officials demonstrated little if any interest in strictly enforcing every law passed in Richmond concerning free blacks. At the same time the free black population indicated through its lack of compliance with statutes like the registration requirement that they too did not always feel the need to abide by the state's free black laws. This in no way, however, implies that Mecklenburg's white residents were more benevolent towards the free black men and women who lived in their communities. Mecklenburg was a rural county where there were no major cities and at its greatest size during the antebellum period the total population remained just shy of 21,000 individuals. The census records show that beginning in 1790 the free black

population generally saw an increase in size until it reached its height in 1840 when free black individuals represented five percent of the total population. The last two census records taken prior to the American Civil War show that by 1860 the free black population had seen a fifteen percent decline, however, they still comprised roughly four percent of Mecklenburg's population. Significantly, during this same time period slaves never represented less than fifty-seven percent of the total population.<sup>36</sup> At its heart Mecklenburg County was very much a slave society. As Ely argues, whites could afford to "deal fairly and even respectfully with free African Americans partly because slavery still held most blacks firmly in its grips."<sup>37</sup> This relatively small free black population, when compared to the size of the white and slave populations in Mecklenburg, did not pose a threat to white dominance.

Yet, the white population's confidence in their dominance because slavery existed does completely explain the more relaxed interactions between free black and white men and women described in Mecklenburg's county records. Perhaps the greatest influence on the way Mecklenburg's free black and white residents engaged each other on a daily basis was the role played by community knowledge of individuals. Although Mecklenburg's white citizens could not possibly have known every free black individual living within the county, they certainly knew those with whom they came in contact and conducted business with daily. Free black men and women moved in and out of the local courthouse on a regular basis effectively making their presence in the community known to those in positions of authority. These men and women bought and sold land, registered deeds and wills, and filed civil and criminal suits. And this was not unique to Mecklenburg. Von Daacke argues that in Albemarle County, free blacks "becoming known quantities with positive behavioral attributes, moved towards a social whiteness that allowed them to live comfortable and unmolested lives in the area."<sup>38</sup> It is possible that within this local environment found not just in Mecklenburg but also in other areas of Virginia, some white authorities simply did not feel threatened enough by these free black individuals, with whom they were most likely well acquainted, to strictly enforce the laws that emerged from Richmond.

Although white officials did not enforce free black laws with a strict consistency, the potential for enforcement did exist and

therefore these laws remained a reality of free black life. Between 1793 and 1835 Virginia passed at least five different laws intended to limit the movement of the free black population and make it easier for white authorities to monitor free black individuals. In Mecklenburg, however, these laws proved difficult to enforce given the general refusal of the free black population to comply and the less than enthusiastic interest among white officials in enforcing state laws. Perhaps one of the most onerous statutes passed in terms of the restrictions it placed on the free black individual's mobility was the registration law initially enacted in 1793. The language of the law indicates that it intended to prevent slaves from roaming about the state posing as free people by issuing certificates of freedom.<sup>39</sup> Yet, the process of properly differentiating slaves from free blacks placed more burdens on members of the free black population than it did on the slaves.

The statute required every free black individual to register with the clerk of their local court and pay a fee every three years. The clerk recorded each individual's name, age, color, height, and any distinguishing scars as well as how she or he became free. Individuals were required to carry proof of their freedom with them whenever they traveled. The statute further stipulated that anyone failing to register or carry proof of their freedom could not seek employment or move freely throughout their county or city of residence. The law also required local magistrates to jail anyone found without a certificate.<sup>40</sup> However, when and how local officials like those in Mecklenburg chose to enforce these laws within their jurisdiction did not always meet the expectations of state legislators.

Although the registration law first took effect in 1793, Mecklenburg authorities did not begin keeping records of free black registers as required by law until 1809, many years after the General Assembly's authorization. More significantly, enforcement of the law by county officials and compliance with the law by free black individuals remained sporadic at best throughout the antebellum era (see Figure 1). In 1810, there were approximately 493 free black individuals living within the county. Assuming for the purposes of this discussion that the population remained steady for the next twenty-one years and also assuming that starting in 1809 one-third of the population registered or re-registered every year as the law directed, this would mean at least one-hundred and fifty registers should appear in the records each year. One-hundred and fifty

registers or re-registers per year from 1809 to 1830 means that a total of 3,150 registers should appear in the records. Yet only ninety-three individuals registered with the clerk by 1830.<sup>41</sup> If the time period for this scenario is expanded to 1865 and assuming that again conservatively one-hundred and fifty individuals registered each year, a total of 8,400 registrations should appear in the books. Yet during this fifty-four year period only 993 registers appear in the court records.<sup>42</sup> This scenario and the charts in Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate that the norm for Mecklenburg County was a basic lack of registration by free black individuals that never came close to fulfilling the requirements of the law.

Only at times when racial tensions escalated in the country, like in 1831 following the Nat Turner rebellion or in 1851 following a renewed push by state officials to remove free blacks from Virginia, did larger numbers of free blacks register with the court. However, these bursts of registrations, which were tied to events taking place outside of Mecklenburg, were very brief. For example, in 1851, the number of registers jumped from only thirty-four in the previous year to one-hundred and eighty-two. Yet this level of registration declined significantly in the next three years with twenty-eight in 1852, twenty-one in 1853, and only four by 1854.<sup>43</sup> When one compares the charts in Figures 1 and 2, it becomes apparent that at only three times between 1809 and 1865 did anywhere close to one-third or more free blacks in the county ever register. It is also important to note that this increase in registration does not necessarily mean that Mecklenburg's white officials more strictly enforced the registration law. The court order books give no indication that Mecklenburg authorities actively pushed free black individuals to register or that they prosecuted those who failed to comply. The varying number of registers recorded indicates the overall inconsistent nature of enforcement in Mecklenburg. At the local level white and black compliance with the registration law fell far short of state officials' expectations.

This lack of compliance with the registration law on the part of free blacks and white authorities does not in any way indicate that Mecklenburg officials were less racist or more sympathetic to the free black class. This pattern of sporadic registration is consistent with what other scholars find in localities throughout Virginia. In Prince Edward County, Melvin Ely finds that not all of the county's free blacks registered consistently or even at all. He also argues that most registrations occurred during

certain times such as in 1831 following Nat Turner’s revolt and in 1850. Even Berlin notes that in Amelia County, Virginia, only one-hundred and fifty names are recorded in the register for the years between 1800 and 1865.<sup>44</sup> This suggests that in rural counties like

Figure 1: Fluctuation in Free Black Registration from Year 1809 to 1865

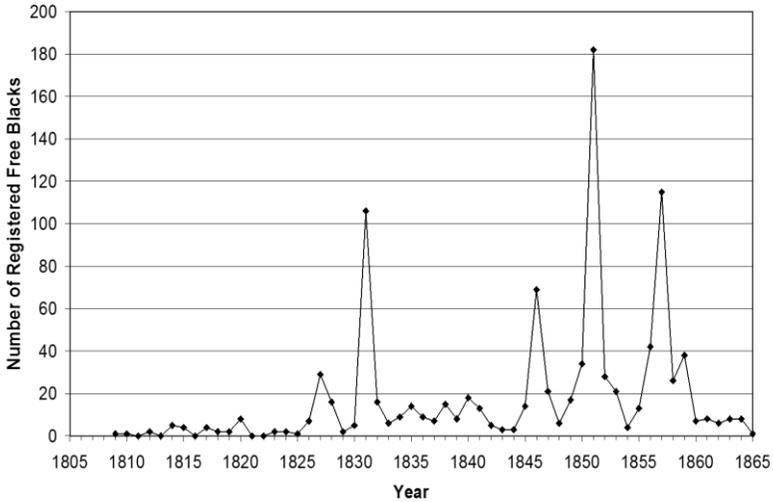
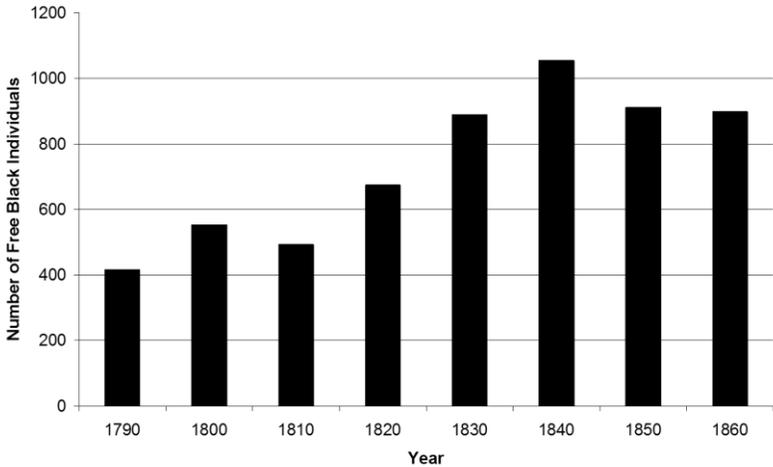


Figure 2: Free Black Population from 1790 to 1860



Information in these charts is drawn from the *Register of Free Negroes No. 1, 1809-1841* and *No. 2, 1841-1865* and the Historical Census Browser. University of Virginia Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html>.

Mecklenburg, Prince Edward, and Amelia, community knowledge of individuals and local context made the strict enforcement of this law unnecessary. Because of the more personal environment found at the local level, Mecklenburg's free blacks could be seen as individuals with strong connections to the community through their families, homes, and businesses. The state level laws passed in Richmond often represented a distant force that had limited impact on localities throughout Virginia. The free black population of Mecklenburg recognized the flexibility this situation allowed them, and they simply chose not to register.

Berlin, however, argues that the central reason more free black names do not appear in registers throughout the South is that they simply avoided white authorities. He specifically states that "free Negroes instinctively avoided white officials" because white authorities could "jail or enslave them for any one of a dozen piddling reasons."<sup>45</sup> Yet the experiences of Mecklenburg's free blacks do not fit this model. For example, Priscilla Ivey recorded her free status in the "Register of Free Negroes" for the first and only time in 1840. Yet she lived in Mecklenburg for at least forty-seven years before she registered for the first time and lived there another sixteen years until her death in 1856. Her sons William and Frederick Ivey and her daughter Olive Naish registered only once while her other children Margaret Kersey and George Ivey never registered.<sup>46</sup> Still, during her lifetime Priscilla Ivey filed two lawsuits against white men and also filed petitions with the court on behalf of her son George Ivey's estate after his death. Although the reasons for Ivey and her children choosing to register that one time are unclear, there is no evidence that Mecklenburg officials pressured either of them to do so.

Similarly, Mason Brandom, who lived in Mecklenburg for almost seventy years before his death in the late 1840s, never registered with the clerk of the court. Additionally, four out of Brandom's five children registered as free blacks only once in their lifetimes between 1846 and 1853<sup>47</sup>, while one of his sons, Mumford Brandom, never registered. Still the Brandom family appeared before the court, in front of the very same white men who were charged with ensuring their compliance with state laws, to register land deeds and file lawsuits. Mason Brandom used the courts on five different occasions to register land deeds and indentures, and Brandom's son Wyatt successfully filed a civil suit against a white man in 1839 well before he registered for the first time in 1846.<sup>48</sup>

Fellow free black James Drew never registered with the clerk of the court. Yet during the 1830s, he used the courts several times to defend himself in civil and criminal suits filed against him. The experiences of these individuals challenge Berlin's assertion that free blacks simply avoided the local courthouse because they feared white authorities. They instead regularly used the courts, and when they did the judges and magistrates did nothing to encourage these individuals to comply with the registration law.

Virginia state officials did not stop with only passing laws intended to control the movements of free black individuals, they also enacted a different category of statutes aimed at limiting the growth of the free black population even if that meant taking away a person's liberty. The numerous removal and migration laws passed by individual states represent some of the most cited examples of white antipathy for the free black population. Nevertheless, these types of laws received the same level of compliance from Mecklenburg's white and black citizens as the registration law discussed above. In 1805, Virginia passed what is often referred to as the 1806 removal law, which required every slave emancipated after March 1806 to leave the commonwealth within twelve months or face severe limitations on their freedom because court officials were authorized to sell their labor to the highest bidder.<sup>49</sup> The law did allow for the possibility that some free blacks could remain in the state, but they had to receive permission from the General Assembly to do so. However, after the waves of petitions filed in year after year, the legislature amended the law and localities were given the ability to grant waivers for free blacks to remain in the state.

This law represents an attempt by state officials to keep more black men and women bound by the chains of slavery and therefore theoretically under the close supervision of whites. Yet, in Mecklenburg at least thirty-three different slaves received their freedom from their masters' wills, and the justices of the court only denied three of those newly freed slaves permission to remain in the county. Samuel Holmes freed three of his slaves, Ned, Eliza, and Stephen, in 1825. Because at least one of them, Stephen, had not reached the age of twenty-one, he was allowed to remain in the county. However, in 1833 the sheriff arrested Stephen for failing to comply with the 1806 removal law. The attorney for the county initially asked that the court turn Stephen over to the Overseers of the Poor so he could be hired out. Ultimately, however, all charges

were dropped against Stephen and he was released.<sup>50</sup> In 1859 Pleasant Burnett freed twenty slaves through his will and according to the court documents all twenty received their freedom papers. More significantly the records give no indication that court officials forced any of the twenty emancipated slaves to leave Mecklenburg.<sup>51</sup>

The same year that Burnett's slaves received their freedom, the justices of the court did reject applications to remain in the county from three slaves freed by the Trustees of Randolph-Macon College, a Methodist college located in Boydton. In this case, the justices of the court made specific notations below each of the three slaves' registers stating they were denied permission to stay in Mecklenburg.<sup>52</sup> However, the records are not clear as to whether these three individuals ever left the county. Reginald Butler, in his study of Goochland County, Virginia, also looks at the enforcement of the removal law, and he too finds that county officials did not consistently enforce the law. He argues "most Goochland slaves manumitted after 1806 in the county did not formally request leave to stay in the county," and of those who did, the surviving documents indicate they were granted permission to remain.<sup>53</sup> Although this statute authorized Mecklenburg officials to force every newly freed slave out of the county who did not request and receive permission to remain, as in Goochland County the justices in Mecklenburg rarely used this power. Even when presented with opportunities to prevent the growth of their free black population, county authorities did not strictly enforce the law.

Although the laws discussed thus far involved attempts by white legislators to monitor, reduce, and remove the free black population, there were other statutes designed to draw a clear dividing line between blacks and whites by preventing their intermixing. Nevertheless, as with the other laws, when the General Assembly passed restrictive statutes aimed at Virginia's free black population, the enforcement of those laws fell onto the shoulders of local county officials. In Mecklenburg, again enforcement was not always consistent and the free black population generally disregarded those laws as well.

Examples of these laws include those used by white authorities to regulate sexual relations between whites and blacks. White Virginians in theory did not condone interracial unions and sexual relations, hence the passage of a statute prohibiting marriage between black and white individuals. However, as Joshua Rothman

argues, “white Virginians, like white Southerners elsewhere, tolerated and accommodated a wide array of sexual activity.”<sup>54</sup> The interracial relationship of Priscilla and Frederick Ivey indicates that this was true of Mecklenburg as well. In fact, Priscilla Ivey, a free black woman, actually married a white man named Frederick Ivey. The 1813 personal property records list her husband Frederick Ivey as a white man over the age of twenty-one. After Frederick’s death in 1821, Priscilla appears as the head of household for the first time, and she is listed as a free black female over the age of fifty-five. Despite legal prohibitions against interracial marriage, county officials legally married the two in 1795 and at least two other court documents refer to Priscilla as Frederick Ivey’s wife.<sup>55</sup>

Despite the fact that Priscilla and Frederick Ivey lived almost their entire adult lives in violation of the marriage statute, the community as a whole did not appear to react negatively as evidenced by the fact that Frederick Ivey continued to interact peacefully with his fellow white citizens. He entered into contracts to buy and sell land, he was given at least three apprentices by the Overseers of the Poor to train, he successfully used the courts to sue black and white members of his community, and he received power of attorney rights for a white woman named Sally Crew. It is almost certain that Frederick and Priscilla Ivey’s marriage was a well-known fact in Mecklenburg County, and it seems from their active participation in the community that they were not ostracized or penalized for living in contradiction to state law.

Although Priscilla and Frederick Ivey’s marriage was the only known interracial union officially recognized by Mecklenburg’s white authorities, they were certainly not the only interracial couple in the county. Throughout the period between 1820 and 1860 at least fourteen other such relationships existed in Mecklenburg. Because neither of these individuals married, according to Virginia law they were in fact committing fornication.<sup>56</sup> Although sex between blacks and whites was not technically illegal, all sex that took place outside a properly legalized marriage was prohibited. Thus as historians Martha Hodes and Joshua Rothman demonstrate, interracial couples could face charges of fornication if whites decided to act upon these illicit unions.<sup>57</sup> This does not seem to have been the case in Mecklenburg. Mason Brandom was a free black man who carried on an interracial relationship with a white woman named Molly Earls for many years, and their union ultimately resulted in the birth of five

children.<sup>58</sup> Yet Brandom was never prosecuted for having an illicit sexual relationship with this woman. In Albemarle County, von Daacke finds several interracial relationships, such as that of Thomas Bell and Mary Hemings, which while not recognized legally, were accepted by the community and did not impede the couples' ability to interact cordially with their neighbors.<sup>59</sup> Despite legislators' attempts through the law to prevent whites and blacks from forming sexual unions, "interracial sex was ubiquitous in urban, town, and plantation communities throughout the state."<sup>60</sup>

The actions of Mecklenburg's free black population and the white officials in most cases turned state laws into mere parchment barriers to free black activity that more often than not had little impact on most Mecklenburg free blacks. Throughout the antebellum period, state legislators repeatedly tried to create sufficient methods of controlling and in some cases eliminating the state's free black population. Yet Mecklenburg's white officials in most cases only half-heartedly seized those opportunities presented to them, and this created breathing room for the county's free black population. Free black men and women regularly took full advantage of this laxity on the part of whites. Legislators tried to create an atmosphere of complete hostility in the state that would convince African Americans and whites that all black individuals were better off enslaved or removed from the state. By looking at these laws and assuming that because the General Assembly passed them then surely they were enforced, Virginia's legislators are credited with a success they never saw in reality.

The free black individuals discussed here and their experiences in antebellum Mecklenburg challenge the long held view that the South's free blacks were "slaves without masters." Rather than doing their best to avoid all contact with white authorities lest they attract unwanted attention, Mecklenburg's free blacks, like their white neighbors, actively participated in the normal activities of local life. They also did not hesitate to use the local court system to their benefit and the success they experienced indicates that it was possible for free black individuals to receive a relatively fair hearing. When state laws threatened to strip away their rights or place extra burdens on the free black class, the laxity of white authorities and the more personal culture found at the local level that allowed for individual knowledge of community members provided free black individuals with more freedom than the laws intended. The experiences of Mecklenburg's free blacks suggest

that scholars should reconsider the commonly held perceptions about free black life in the South. As more studies of this nature are conducted, perhaps one day scholars can say that the experiences of Mecklenburg's free black population are indeed representative of the "normal" free black experience.

## ENDNOTES

1. "For the Enquirer," *Richmond Enquirer*, December 24, 1831, pg. 2, Vol. XXVIII, Issue 68, Virginia's Historical Newspapers, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.arcane.lynchburg.edu>, (accessed 26 November 2011).

2. Ulrich B. Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment, and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1918), 440. For information on the tendency of early twentieth century scholars to demean members of the black race in their analysis of slavery see Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: "The Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 75 and 77.

3. For the declension model of the free black experience see John Hope Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1943); Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974); Suzanne Lebsock, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984); Tommy L. Bogger, *Free Blacks in Norfolk, Virginia, 1790-1860: The Darker Side of Freedom* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997); and Brenda E. Stevenson, *Life in Black and White: Family and Community in the Slave South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

4. Berlin, 181.

5. See Luther Porter Jackson, *Free Negro Labor and Property Holding in Virginia, 1830-1860* (New York: Antheneum, 1969); Loren Schweninger, *Black Property Owners in the South 1790-1915* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Michael P. Johnson

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6. Melvin Patrick Ely, *Israel on the Appomattox: A Southern Experiment in Black Freedom from the 1790s Through the Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004) and Kirt von Daacke, "Freedom Has a Face: Racial Identity and Community in Jefferson's Albemarle, 1780-1865" (PhD diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 2005). Von Daacke's work on Albemarle is now a book entitled *Freedom Has a Face: Race, Identity, and Community in Jefferson's Virginia* which was released in October 2012.

7. Population information on Mecklenburg can be accessed through the Historical Census Browser. The University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html>, accessed 3 October 2011.

8. Mecklenburg County Court Records: County Court Judgments 1857-1859, *Quinichett & C vs. R.H. Moss & Bros Petition*, Box # 52, Library of Virginia.

9. Berlin, 97.

10. William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large* Vol. 12 Chapter LXXLII Section II (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1968), 182.

11. Ely, 267.

12. Mecklenburg Chancery Causes-County Court, *George Ivey vs. ADMR of Frederick Ivey ETC, 1834-064*, Library of Virginia and *Will Book No. 13, 1832-1835*, "The Estate of Frederick Ivey", pg. 387, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.

13. For information concerning the civil suits filed by Priscilla and Frederick Ivey see Mecklenburg County Chancery Causes-County Court, *Priscilla Ivey Widow vs. ADMR of Frederick Ivey & C by ETC, 1830-018*, Mecklenburg County Court Records: County Court Judgments 1820, *Ivey v. McCarter*, and *Mecklenburg County Order Book #16 1811-1813*, pg. 218, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.

14. Mecklenburg Chancery Causes-Circuit Superior Court, *Brandom Etc vs. Davis Executor etc 1839-004*, Library of Virginia.

15. Mecklenburg County Court Records: County Court Judgments 1832-1833, *Chavous vs. Drew*, Box # 34, Library of Virginia.

16. Mecklenburg County Court Records: County Court Judgments 1832-1833, *Chavous vs. Drew*, Box # 34, Library of Virginia.

17. In addition to the cases discussed here also see *Commonwealth vs. Chapman, Order Book No. 1-A 1833-1836*, pg. 96-97, Reel # 45, Microfilm and *Commonwealth vs. Edmund Brown, Order Book No. 7, 1859-1865*, pg. 541, Reel #120, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.

18. Von Daacke, 191-226.

19. Mecklenburg County Court Records: County Court Judgments 1857-1859, *Commonwealth vs. John Guy* and *Commonwealth vs. Buck (a slave)*, Box # 38, Library of Virginia.

20. *Acts of Virginia 1846-1851*, Film 358/Reel 2, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.

21. *Commonwealth vs. John Guy* and *Commonwealth vs. Buck (a slave)*, Box # 38, Library of Virginia.

22. Mecklenburg County Court Records: County Court Judgments 1857-1859, *Commonwealth vs. Bob Chavous*, Box # 52, Library of Virginia.

23. Ely, 249.

24. Laura F. Edwards, *The People and Their Peace: Legal Culture and the Transformation of Inequality in the Post-Revolutionary South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 7.
25. Mecklenburg County Court Records: County Court Judgments 1857-1859, *Commonwealth vs. Durham and Soward*, Box # 52, Library of Virginia.
26. *Commonwealth vs. Durham and Soward*, Box # 52, Library of Virginia.
27. *Mecklenburg County Order Book No. 2-A, 1836-1840, Commonwealth vs. George Ivey, George Garnes, and Frederick Ivey*, pg. 54-56, Reel # 45, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.
28. Mecklenburg County Court Records: County Court Judgments 1833, *Commonwealth vs. James Drew*, Box # 35, Library of Virginia and *Order Book No. 29 1831-1833*, pg. 548, Reel # 44, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.
29. Mecklenburg County Court Records: County Court Judgments 1830-1831, *Commonwealth vs. Cousins*, Box # 33, Library of Virginia.
30. Berlin, 100.
31. Mecklenburg County Court Records: County Court Judgments 1832-1833, *Commonwealth vs. Cousins- Indictment for stealing a free person for a slave*, Box # 34, Library of Virginia.
32. Berlin, 101.
33. *Commonwealth vs. Cousins- Indictment for stealing a free person for a slave*, Box # 34, Library of Virginia.
34. "Blacks in Louisiana", *Alexandria Gazette*, May 3, 1830, pg. 3, Readex: Virginia's Historical Newspapers, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.arcane.lynchburg.edu>, accessed 30 September 2011.

35. Berlin, 316.

36. Historical Census Browser. The University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center, <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html>, accessed 3 October 2011.

37. Ely, X.

38. Von Daacke, 131.

39. *Records of the States of the United States Virginia General Assembly Session Laws 1794-1812*, "Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia 1793," Part I Chapter XXII, pg. 27, Film 358/Reel 4, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.

40. "Acts Passed ... 1793," *1794-1812*, Part I Chapter XXII, pg. 27, Film 358/Reel 4, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.

41. *Register of Free Negroes, No. 1, 1809-1841 and No. 2, 1841-1865*, Reel # 52, Library of Virginia and *Population Schedules of the Fifth Census of the United States 1830*, Mecklenburg County, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.

42. The calculations for this scenario were derived as follows, in 1810 one year after the extant records begin there were 493 free black individuals living in Mecklenburg. One-third of 493 is actually approximately 164 individuals but in an effort to remain conservative in my estimates I chose 150 to represent one-third of the free black population.

43. *Register of Free Negroes*, Reel # 52, Library of Virginia.

44. Ely, 253-254 and Berlin, 328.

45. Berlin, 329.

46. *Register of Free Negroes*, pg. 140, 142, and 151, Reel # 52, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.

47. It is most likely that the Brandom children chose to register during this time period because they were preparing to file a petition

in the county court to have themselves certified as non-mulattos and non-negroes. After their father's death in the late 1840s, the Brandom children certified their free status with the courts and elicited the testimony of several white individuals to testify that their grandmother was not a free black. The record of their petition can be found in the Mecklenburg County Court Records: County Court Judgments 1849-1853, Library of Virginia.

48. The Brandom children's freedom papers can be found in the Mecklenburg Court Records: County Court Judgments 1855-1857, Box 51, Library of Virginia.

49. "Acts...1805," *1794-1812*, Part I Chapter XXI, pg. 16, Film 358/Reel 4, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.

50. Mecklenburg County Court Records: County Court Judgments 1833, *Commonwealth vs. Ned a free man of color*, Box #35, Library of Virginia.

51. *Order Book No. 7, 1859-1865*, pg. 70, Reel # 120, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.

52. *Order Book No. 6-A, 1853-1858*, pg. 491 & 22, Reel # 120; *Order Book # 7, 1859-1865*, pg. 70, Reel # 120; and *Register of Free Negroes, No. 2, 1841-1865*, Reel # 52, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.

53. Butler, 353. Kirt von Daacke also found that in Albemarle County most freed slaves did not apply for permission to remain in the state. This lack of enforcement continued in Albemarle until 1850 when white attitudes began to change. See pp.129, 136-141.

54. Joshua D. Rothman, *Notorious in the Neighborhood: Sex and Families Across the Color Line in Virginia, 1787-1861* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 4.

55. The Ivey's marriage certificate can be found in *the Mecklenburg County Minister's Returns 1785-1854*, pg. 18, Microfilm, Library of Virginia and laws against interracial marriage can be found in W.W Hening, *Statutes at Large*, Vol. 11, Chapter VII, Section XIV, p. 361.

56. *Revised Code of Laws of Virginia*, 1819, chapter 141, section 6, pg. 55-56.

57. Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth-Century South*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 2-3 and Rothman, 4 and 57-87.

58. *Population Schedules of the Fourth Census of the United States 1820*, Mecklenburg County, Microfilm, Library of Virginia.

59. Von Daacke, 289-293 and 309. See also Ely, 113 and 193-194 for examples of interracial couples in Prince Edward County and the community reaction to those relationships.

60. Rothman, 4.

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**REMARKS FROM THE 2012  
VSSA SCHOLAR AWARD RECIPIENTS**

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**WHAT I DO AND HOW I GOT TO WHERE I AM TODAY**  
Remarks upon Receiving the Virginia Social Science Association  
2012 Scholar Award in Geography

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*Virginia Social Science Journal, 2013, Vol. 48, pages 146-149*

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First of all, I would like to thank the members of the Virginia Social Science Association for awarding me the 2012 Scholar Award in Geography. I am honored to be recognized for my research in Geography.

When I was first notified of this award, I was told that I would have to give a ten minute presentation on, first, what I do, and, second, how I got to where I am today. As academics, we are often researching, writing and presenting about other people's lives. And, while academics are certainly not shy about talking about themselves, it is rare that we have to do so in such a structured, formal setting. So, I sat down and starting thinking about these two questions of what I do and how I got where I am today.

Answering the first question, 'What I do', is easy. I have been teaching college full time for the past twenty-one years. I received my Ph.D. in Geography in 1992 from Syracuse University, where I specialized in political geography. At Syracuse, I had the privilege of working with the leading political geographer of the past twenty-five years and one of today's leading human geographers, John Agnew. When I left Syracuse in 1991, I spent a year as a visiting faculty member at New Mexico State University, before teaching at Georgia Southern University for three years. In 1995, I left Georgia Southern, and taught for the next thirteen years at Florida State University. I left Florida State in 2008 to come to Old Dominion University.

In terms of my research, I am a political geographer, but I also do research in the areas of race and ethnicity, and cultural geography, with a regional focus on the American South. To characterize my writings, much of my research has concerned political and cultural change in the South. Much of this work has

focused in two main areas: 1) race, redistricting, voting rights, and elections in the American South, and 2) the politics of representation on the contemporary Southern landscape involving Confederate and Civil Rights iconography. My research into these areas has revolved around two common themes: 1) the changing balance, albeit slowly and erratically, of race and power in the South in the post-Civil Rights Era, and 2) the evolution of contemporary Southern identities.

As I mentioned before, the first part of this talk, what I do, was easy to put together. The second part, how I got to where I am today, that is a geography professor, has been a lot more difficult to answer. Indeed, when I began to mull over this question, I had a mini-existential crisis. I had to think long and hard about, as Ross Perot's 1992 Vice Presidential choice, Admiral James Stockdale, infamously put it: 'Who am I? Why am I here?'

Well, the first dilemma in answering this question of 'How I Got to Where I am Today', was trying to figure out how far back to take this self-reflective journey. Now there are different times throughout my life I could point to that led me to becoming a geographer. Looking back, I can see that as a child I was always interested in geography and learning about places, whether it be through an early love of maps, playing geeky geography games, or in collecting items that have a geographical dimension to them, such as license plates from different parts of the United States and from around the world...a hobby that I continue to dabble in today.

However, while as a child I had a love for what I now recognize as Geography, I did not have an academic outlet for that love. Numerous studies have demonstrated that Americans have very little knowledge of the world around them, in part because the subject of Geography is rarely required in K-12 school curricula. While this is changing nationwide through the efforts of the National Council of Geographic Education, of which Old Dominion Geography Professor Don Zeigler is a past-president, and in this state via the Virginia Geographical Alliance, when I was in grade school in New Jersey in the 1970s I could only take one half-year 7<sup>th</sup> Grade course in Geography.

If I had to pinpoint the key moment in my becoming a geographer, I would say it occurred when I was an undergraduate college student. I started off my undergraduate career at one institution, and then, in 1982, I transferred before the start of my junior year to Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg (and it

will always be Mary Washington College to me). I transferred to Mary Washington as a political science major, and, as a transfer student, I was desperately looking for courses to fill out my first semester schedule. There was an introductory Geography course with seats open and I thought I would try it out. This was my first Geography course as my previous college did not have a Geography program nor any courses. And I absolutely loved the course; not only was the content interesting, but the professor, Richard Palmieri (who passed away way too young in 1997), was great and engaging as well. Having learned by that point that the best strategy for a successful college career is to pick courses based on the professors who are offering them more so than based on the content they provide, I kept taking additional geography courses from Dick Palmieri.

By the time I was ready to graduate the following year, I had fulfilled all of the requirements for my major in Political Science. As well, I had taken five Geography courses up to that point, well short of completing a major. However, I was so intrigued by the discipline and the courses I had taken from the excellent Geography faculty at Mary Washington that I decided, with the Geography faculty's encouragement, to stay an extra year to complete a double major in political science and geography.

My thinking at the time was that I would use the degree to get a job working for the Federal Government. However, one of the Geography faculty, Jim Gouger, asked me one day during the Fall of 1984 (what I had dubbed my 'second senior year'), why I was not thinking about going to Graduate School. I told him, very simply, that there was no way I could afford it. He said, 'well what about applying for assistantships? That way your tuition will be paid and you will get a stipend for working for the department.' As an undergrad, I had no clue such things existed...and so after many consultations with the faculty about where my interests lie and their guidance about which departments to apply to and, more importantly in retrospect, which ones to avoid. I applied to several schools recommended by the Geography faculty and ended up going to Syracuse for my Master's and Ph.D.

My take away from all of this is that if it was not for the excellent Geography faculty that I had the privilege to get to know and interact with at Mary Washington, both in terms of the excellent instruction I received inside the classroom and the wise guidance I received outside the classroom, I would not be where I am today.

And today, as a professor, I try to provide similar guidance to my students. If I am half as successful as they were, I would consider it an accomplishment.

**LIVING A POLITICAL LIFE  
(OUTSIDE THE POLITICAL ARENA)**

Remarks upon Receiving the Virginia Social Science Association  
2012 Scholar Award in Political Science

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*Virginia Social Science Journal, 2013, Vol. 48, pages 150-154*

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**B**aby Boomers may recall the 1970s classic sit-com *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and its character Ted Baxter, a pompous local newscaster who would recite his autobiography at any opportunity. “It all started in a 5,000-watt radio station in Fresno, California,” he would ponderously intone.

At the risk of evoking the spirit of Mr. Baxter, I always begin my professional history with, “It all started at a John F. Kennedy rally in Louisville, Kentucky.” Although only four years of age at the time, I can remember the crowd, balloons, and confetti, as we stood in front of the podium where the future president spoke on October 5, 1960. I was destined to become a political scientist! Three years later, when our Catholic school marched to church to pray for the young president, shot in a Dallas motorcade, it made an indelible mark on my psyche. Shortly after, my mother bought me a children’s book on President Kennedy, which I pored over until I had memorized every photo of his family and life in politics.

While other girls were borrowing books on horses from our grade-school library, I was checking out children’s biographies of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Our family outings included day trips to the Great Emancipator’s birthplace in Hodgenville, Kentucky. The shrine to our 16<sup>th</sup> president, a Greek-style temple with a reproduction log cabin inside, made quite an impression on me. My first history teacher, John Young, brought the subject alive by tying lessons of the past to current events, in the midst of the Vietnam War and the troubled 1960s.

In elementary-school speech contests, where I would choose JFK when the topic was “the person you most admire,” I discovered a talent for public speaking, following in my dad’s champion orator footsteps. By age sixteen, I volunteered as a

docent at the historic home of General George Rogers Clark, the great Virginia pioneer, frontier soldier, and founder of Louisville. Tourists responded enthusiastically to my narratives of Clark's life and legend.

High-school American history class, taught by Sherleen Sisney, who would win the national Teacher of the Year Award, consisted of one exciting interactive assignment after another. Ranking the American presidents, conducting a constitutional convention, trying Harry Truman for war crimes are several that come to mind. One day I was standing outside the guidance counselor's office when a college brochure posted on the bulletin board caught my eye. "Study the president, Congress, and Supreme Court" as a political science major, it read. I knew on Day 1 of freshman orientation at the University of Louisville that I would indeed major in "poli. sci."

My parents' high-school graduation gift to me had been a trip to Washington, D.C. Mother and I sat across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, gazing at the historic landmark. "Someday I'll come back here to work," I announced. My plan was to combine classroom theories with practical internships, so every summer I worked in government and politics: first in a local agency, then for Kentucky's U.S. Senator Wendell Ford in his Capitol Hill and Louisville offices, then at the U.S. Department of Justice. Senior year presented a quandary: What to do with a political science degree? Law school? A Ph.D.? One of my professors allowed that I could go to law school but that I would find it a "stultifying experience." He encouraged me to earn a doctorate instead.

As the first generation in my family to receive even a bachelor's degree, the Ph.D. seemed somewhat beyond my grasp. I would take a year to sort out my options, working for the Louisville-Jefferson County Human Relations Commission, enforcing a local affirmative action ordinance. Now *that* was real world experience! But I knew a 9-5 job, no matter how challenging, was not for me. When I won a two-year scholarship to Oxford, I was on my way to the academic life.

What a life-changing experience it was to study politics and philosophy at the world's intellectual crossroads. Oxford's medieval tutorial experience, reading my weekly essay to an imposing don, was as rewarding as it was intimidating. But most engaging were the discussions with the best and brightest students

in the U.K. I hoped that my Oxford degree would pave the way for admission to Harvard and study with famed presidency scholar, Richard Neustadt. When word came that Harvard had accepted me for its Government Ph.D. program, I thought my wish had come true. Unfortunately, the price tag was too high, so instead of choosing Kennedy's alma mater, I chose the University of Virginia, founded by Thomas Jefferson, which offered a more generous financial-aid package.

As a native Louisvillian, my athletic passion is college basketball, and I like to quote famed coach John Wooden, who observed that "those who get the best of everything make the best of everything they get." Harvard proved elusive, but at UVA I had the great fortune of studying with Professor Henry J. Abraham, in whose name I have established a VSSA award for the best graduate student paper at the annual meeting. As an undergraduate, I had taken a year-long course on constitutional history from Mary K. Bonsteel Tachau, a relative of Louisville-born Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis. In addition to being one of the few women role models I had as an undergraduate, she taught the U.S. Constitution and Supreme Court in a way that enlightened all of the major political controversies of the 1970s: Watergate, impeachment, war powers, affirmative action, abortion, criminal rights, and freedom of religion. While continuing to follow my interest in the presidency, I focused at UVA on constitutional law and the Supreme Court, studying with the master of those subjects in the political science field, Professor Abraham. Working with him on Supreme Court appointments, I wrote my dissertation on the impact of race, religion, and gender on nominations to the high tribunal. He arranged for me to interview his friends there, Justices William J. Brennan, Jr. and Lewis F. Powell, Jr. I then arranged interviews with Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, Byron White, John Paul Stevens, William H. Rehnquist, and Antonin Scalia. What stunning experiences for a graduate student to walk into the chambers of the nation's highest court, sit down, and chat with seven of the nine justices!

Although I had moved on from the University of Louisville, my undergraduate mentor there, Professor Paul Weber, continued to advise me. Just out of graduate school, and ensconced in my first position at the University of Central Florida, I received an invitation from him to co-author a book on constitutional conventions and whether the United States should convene them periodically to

update our governing document. We published *Unfounded Fears: Myths and Realities of a Constitutional Convention* in 1989, just as I assumed my next professorship, at Sweet Briar College in Virginia. Paul's continuing guidance spurred my next book, based on my dissertation, *A "Representative" Supreme Court? The Impact of Race, Religion, and Gender on Appointments*. Sweet Briar, a women's liberal arts college, allowed me to hone my teaching skills, while progressing in research and writing. Shortly after I earned tenure there, the College wished me well as I made good on my youthful vow to return to Washington and work in government. I received the honor of serving as a Supreme Court fellow in 1994-95. Working in the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Chief Justice, I assisted Chief Justice Rehnquist in research for speeches and reports, spoke to 3,000 visitors from 70 different countries about the jewel in America's judicial crown, attended more than half of the term's oral arguments, and met with the Court's justices at public and private events.

Those experiences inspired my next book, *The Priestly Tribe: The Supreme Court's Image in the American Mind*, which focused on how the justices present public symbols of authority and independence to bolster their institution's power. Students, media, and general audiences also wanted to know about the personalities, ideologies, and biographies of contemporary justices. With apologies to Motown, I published *"The Supremes": An Introduction to the U.S. Supreme Court Justices*, now in its second edition.

In addition, I have had the honor of serving as the junior author on the sixth, seventh, and eighth editions of Professor Abraham's classic *Freedom and the Court: Civil Rights and Liberties in the United States*. My long-time interest in affirmative action inspired me to try my hand at litigation history with my book *The Michigan Affirmative Action Cases*.

Teaching an undergraduate course on the presidency, however, kept me engaged in my original interest in political science. When I saw that the University Press of Kansas was launching a series on modern first ladies, I volunteered to produce the volume on Jacqueline Kennedy. Now I was combining my life-long fascination with the Kennedys and my scholarship on the presidency. *Jacqueline Kennedy: First Lady of the New Frontier* borrowed my theories of symbolism as a source of political power from *The Priestly Tribe* and applied them to the Kennedys' creation of a modern-media White House. I reveled in work at the John F.

Kennedy Library and welcomed the opportunity to do so again for my next book *Rose Kennedy: The Life and Times of a Political Matriarch*. The Kennedy Library released Rose's papers, all 250 boxes of them, in 2006, and I spent weeks researching her archives there. The definitive biography, based on them and my interviews with Jean Kennedy Smith and Ted Sorensen, will be published by W.W. Norton in July 2013. The first stop on my book tour will be a talk at the Kennedy Library on the 123<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Rose's birth.

In this final third of my career, I have come full circle. Returning to the Kennedy legacy that my mother firmly implanted in my young life, and moving on to a Senior Fellowship at the University of Virginia's Miller Center to join its Presidential Oral History Program, I have embraced the institution that drew me initially to the field of political science.

The Miller Center has provided a home to learn the art and science of oral history interviews from the master, my colleague Professor Russell Riley, and exchange knowledge of the Kennedy presidency with Professor Marc Selverstone, director of the Center's Presidential Recordings Program. I have compiled a commemorative book on George H. W. Bush, and a co-edited scholarly volume, with Professor Michael Nelson, based on the Miller Center's oral history of the forty-first presidency. In addition, I have maintained my work on the intersection of the presidency and the Supreme Court, most recently in attending the announcement of the latter's decision on the Obama health-care law in June 2012. Being at the University of Virginia has increased my contacts with media, which allow me to disseminate my scholarship to a global general audience. Moreover, I am now an adjunct faculty member at the Federal Executive Institute in Charlottesville, where I speak on the Supreme Court and the Kennedy presidency to senior federal executives. I may not be working in Washington, and certainly not in the White House, but I am learning from those who do, and perhaps even having an impact on them through my lectures and scholarship. My parents and friends, especially Rose and Rob Capon, who accompanied me to Old Dominion University, to receive the 2012 Scholar Award in Political Science, deserve all my gratitude for their support. To quote my favorite holiday film, I "really have had a wonderful life."

**CHAPMAN'S PARAKEETS: ACKNOWLEDGING THE  
ROLE OF SERENDIPITY IN RESEARCH AND LIFE**

Remarks upon Receiving the Virginia Social Science Association  
2012 Scholar Award in History

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Virginia Tech

*Virginia Social Science Journal, 2013, Vol. 48, pages 155-159*

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In 1990, my fourth year of graduate school, I was deeply engaged in archival research for my dissertation. One particularly rich site for the project, a history of American bird study from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, was the American Museum of Natural History in New York. Most people know the American Museum for its cavernous exhibit halls, which are brimming with impressive dioramas, spectacular dinosaur skeletons, and exquisite stuffed animals. But behind the walls of these well-travelled public spaces, the institution also houses one of the world's great research collections, more than 32 million natural history specimens and cultural artifacts.

On days when I was not teaching, I had begun a series of short trips to New York from Cambridge, Massachusetts, where I was a doctoral student in the History of Science Department at Harvard. My primary destination was the American Museum's Department of Ornithology, home not only more than a million specimens of bird skins, skeletons, eggs, fluid-preserved specimens, and tissue samples, but also to a vast Historic Correspondence File documenting the origins of that collection. Having been offered a warm welcome, including keys to the room where the departmental archives were housed and a twenty-four hour pass to the museum, I was slowly making my way through the 20 or so alphabetically arranged file drawers, one file at a time. The work often proved tedious, but every now and again I would stumble on to some discovery that made the many hours seem worthwhile.

Such was the case one morning when I was slogging through the files of Frank M. Chapman, a longtime curator at the American Museum and renowned American ornithologist from the early decades of the twentieth century. Chapman was highly

regarded by his scientific colleagues not only for his pioneering research on the biogeography of South American birds but also for building the American Museum's bird collection into the world's largest, with more than 600,000 specimens by the time he retired in the 1930s. In addition to his considerable scientific accomplishment, Chapman was also widely known as a pioneering author of illustrated bird field guides, a tireless promoter of birdwatching (the annual Christmas Bird Count was his idea), and a key leader of the Audubon bird protection movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He was on my radar screen in part because I had read an account of Chapman's work in Florida that had been edited by Elizabeth Austin, the wife of prominent ornithologist of a later generation, Oliver Austin, Jr. The Austins spent the latter part of their lives in my hometown of Gainesville, Florida, and my parents had purchased and restored their Victorian home while I was attending college at the University of Florida. Aware that Chapman was an important figure in American ornithology, my interest was further piqued when I learned of his regular visits to my home state, including numerous stints in Gainesville, where his mother maintained a winter home. Austin's edited volume also made an intriguing reference to a missing field journal Chapman had kept while pursuing the then rare and now extinct Carolina parakeet near the headwaters of Florida's Sebastian River.

The only species of the parrot family endemic to the United States, the Carolina parakeet originally ranged widely across the southeastern United States. But over two hundred years of settlement had taken its toll on the brilliantly colored bird, with its vivid green, yellow, red, and orange plumage. Deforestation had destroyed much of the moist habitat—mature bottomland forests—the species needed to live and reproduce. The species also suffered relentless persecution at the hands of farmers, who feared the voracious flocks would destroy their valuable crops, and individuals who regularly captured it for the pet trade. By the late 1880s, the few surviving Carolina parakeets were largely confined to the uninhabited regions of Florida, and most experts feared that extinction was imminent.

The document that caught my eye that morning in New York was the long-missing journal of Chapman's expedition to Florida in early 1889, not long after he had left a promising career in banking to become an assistant curator at the American Museum

of Natural History. Here, pressed between two folders containing unrelated correspondence, was a manila envelope containing all but the first page of the manuscript field notes Chapman kept while pursuing the Carolina parakeet just over a century earlier. I quickly realized that this document might provide valuable insight into how and why the man who would become so closely associated with the bird protection movement had collected what he believed were some of the final living examples of this magnificent and tragic bird.

I was not disappointed, for Chapman's journal offered a fascinating (albeit troubling) account of his encounter with the Carolina parakeet. After hearing rumors that the increasingly rare species had been found near his base camp in southern Brevard County, Chapman immediately set off in chase. When he and his guide arrived near the headwaters of the Sebastian River, Chapman immediately spotted the brilliantly colored birds on the opposite bank, "my first view of *Cornurus* in the state of nature, a sight I have long desired to feast my eyes on and which in imagination I have seen many times." Over the next two days, Chapman collected no less than nine parakeet specimens. His excitement soon gave way to concern, however, as the potentially grave consequences of his actions began to dawn on him. While admiring the bodies of his cherished birds, Chapman resolved to cease pursuing the species: "I shall make no further attempt to secure others, and far be it for me to deal the final blows. Good luck to you poor doomed creatures, may you live to see many generations of your kind."

Within two days, Chapman's resolve was put to a decisive test when he located what he believed to be the last flock of parakeets in the vicinity and perhaps the final living examples of this stunning bird anywhere on earth. Despite his stated intention to refrain from further molesting the beleaguered Carolina parakeet, the overwhelming urge to possess the species again triumphed: "Good resolutions like many other things are much easier to plan than to practice. [T]he parakeets tempted me and I fell; they also fell, six more of them making our total fifteen."

Through subsequent research I discovered that Chapman's determination to amass as many specimens as possible of the parakeet was hardly unusual. During the second half of the nineteenth century, naturalists occasionally acknowledged the importance of gathering data on living birds, but for a variety of

reasons that I would explore in my dissertation and first book, the ornithological community remained preoccupied with collecting. The Carolina parakeet itself provides compelling evidence for this general orientation. More than 800 specimens of the bird continue to collect dust in collections around the world, yet scientists learned little concerning its life and behavior before the last known individual died in the Cincinnati Zoo in 1918.

How could a scientist who had done so much to promote bird protection also collect what he thought were some of the last examples of the endangered Carolina parakeet? Answering that question became one of the central themes running through my dissertation, which I subsequently revised into my first book, *A Passion for Birds: American Ornithologists after Audubon* (Princeton University Press, 1998). The discovery of Chapman's parakeet journal also gave me the push I needed to make the often-difficult transition from the researching to writing up that initial project. At the same time, Chapman's experience with the Carolina parakeet became the opening scene for the first conference paper I wrote, a paper that I delivered at the American Society for Environmental History annual meeting in 1991 and that was subsequently incorporated into two dissertation chapters. Perhaps even more importantly, it was not long after finding Chapman's journal that I began to conceptualize my second major research project, a chronologically expansive view of how naturalists had engaged with the issue of wildlife extinction from the late eighteenth century to the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Many years later that project came to fruition with *Nature's Ghosts: Confronting Extinction from the Age of Jefferson to the Age of Ecology* (University of Chicago Press, 2009), a book that has won several major awards. Indeed, I think it no exaggeration to say that Chapman's journal helped establish a research trajectory that has kept me professionally engaged for more than three decades now.

Serendipity often plays a large role in our lives. In this case, a chance encounter with a once-lost collecting journal provided inspiration for not one but two major research projects. I was first alerted to the possible existence of that journal by a book on Chapman's Florida travels that I had learned about when my parents purchased the home of its editor. Without much effort, I can think of several other examples where serendipity has loomed large in my life and career. While studying history as an undergraduate at the University of Florida, for example, a passing

remark by one of my professors, David M. Chalmers, first informed me about the existence of the history of science as a scholarly enterprise. I subsequently enrolled in several undergraduate courses in the history of science and eventually decided to pursue a graduate degree in that field. Although primarily known as a historian of biology, my primary mentor at Harvard, Everett Mendelsohn, also periodically offered a course on environmental history, which exposed me to an exciting and relatively young field of history that has had a profound effect on my work.

Serendipity also played at least a small part in the award that I am receiving today. Just as I was entering the job market late in 1991, the History Department at Virginia Tech began advertising for someone whose research and teaching expertise spanned the fields of environmental history, history of science, and American history. It almost seemed as though the position had been written for my particular background and interests. After a campus visit in which I delivered a version of the Chapman conference paper for my job talk, I was offered the position and moved to Blacksburg, Virginia with my wife and family. Virginia Tech has remained my institutional home for two decades now, and I am quite thankful for the generous support of my colleagues, department, college, and university. I am also extremely grateful to the Virginia Social Sciences Association for recognizing my work with this award.

**REFLECTIONS ON MY JOURNEY: THE BUSINESS OF  
GOVERNMENT AND ACHIEVING THE PUBLIC GOOD**  
Remarks upon Receiving the Virginia Social Science Association  
2012 Public Service Award

B. Douglas Skelley  
Professor Emeritus  
James Madison University

*Virginia Social Science Journal, 2013, Vol. 48, pages 160-161*

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**T**hank you for this recognition. I accept it, not for myself, but for the many public administrators I have known and taught who seek daily to make a better collective life for us all by bringing social science knowledge to bear on practical problems in government and the nonprofit sector.

While I made my career teaching in James Madison University's Political Science Department, my interest in the broader social sciences began as a child under the influence of my mother, a grade school teacher, who gave me a love for history, geography, and politics. No doubt as a reaction to the provincialism of my upbringing in rural South Carolina, I majored in international studies--a mix of history, international politics, geography, and economics--when I went off to college in 1961. Having grown up during the high water mark of the Cold War, I focused on Soviet area studies, a field of study that also drew from these same social sciences, for my MA. I got direct experience in the consequences of international politics as a naval officer during the Vietnam War period. The U.S. Navy exemplified the prototypical, Weberian bureaucracy, and this military experience gave me a lot to reflect on when I returned to graduate school to pursue a political science degree at the University of Georgia. Here I studied a subject area that I had not been introduced to before--public administration. Understanding the "business of government" required studying research in politics, management, economics, sociology and psychology. Ultimately I wrote a dissertation in public policy, assessing the implementation of health services distribution policy in the U.S.

The point of this account of my academic background is to demonstrate that I was a student with broad interests in the social

sciences, which evolved from an international perspective to one focused on organizations and applied social science. While I taught American government and international relations during my first few years at JMU, essentially my last 27 years of teaching largely dealt with organizational behavior, an eclectic field of study that draws on social science to understand human behavior in the work place. Much of my teaching attempted to show how this body of knowledge may be used to understand and address the management challenges of governments and nonprofits.

For much of my career I coordinated internships for students in JMU's undergraduate program in Public Policy and Administration and in our Master of Public Administration Program. Internships gave me frequent contact with public organizations and the opportunity to gain insight into the great variety of jobs encompassed by the term "public administration." Moreover, I learned to accept a comment frequently found in students' internship reports: "I learned more doing this internship than I did in all my classes." No one can teach public management, per se, because management is very situational. The wonderful thing about internships—experiential learning, if you like—is that they place our various organizational theories in a context for testing. Ultimately students must figure out how academic theories can best be used to address the contingencies of their work environments.

Working with career professionals and aspiring professionals has proved very satisfying as have my efforts at analyzing a variety of issues in public organizations. My research informed my teaching of public management at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Near the end of my career, my academic focus has come somewhat full circle. For the past five years I have taught a "management in international nongovernmental organizations" course to graduate students aspiring to bring about change in our globalizing world.

Obviously, it is a satisfaction to me to find our graduates working at all levels of government and in organizations great and small, local and international. Seeing these professionals go on to assume positions of responsibility and leadership in public organizations reassures me that the promotion of the applied social sciences is vital for good governance and achieving the public good.

Thank you again for this recognition.

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