



**Proceedings of a
Multidisciplinary Colloquium on
*Impact***

July 23, 2020

**WILLIAM A. KEYES IV, PhD
Editor**

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The Institute for Responsible Citizenship

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FOREWORD

William A. Keyes IV, PhD

In 2001, I created the Institute for Responsible Citizenship and, since 2003, we have selected talented African American male college students for an intensive two-summer experience in Washington, D.C. These scholars have come from all over the United States and have represented large state universities, small liberal arts colleges, Ivy League institutions, and historically black colleges and universities. They have also had a wide range of academic majors and career goals. Today, Institute alumni include ministers, college professors and elementary school teachers, lawyers, doctors, Wall Street analysts, accountants, consultants, engineers, and entrepreneurs. They have been named Rhodes Scholars, Fulbright Scholars, Truman Scholars, and Udall Scholars and have earned numerous other prestigious awards.

The summer of 2020 may come to be referred to as “the coronavirus summer.” With the country largely shut down in the wake of COVID-19, the Institute operated with a drastically modified format. Normally, the scholars live together on a college campus, work at high level internships in their fields of interest, complete an academic seminar, participate in personal and professional development workshops, meet privately with prominent public and private sector leaders, enjoy numerous social activities, and engage in stimulating conversation around the dinner table. Though it was not possible for us to do all of this, we did our best to provide a worthwhile experience for the scholars virtually.

The lockdown provided an opportunity that we have not been able to offer during normal times. We asked the scholars to write a research paper on a topic of interest to them. Our only specification was that they write it through a lens of *impact*. Impact is a topic we discuss often in the Institute. Our tagline is, “We prepare extraordinary men to do extraordinary things.” We never neglect to preach to the scholars that the purpose of their succeeding is the impact their work will have on others.

As you will see, the papers range from one by an aspiring sports journalist about the impact of the philanthropy of professional basketball stars to one by an aspiring lawyer on the impact of two North Carolina counties' strategies for dealing with a school desegregation lawsuit on the racial makeup in those counties' public schools. The scholars presented their papers at a virtual symposium on July 23 and several of the papers have been selected for publication in this book.

This project could not have been completed without the editorial services of Carol Allen. She was the second set of eyes that looked at all of the papers, providing valuable critique to the scholars and to me. She also managed the bibliographic details of publishing the book and worked with Matt Jenson on formatting.

Given the value of the scholars' experience of pitching, researching, and writing these papers, we may endeavor to have the research projects become a permanent part of the Institute regimen. We'll see. For now, though, enjoy what the scholars of the coronavirus summer produced.

PART I

IMPACT IN LAW, ECONOMICS & POLITICS

CHAPTER ONE

The Potential Impact of a Strict Liability Standard on Police Killings of Unarmed Citizens

Benjamin C. L. Dormus

The killing of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers on May 25, 2020 has intensified the debate over accountability in the policing of Black and Brown communities. In the spirit of that debate, this paper will explore the application of strict liability to police killings of unarmed people as a way to deter the excessive use of deadly force and encourage more prudent policing. The current standards of objective reasonableness have proven ineffective in holding law enforcement accountable for killing unarmed people or changing the practices that allow these killings to continue. A strict liability standard would hold law enforcement agencies and individual agents necessarily liable for killing unarmed people in the commission of their duties as a means of deterring these killings, denouncing these killings, and creating more accountability.

Examining *Graham* as the Problem

The case that currently governs the adjudication of police use of excessive force claims is *Graham v. Connor* (1989).¹ In 1984 a diabetic Black man named Dethorne Graham was suffering from an insulin reaction while at his home in Charlotte, NC and asked his friend Berry² to drive him to a convenience store to purchase orange juice—the consumption of which would counteract his insulin reaction. When the two arrived, Mr. Graham went into the store while Berry remained in the car. The line in the store was too long so Mr. Graham returned to the car swiftly, asking Berry to drive him instead to a friend’s house. Charlotte police officer M.S. Connor witnessed the pair’s trip to the

¹ 490 U.S. 386 (1989).

² Last name not available in the public record.

store from across the street and assumed a robbery had taken place given the swiftness of their arrival and departure. Officer Connor then followed them for half a mile before pulling them over.

Mr. Graham, still undergoing the insulin reaction, exited the car before passing out on the sidewalk. When he awoke, other officers were present. One such officer insinuated that Mr. Graham was intoxicated, to which Mr. Graham, who was handcuffed, attempted to respond by reaching for the diabetic card in his wallet. This incited a prolonged physical struggle between Mr. Graham and the officers who perceived his movements as resistive and aggressive. The altercation resulted in Mr. Graham's sustaining multiple injuries, including a broken foot. Ultimately, the officers released Mr. Graham after determining that no robbery had in fact occurred.

Mr. Graham went on to sue the officers and the City of Charlotte in federal court under 42 U.S.C. 1983 and the Fourteenth Amendment for deprivation of his rights as a result of, *inter alia*, excessive use of police force.³ The district court applied the four-part test presented in *Johnson v. Glick* (1973) to Mr. Graham's claims.⁴ The controlling question in *Glick* was whether or not an officer acted in "good faith" or acted "maliciously and sadistically," constituting an intentionalist analysis. Using this reasoning, the district court did not find that the officers acted against Mr. Graham with malintent and dismissed the suit. Mr. Graham then appealed to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals and argued that the court should eschew the substantive due process standard of *Glick* and instead decide the case under a Fourth Amendment "objective reasonableness" standard that considered how a reasonable, not just well intentioned, officer would have acted. The Fourth Circuit disagreed and upheld the lower court's decision, so Mr. Graham appealed to the United States Supreme Court.

After hearing the case in 1989, the Court ruled in favor of Mr. Graham. Chief Justice William Rehnquist, writing for a unanimous bench, argued that, because "the excessive force claim arises in the context of an arrest or investigatory stop of a free citizen, it is most properly characterized as one invoking the protections of the Fourth

³ 42 U.S.C 1983 is derived from the Civil Rights Act of 1871 and allows citizens to sue the government and its officials for civil rights violations.

⁴ 481 F.2d 1028 (2d Cir. 1973).

Amendment, which guarantees citizens the right to be secure in their persons . . . against unreasonable . . . seizures of the person.” He established that a judgement of the reasonableness of an officer’s conduct must take into account the “totality of circumstances” and balance the “nature and quality of the intrusion on the individual’s Fourth Amendment interests against the countervailing governmental interests at stake.” A judgement of reasonableness must also be from the perspective of the responding officer and not take into account knowledge acquired with “20/20 hindsight.” And finally, rendering the Court’s judgement, Rehnquist determined that a judgement of reasonableness under the Fourth Amendment is “objective” and takes into account the particularities of situation without regard to the “underlying intent or motivation” of either the officer or the citizen. In other words, “an officer’s evil intentions will not make a Fourth Amendment violation out of an objectively reasonable use of force; nor will an officer’s good intentions make an objectively unreasonable use of force constitutional.”

This new standard of reasonableness under the Fourth Amendment was hailed by many at the time to be more favorable towards plaintiffs in Section 1983 claims against police use of force. The logic was that by making the legal rules less intentionalist courts would be less inclined to give a goodwill pass to police officers. Writing a year after *Graham*, E. Bryan MacDonald theorized:

The *Graham* decision should increase the likelihood that plaintiffs seeking relief under section 1983 will prevail on their excessive force claims. The ‘objectively reasonable under the circumstances’ formulation of the standard means that a jury no longer must find that a police officer acted maliciously and sadistically for the purpose of causing harm. Rather, any force found to be objectively unreasonable under the circumstances will be unconstitutional . . . More plaintiff judgments should have a positive impact on police officer training as well as police department use of force policies and eventually lead to a reduction in the number of excessive force claims filed. (MacDonald 1990)

Similarly, writing two years after the decision, Jill I. Brown thought that *Graham* would bring “potential clarity to a confused area of

section 1983 litigation,” which had been muddled by infirm substantive due process principles à la *Glick* (Brown 1991). Yet she warned that for *Graham* to be fully effective as a clearer standard, it should not be watered down with tools from the substantive due process framework, such as significant injury and subjective intent, which some lower courts were attempting to apply at the time (Ross 2002).

There were, however, scholars who disagreed with the majority about the correctness of *Graham*. Against the seeming legal consensus that the standard needed to be strengthened to bring more redress for plaintiffs and empower prosecutors, Geoffrey P. Alpert and William C. Smith argued that the change in the law was too unfair and unrealistic from the perspective of the officers (Alpert and Smith 1994). They believed that the prior intentionalist standards under substantive due process reasoning were more adequate for capturing the psychology and nature of policing—yet even this belief was rooted in an understanding that more officer violence would be subject to legal scrutiny under *Graham*.

Thirty years after *Graham* was decided, the empirical record has demonstrated its inability to bring proper redress in excessive force cases, causing many legal observers to revisit its wisdom. The contemporary critiques of *Graham* are largely structural and have two major iterations. The first iteration, tailored closely to the scope of this paper, comes from Brandon Garrett and Seth Stoughton. They started their analysis by asking the question “what rules regulate when the police can kill?” and concluded by advocating for a “tactical” approach to Fourth Amendment use of force jurisprudence. Their study of fifty national use-of-force policies and their application under *Graham* found that both the policies and their juridical outcomes were uninformed by sensible, research driven approaches to policing tactics. They argued that unless a Fourth Amendment standard is incorporated that includes a structural critique of policing as an institution, Fourth Amendment jurisprudence will continue to be an unsatisfactory safeguard against unwarranted police violence, especially killings (Garrett and Stoughton 2017).

A second iteration of the structural critique of *Graham* is offered by Osagie K. Obasogie and Zachary Newman. Their critique is against the individualizing effect that placing the locus of protection against

police violence under the Fourth Amendment has in comparison to placing it under the Fourteenth Amendment—a revised substantive due process standard. A Fourteenth Amendment location, they contend, lends itself to a group analysis that will allow the courts to address the structural inequalities and injustices that occur, particularly against communities of color, within the institution of policing. Their research shows that the invocation of the Fourth Amendment in excessive force cases has increased substantially—while the invocation of the Fourteenth Amendment has fallen post-*Graham*. However, settlement and prosecution rates have not similarly risen. As Obsaogie noted, Mr. Graham himself was likely the first person to face this cold legal reality. When his case was remanded to the circuit court, they found that the actions of the officers were “objectively reasonable” under the new standard (Obsaogie and Newman 2018). He did not find justice under the new excessive force legal regime that his case had wrought.

These two structural critiques of the *Graham* rule offer the best evidence as to why a strict liability standard in the case of police killing of unarmed citizens is necessary, but they do not go as far as to reach that conclusion. Whereas the application of strict liability is neither adequate nor prudent to apply to all forms of excessive force claims, police killings of unarmed citizens represent a special case within the use of force continuum. Law enforcement agencies are the only non-military groups endowed with the systematic legal authority to employ deadly force. The irreversibility of death means that when a life is under consideration to be taken, that choice must be held to a stricter legal standard.

Contrary to the arguments of Garrett and Stoughton, this stricter standard is unlikely to be found in a “tactical” approach to the Fourth Amendment as long as any construction of it has to be conformed to the textual language of reasonableness. The problem with the “reasonableness” and “totality of circumstances” requirements stemming from *Graham* is that they substitute an ignorance claim for the “good faith” claim of the pure intentionalist model. The defense shifts from “I acted as such because I meant well” to “I acted as such because I did not know better,” which has proven empirically to have the same juridical outcome: less accountability for the use of excessive force. When force is deadly, ignorance is an improper means with

which to justify the taking of a life. The state ought to be held to a higher standard morally and legally.

Obasogie and Newman are correct that a framework built under the Fourteenth Amendment is the proper way forward insofar as it enables the application of strict liability in the case of police killings of unarmed citizens. The substantive due process jurisprudence in use of force cases of yesteryear rested on infirm intentionalist grounds, whereas a substantive due process construction that recognizes life as a fundamental right is a proper safeguard against unnecessary deadly force. The next section of this paper will look at the mechanics of strict liability as a legal concept, its application in other areas of the law, and its justification in the context of addressing police killings of unarmed citizens.

Examining Strict Liability as the Solution

Strict liability is defined as “[liability] for committing an action, regardless of what [someone’s] intent or mental state was when committing the action” (Cornell Law School. n.d. “Strict Liability”). Strict liability is most often applied in tort law where “legal responsibility for damages or injuries [is imposed] even if the person who was found strictly liable did not act with fault or negligence” (Justia 2018). Such applications include strict liability for the owner of an animal that harms someone or causes property damage, as well as strict product liability for the manufacturers of hazardous products. Strict liability has also been advocated for, and varyingly applied to, colliders in certain vehicular incidents. In his seminal work in the field of law and economics, *The Cost of Accidents* and in other works, Guido Calabresi argued that the application of a strict liability regime to rear-end collisions lowers the costs of such accidents and enacts a utilitarian allocation of externalities (Calabresi 2008). Theoretically, the application of strict liability in these cases amounts to higher stakes for the following driver and therefore more careful driving on their part as the individual best suited to employ defensive techniques in the avoidance of accidents.

Strict liability also has application in criminal law. In traffic law, someone who speeds is found strictly liable for exceeding the speed

limit whether or not they intended to or were aware they were doing so (Kazis 2016). In drug cases, someone is found liable for possession regardless of whether or not they knew they had narcotics in their possession. Strict liability is also applied to felony murder and statutory rape. Felony murder is when one is held liable for homicide that occurred during the commission of another felony (Binder 2011). Statutory rape occurs when an adult has sex with a minor, even if the minor “consented” to the act (Cornell Law School. n.d. “Statutory Rape”). In many states, individuals are held strictly liable for statutory rape even if they had every reason to believe that the individual with whom they had sex was of the age of consent.

The application of strict liability in these cases tracks the following logic: the prospect of being held strictly liable for an action incents someone in a position of relative power to exercise that power cautiously to avoid the commission of a crime. In speeding and drug possession cases, the power is self-referential in that the onus is on the individual to ensure that the car they are operating does not exceed the speed limit or that their body and property do not contain narcotics. In felony murder and statutory rape cases, the power is other-referential. When someone asserts power in the commission of a crime, the onus is on them to ensure that they do not use force to violate the lives of others they do not intend to harm. And when an adult wants to have sexual intercourse with another person, the onus is on them to ensure that the possibility of having sex with a minor—who is legally non-consenting and psychologically impressionable—is not present. This logic encompasses a deterrent theory vis-à-vis levels of perceived relative power.

Deterrence is the primary justification for applying strict liability to police killings of unarmed citizens. On the theoretical level of power, law enforcement officers are the command theory of law personified and it is their obligation to value the sanctity and inviolability of human life and only exert deadly force when there is a near certain threat to other life (Hart et al. 2012). On a practical level of power, officers have more tactical training than the average citizen. The latest data indicates that the average law enforcement officer completes 840 hours of academy training, including 168 hours spent in firearms, self-defense, and use of force training; 40 hours in community policing training;

13 hours in domestic violence training; and ten hours in mental health training. (Reeves 2016). Moreover, 90 percent of academies train in stress-inducing environments to mimic the rigors of the job at its worst. Important debates about the normative length and nature of different trainings are necessary, but the fact that law enforcement is, even at its minimum, overwhelmingly more trained than the citizenry they police remains true. Law enforcement ought to be held to a higher standard that reflects this lengthy preparation. Making law enforcement officers and their agencies strictly liable for killing unarmed citizens will deter them from taking liberties during the performance of their duties and require them to enhance their training and practices. Officers are not ignorant of *Graham* and its complementary rules; they undergo an average of 86 hours of legal training. Stricter standards for use of deadly force will deter laxity and encourage prudence in policing practices.

If legislatures vote to enact strict liability and the courts construct a favorable legal framework under the Fourteenth Amendment to do so, there will be an unequivocal public rebuke of police killings of unarmed citizens as a “reasonable” practice. The state has no right to kill someone who poses no strong threat to the lives of others, and the democratic moral sentiment ought to reflect that understanding. A stern denunciation of police killings of unarmed citizens through the law will communicate to the citizenry that state executions of that kind are unjustifiable, which could further change public opinion on how these cases should be viewed. Denunciation can also have the positive material effect of changing individual and institutional behavior in light of mass social and political disapproval.

Applying strict liability to police killings of unarmed citizens may also restore community faith in state institutions, namely the courts, legislatures, and law enforcement agencies. As Lysander Spooner argues in *No Treason*, calling the formation of the relationship between government and its citizens a “contract” is illegitimate insofar as it is not fundamentally based on a voluntary agreement (Spooner 1867). However, the relationship between government and its citizens often materially acts as a contract, wherein government and citizens expect benevolent reciprocity from each other founded in fundamental social norms. Citizens, in return for their taxes and civic participation,

want a government that respects human life, provides equal protection of the laws, and enacts justice against its agents when they do not adhere to these expectations. Redress and prosecution rates for excessive force claims are unacceptably low, and applying strict liability to police killings of unarmed citizens is a way in which courts and legislatures can demonstrate that they understand the injustice of this fact. State violence is inherently systematic and its tendency has been to disproportionately impact communities of color—particularly the Black community and particularly Black men. If courts and legislatures recognize their obligation to ameliorate this reality, law enforcement agencies and their agents will have to change their behaviors or face more stringent repercussions. This process will strengthen the efficacy and increase the benevolence of government and reassure the citizenry that it is sufficiently protected from unnecessary violence and entitled to recourse when it does occur. In the end, faith in the operative and corrective mechanisms of public institutions will have been restored.

Objections and Limitations

Finding law enforcement strictly liable for the deaths of unarmed citizens that occurred during the commission of police duties is controversial and not without objections. First and foremost, the concept of strict liability itself as applied to criminal law is deeply contested. Scholars such as W. Robert Thomas (2012), Larry Alexander (2018) and Michael S. Moore (2018) all argue that strict liability removes the connection between guilt and culpability and moral blameworthiness. In their eyes, a criminal law system that maintains this connection is retributive and just. The works of scholars such as Kenneth W. Simons (1997) and co-authors John C.P. Goldberg and Benjamin C. Zipursky (2018) seek to complicate this retributive understanding, however. They argue that strict liability is not merely cold and utilitarian in its allocation of blame for wrongdoing in the absence of any harm or wrongdoing, rather it applies guilt without regard for intent where there is in fact harm and a wrongdoing. Applying a strict liability standard to unarmed killings establishes that behavior as an unequivocal wrong, but it does not preclude courts from

taking the intent of the officer into account during sentencing after guilt has been assigned. It is not enough for an ignorance or “good faith” plea to make such an act right or wrong, reasonable or unreasonable. Rather, it ought to be predetermined because of law enforcement’s unequal power and resources over the people they police.

Another objection to strict liability, similar to that of Alpert and Smith at the time of the *Graham* decision, is that this stricter standard will make policing harder and remove complex human elements from the analysis of police conduct. This new reality may make police officers less inclined to police in the first place, for fear of harsh repercussions, leaving communities less safe and officers more at risk. The first response to this objection is that the proposed narrow application of strict liability to unarmed killings leaves room for the important complexities that exist within policing. The second response to this objection is that raising the standard will not necessarily result in less policing, but it will result in more prudent policing. If prudent policing does in fact lead to less policing overall, then it will not have been because law enforcement officers are more scared to do their job, rather it will be because they are doing it with more discernment and with greater care.

Beyond these objections, there are also important limitations to strict liability as a solution in excessive force claims. Excessive force claims cover a range of violent police activities that the current objective reasonableness standards leave inadequately scrutinized. The application of strict liability is narrowly tailored to use of excessive deadly force where the person is unarmed, and therefore does not address the myriad other ways police use excessive force. This is because of the irreversible and stark nature of the choice to kill someone. Either an officer killed an unarmed person or they did not; there is not the same gradation in activity that might exist in the use of non-lethal physical tactics to engage a person. Even the definition of “unarmed” is contested and beyond the scope of this paper to explore extensively, but it is conceivable to define it as what it means to wield or attempt to wield a firearm, blade, or blunt force object within one’s possession and how the opposite of that would constitute the status of “unarmed.” Another blind spot, even within this narrow focus on unarmed citizens, is revealed in cases similar to that of Philando Castile

where he informed the officer that he had a gun in the car, did not reach for it, but was still shot and killed (Chappell 2016). Are he and others like him to be considered unarmed? This is a genuine blind spot that requires more careful consideration. But this consideration can only occur if strict liability is first offered as a viable alternative to the status quo.

Conclusion

The objective reasonableness standards that arise out of *Graham* have removed some of the incentives for prudent policing and have made it nearly impossible to obtain redress or prosecution in cases of police killings of unarmed citizens. A shift towards strict liability standards in these cases would properly recognize the outsized power and impact that law enforcement has on the communities they police and usher in greater accountability and justice in policing. Though this paper has covered substantial ground, there are still further important topics to be explored, criticized, and rethought as evidenced by the section on objections and limitations. These include, but are not limited to, a discussion of qualified immunity and the part of the force continuum that is non-lethal. May the conversation continue.

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CHAPTER TWO

The Potential Impact on Black Entrepreneurship of Diversifying the Venture Capital Industry

Clarence N. Jenkins III

Entrepreneurs propel innovation that increases the quality of products and services people use. In turn, this innovation better prepares the world to resolve complex issues. Additionally, entrepreneurs are a catalyst for economic growth as successful companies create more jobs and enhance market competition. The process of converting an idea into a global company requires an access to capital that allows a startup to scale. The roots of some of the most successful technology companies, such as Microsoft, Apple, Facebook, and Google, were cultivated using venture capital funding during their early stages. According to Illya Strebulaev and Will Gornall of Stanford Business School, as of 2015, 20 percent of Fortune 500 companies had received venture capital funding (Strebulaev and Gornall 2015). The impact of venture capital on American innovation and economic growth is evident, yet venture capitalists have not used their funding to benefit minority entrepreneurs and founders. The need to increase the diversity within venture capital stems from the cost of neglecting diverse entrepreneurs and, consequently, diverse, untapped market segments. This paper will explore the financial impact that could result from diversifying venture capital and will examine the potential role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in making this happen.

Defining the Problem

First, an analysis of the venture capital industry must be conducted to verify that a diversity issue actually exists. Deloitte's study on diversity and inclusion within the venture capital industry surveyed data from over 200 venture capital firms which employed

more than 2,700 employees (Deloitte n.d.). Their survey found that only four percent of firm employees were African American; three percent of all investment professionals were African American; and three percent of investment partners were African American despite making up 13.4 percent of the country's population (Deloitte n.d.). Although women comprise 45 percent of the venture capital workforce, only 11 percent of investment partners at venture capital firms are women (West, Sundaramurthy, and Nichols 2020). With regard to the specific positions that African Americans hold within venture capital firms, two percent are investment professionals; three percent are in finance roles; three percent are in investor relations, communications or marketing roles; four percent are in administrative roles; and five percent are in operations (West 2020). Research confirms that there is an issue in the number of minority venture capitalists at venture capital firms. Although firms lack minorities, minority entrepreneurs are not absent in the startup industry. According to the Founder Institute, the number of African American entrepreneurs increased by 37 percent from 2007 to 2012, and African American women are the fastest growing population of entrepreneurs in the country as seen by their 164 percent increase from 2007 to 2018 (Founder Institute 2020). Therefore, a lack of minority founders is not the reason why venture capitalists are not funding minority startups.

The lack of diversity within the venture capital industry contributes to funding disparities that directly affect minority entrepreneurs. A Kauffman Fellows study found that 79.2 percent of startup executives are White, 2.6 percent are Latinx, and 2.1 percent are African American. Compared to the percentage of African Americans in the working age population, African Americans are more than 80 percent underrepresented as executives at startups. White Americans are overrepresented in executive positions at startups compared to their working age population percentage by 25 percent and Asian Americans by 160 percent. Only 105 companies with African American or Latinx founders raised at least one million dollars from 2000 to 2018, and a mere one percent of venture capital funding went to African American startups in 2015 (Harlem Capital Partners 2019). Of the \$85 billion in venture funding in 2017, women received 2.2 percent (Zipkin 2018).

By comparison, from 2009 to 2018, African American women raised only .0006 percent of the total \$424.7 billion raised (Zipkin 2018).

Benefits of Diversifying

Diversity correlates with increased financial returns (Hunt 2015). According to a McKinsey & Company study, “companies in the top quartile for racial and ethnic diversity are 35 percent more likely to have financial returns above their respective national industry medians” (Hunt 2015). Furthermore, companies in the bottom quartile with regard to race are “statistically less likely to achieve above-average financial returns” (Hunt 2015). Similar to the findings in the McKinsey & Company report, Paul Gompers and Silpa Kovvali of Harvard Business School found that “diversity significantly improves financial performance on measures such as profitable investments at the individual portfolio company level and overall fund returns” (Gompers 2018). Workforces made up of homogenous ethnicities result in a 26.4 percent decrease in an investment’s comparative success rate (Gompers 2018). Ethnically diverse partners outperform homogenous counterparts in mentoring, grooming, and strategizing the future of the startup (Gompers 2018). Morgan Stanley’s 2019 report on the venture capital funding gap suggested that neglecting African American entrepreneurs has cost venture capitalists \$4.4 trillion (Morgan Stanley 2019). According to the US Department of Labor Statistics and the US Census Bureau’s 2012 survey of Business Owners, women- and minority-owned businesses accounted for \$2.4 trillion at that time. The report “put[s] the cost of unequal access to capital into context” by making the “revenues for women and multicultural entrepreneurs proportional to their representation in the U.S. labor force.” After calculating minority and women businesses’ revenues in proportion to their 56 percent representation in the labor force, this study found that these businesses’ “gross receipts would have increased to \$6.8 trillion” (Morgan Stanley 2019).

Data from the most recent US census projects that the country will become minority White by 2045 and that White Americans will account for only 36 percent of Americans under 18 years old by 2060 (Founders Institute 2020). Current minorities will become the “primary

demographic engine of the nation's future growth" (Founder Institute 2020). The projected trend is based on racial minorities collectively growing by 74 percent between 2018 and 2060 and the aging White population experiencing an extensive decline in population after 2024 as a result of more deaths than births (Founder Institute 2020). A Deloitte study on the changes in consumer habits and behaviors found that the nation's consumers have become more heterogeneous as "millennials are the most diverse generational cohort in U.S. history, with roughly 44 percent consisting of ethnic and racial minorities" (Deloitte 2019). Furthermore, Generation Z consumers will become increasingly diverse along racial and ethnic lines. The desires and demands of a more diverse consumer base will require innovative products that align with changes in consumer preferences. Venture capitalists should embrace the inescapable fact that more entrepreneurs will become people of color over time.

The Kauffman Fellows study that was mentioned previously also magnified the higher returns of ethnically diverse startups (West 2020). According to the study, "diverse founding teams have higher returns when cash is returned to investors" (West 2020). These teams earn a 3.26x median realized multiple on IPOs and acquisitions while White founding teams earn a 2.50x realized multiple (West 2020). In other words, investors increase their return on investment by 30 percent when investing in diverse founding teams compared to all-White founding teams when these startups go public or are acquired.

Before proposing ways in which the growing number of minority venture capitalists can implement solutions to the problems outlined in this paper, it is necessary to validate the presumption that simply adding more minority venture capitalists will increase the amount of funds allocated to minority startups. A survey of over 200 venture capital firms and diverse entrepreneurs showed a positive correlation between the amount of diversity within a venture capital firm and the diversity within its investment portfolio (Morgan Stanley 2019). Two thirds of the entrepreneurs surveyed confirmed that they experienced more success with more diverse venture capital firms (Morgan Stanley 2019). Not only are venture capitalists more inclined to work alongside people who look like themselves, but they also are more prone to partner with people who share their educational background or a former

employer (Gompers 2018). Identifying as the same race as another person increases one's propensity to work collaboratively with that person by 39.2 percent (Gompers 2018). Similarly, sharing a degree from the same institution increases the chances of people working together effectively by 34.4 percent (Gompers 2018). The propensity for people to partner and work alongside people of the same race and background as them supports the positive correlation between the number Black venture capitalists and the increase in funding distributed to minority entrepreneurs.

The Path toward Solutions

Ultimately, funding gaps along racial lines will remain unless venture capital firms intensify their inclusion of minorities. Therefore, it would behoove any venture capital firm to adopt the financially intelligent practice of diversifying its firm. Intuitively, firms should recruit and hire potential African American venture capitalists in places where young African Americans are highly concentrated. The best place to start to recruit and hire ambitious and capable African American talent is at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), whose graduates constitute 80 percent of African American judges, 50 percent of African American lawyers and doctors, and 25 percent of African Americans with STEM degrees (Harris 2019).

A Crunchbase report based on over 4,500 investors highlighted that twelve schools produced 42 percent of venture capitalists, and that 75 percent of them earned an advanced degree of which 51 percent were MBAs (Hess 2018). Prioritizing Ivy League and elite institutions will hinder venture capital firms' ability to engage with the promising talent at HBCUs. After compiling a list of 59 HBCU graduates who work or have recently worked in venture capital, Hadiyah Mujhid, founder of HBCUvc, discovered that Morehouse College has produced 39 percent of HBCU alumni in venture capital. Howard University has produced the most HBCU graduate African American women in venture capital, at 38 percent (Mujhid 2019). Harlem Capital's report on African American and Latinx venture capitalists presented the top 25 undergraduate institutions that have generated the most African American venture capitalists. Only four HBCUs, Morehouse College,

Howard University, Hampton University, and Florida A&M University, appeared on the list and together account for 20 venture capitalists. For perspective, UC Berkeley alone has eleven African American graduates in venture capital (Harlem Capital 2019). Seemingly, there is too much focus on institutions that graduate few African Americans and insufficient attention given to institutions where the overwhelming majority of students are African American.

Companies and firms within other industries have turned to HBCUs to diversify their workforce. In 2018, the Information Technology Industry Council launched the first Historically Black Colleges and Universities Caucus' Diversity in Tech Summit at North Carolina A&T State University, which "focused on improving diversity in the tech workforce" (Information Technology Industry Council 2018). HBCU students were able to engage with recruiters and executives from leading technology companies, such as Microsoft, eBay, HP, Nielsen, and Stubhub (Information Technology Industry Council 2018). Many companies have created more comprehensive recruitment strategies with HBCUs. After Google engineers revitalized a computer science course at Howard University, Google established the Google In Residence Program, a partnership with HBCU computer science departments where Google professionals spend time on campus teaching computer science classes (Simon 2016). Within two years of its launching, the Google In Residence Program expanded to seven HBCUs and resulted in 30 HBCU interns (Simon 2016).

While it may be uncommon for venture capital firms to hire college students without any prior job experience, firms can still play a critical role in placing HBCU students in startup ecosystem networks that will better prepare them for careers in venture capital. Unusual Ventures offers an Unusual Interns program that "is designed to increase the number of black students working in technical internships by connecting students from HBCUs with high growth Silicon Valley startups" (Umoh 2019). The program selects ten computer science students from an array of HBCUs, and these students are then placed as interns with tech companies with the possibility of full time employment afterwards. In addition, interns have access to a six-week course with Lambda School, a computer science academy (Umoh 2019). Other venture capital firms can follow the blueprint of Unusual

Ventures in order to expand their reach to African American students and facilitate the flow of industry knowledge from Silicon Valley to HBCUs. In addition to accessing HBCUs, venture capital firms interested in diversifying their industry should connect with programs and organizations that are geared towards African Americans. Within venture capital, HBCUvc serves as an incubator for HBCU students interested in venture capital and technology entrepreneurship (HBCUvc 2018). Venture capital firms should absolutely form relationships with the participants in programs like HBCUvc, whose core mission is to “[increase] the racial and ethnic diversity in venture capital” (HBCUvc 2018). Presumably, the HBCU students involved with HBCUvc will have relationships with other students at their institutions whom venture capital firms should want to meet. Even organizations outside of the venture capital industry that are HBCU student hubs, such as the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) and the United Negro College Fund (UNCF), should be on the radar of firms that want young African American talent. In 2018, the Boeing Company reported a “\$6 million investment in the future technical workforce through a partnership with the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, the nation’s largest organization exclusively representing the black college community” (Thurgood Marshall College Fund 2018). According to Michael Ford, Boeing vice president of Global Diversity and Inclusion, the partnership will “inspire and enable HBCU students to pursue careers in the aerospace industry” (Thurgood Marshall College Fund 2018). The former CEO of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., explained that companies that fund the TMCf should “consider it an investment instead of charity” as the fund “can help employers create a pipeline of qualified HBCU candidates” (Kasperkevic 2017).

Similar to the Thurgood Marshall Fund, the United Negro College Fund has utilized its talent pool of HBCU students to attract companies. The UNCF has shown the impact of HBCUs on diversifying STEM fields. According to the UNCF, 25 percent of African Americans with STEM degrees graduated from HBCUs and approximately 30 percent of African American graduates with science and engineering doctorates graduated from HBCUs (United Negro College Fund 2018). The UNCF started the HBCU Innovation,

Commercialization, and Entrepreneurship Initiative (HBCU I.C.E.) in 2012 in order to help the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy's Tech Inclusion Initiative. In 2018, the sixth annual HBCU Innovation Summit occurred in Silicon Valley where "150 fellows and more than 20 faculty members representing more than 40 HBCUs" participated (United Negro College Fund 2018). Students interacted with 14 Silicon Valley tech companies, faculty engaged in workshops surrounding computer science and engineering, and administrators deliberated on how HBCUs can improve "innovation, commercialization, and tech entrepreneurship on their respective campuses" (United Negro College Fund 2018). As a result of the HBCU Innovation Summit, more than a third of the 2015 and 2016 participating fellows received full-time offers or internships with the sponsoring companies of the conference (United Negro College Fund 2018). The UNCF's and TMCf's consolidation of HBCU talent simplifies the search for companies and firms to find innovative interns and job candidates. Firms should form mutually beneficial relationships with these organizations to diversify and find valuable workers.

The financial losses of ignoring a whole demographic of entrepreneurs will not be fixed by simply attracting more African American professionals to the venture capital industry. However, research suggests that firms and industries that proactively hire diverse people will reap rewards by connecting with varied perspectives. As the industry that oftentimes selects what the future innovation will be and who will champion it, venture capital is uniquely situated to shift the economic allocation of the future into the hands of diverse people, who can then create more jobs and wealth opportunities for the growing minority demographics in the nation. In an industry of uncertainty, filled with inherent risk, diverse perspectives are necessary to maneuver a multicultural and multifaceted world. The venture capitalists of today will be ill-equipped to maximize their investments without having more representation of what the future will resemble working alongside them. The impact of diversifying venture capital will allow venture capital firms to withstand the future and optimize American innovation.

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CHAPTER THREE

The United Kingdom or a Divided Kingdom? How Class Divisions Impacted the Brexit Vote

Xavier Bradley Sims

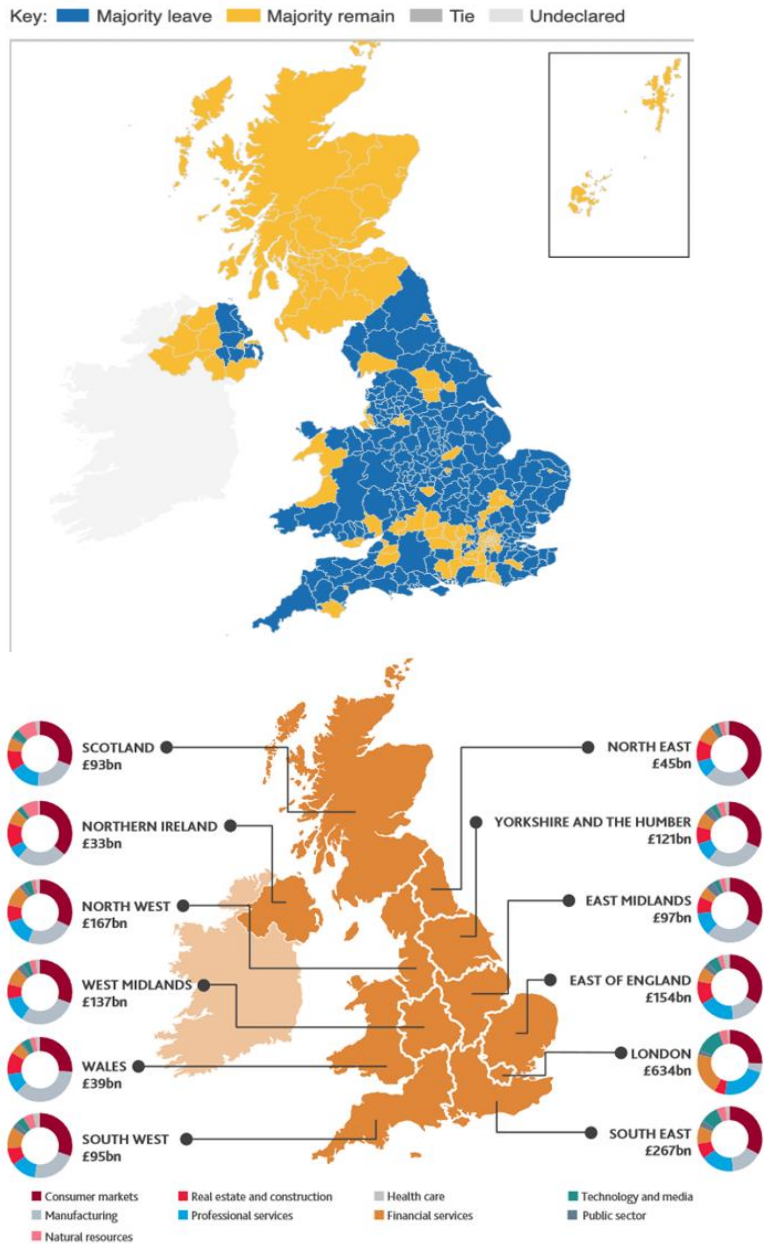
In 1999 at the Labour Party Conference in Bournemouth, a seaside town on the English Channel, Tony Blair, the recently elected Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, boldly declared that the “class war is over” (Blair 1999); seventeen years later, his country would vote to leave the European Union (BCP Council 2019). The 2016 Brexit vote, divided largely along class lines, not only negated Blair’s optimism but also served to expose, in spectacular fashion, Great Britain’s class divisions. The Vote Leave campaign politicked on the populist tenets of “taking back control” based on economic and legal sovereignty, restricting immigration, and adding jobs through new trade deals with “key allies” (The Vote Leave Board, n.d.). Such anti-globalist arguments resonated with older voters, low income voters, and unemployed voters who viewed the European Union as a twofold threat: the chief threat being that the EU functioned as the political tool of the elite to maintain power and secondly, but just as resonant, the EU facilitated unchecked immigration of workers who would compete for low paying jobs, further imperiling the already endangered poor Briton. Although joining the European Economic Community and, subsequently, the European Union has largely had positive economic and trade implications for the United Kingdom, the referendum ultimately illuminated the uneven benefits of such a relationship. The rich got richer, while the poor either stagnated or got poorer. As such, class, not industry, was *the* deciding factor in Brexit. Thus, using Brexit as a method of examining the merits of a sector- or class-based lens to analyze the changing landscape of international trade, I posit in the subsequent paragraphs that class, as it often incorporates sector differences, can more accurately describe the political and economic

implications of introducing new issues to the international trade landscape.

Theoretical Background

Ronald Rogowski in *Commerce and Coalitions: How Trade Affects Domestic Political Alignments* argues that in an advanced economy with a high land-labor ratio, a class cleavage will persist in society as “capitalists, capital-intensive industries, and agriculture will all benefit from, and will endorse, free trade; labor being scarce, worker and labor-intensive industries will resist, normally embracing protection and (if need be) imperialism” (Rogowski 1990). If one were to superimpose the aforementioned theory upon the Brexit debate, one would suppose that capitalists (purported as the “Cosmopolitan Elite of London” during the Brexit campaign) (Calhoun 2016) and farmers would be in favor of free trade with the European continent, comprising the “Remain” vote. Conversely, Rogowski’s theory would suppose that blue-collar workers in labor intensive industries such as manufacturing would be in favor of protectionism, comprising the “Leave” vote. Figure 1 illustrates this correlation by placing the referendum electoral map on top and Britain’s sector breakdown on the bottom. What is immediately clear upon an initial visual analysis, is that every region with a substantial reliance upon manufacturing, except for Scotland and Northern Ireland who receive generous benefits from the European Union (Yglesias 2016; Scottish National Party n.d.), voted to leave the European Union. This visual analysis is supported by statistical research showing that education and “dependence on manufacturing employment as well as low income and high unemployment” were “key drivers of the Vote Leave” share of Brexit voters (Becker, Thiemo, and Novy 2017).

Figure 1
Constituency Level EU Referendum Voting vs.
Sector Makeup United Kingdom



(BDO United Kingdom 2019; BBC n.d.)

Rogowski furthers his argument, illustrated in Table 1, positing that

In an advanced economy where both land and labor are scarce, expanding trade will benefit only capital. Agriculture and labor—"Green" and "Red"—can be expected to unite. Only capitalists will unreservedly embrace free trade; to the extent that such policies are objectively possible, farmers and workers will support protection and, if need be imperialism. Either a 'progressive' capitalist dictatorship, pursuing trade and development, or an economically retrograde but more participatory regime may ensue. When trade contracts in such a case, the scarce factors of land and labor gain economically at capital expense; and the alliance of Red and Green, likely demanding expanded mass participation in politics and a radical curtailment of capitalist power, grows markedly more assertive. (Rogowski 1990)

Table 1

Rogowski's Predicted Effects on Economies That Are Rich, or Poor, in Both Land and Labor

	Land and Labor Both Abundant	Land and Labor Both Scarce
Economy Advanced	Ø	<i>Expanding Trade:</i> Capital assertive, free-trading; Land Labor protectionist, defensive <i>Declining Trade:</i> Land and Labor assertive; Capital "internationalist," defensive
Economy Backward	<i>Expanding Trade:</i> Land and Labor free-trading, assertive; Capital defensive, protectionist <i>Declining Trade:</i> Capital assertive; Land Labor "internationalist," defensive	Ø

(Rogowski 1990)

Rogowski's assertion that laborers and farmers will likely demand greater political participation and "radical curtailment of capitalist power" largely echoes the underlying sentiments behind Brexit. Craig Calhoun, President of the Berggruen Institute, argues that "Brexit was a vote against London, globalization and multiculturalism as much as a vote against Europe." In his article entitled *Brexit Is a Mutiny Against the Cosmopolitan Elite*, he notes that London "voted overwhelmingly to remain in the European Union" while the "rest of England did not." He goes on to describe London as "the world's single most important center of global finance . . . [and] it dominates the United Kingdom's economic growth" (Calhoun 2016). Calhoun, echoing Rogowski's argument that workers in a class conflict would embrace "protection and [imperialism]," argues that "the [Leave] vote was grounded in nostalgia . . . it played on an old idea of sovereignty, old English ideas about the difference between the island nation and the mainland of Europe, [and] alarm over immigrants," ideas that have long been espoused by Britain's long imperial legacy (Calhoun 2016). Britain, in transitioning out of the European Union and its markets, has effectively transitioned away from a "'progressive' capitalist dictatorship, pursuing trade and development" to an "economically retrograde but more participatory regime," as argued by Rogowski.

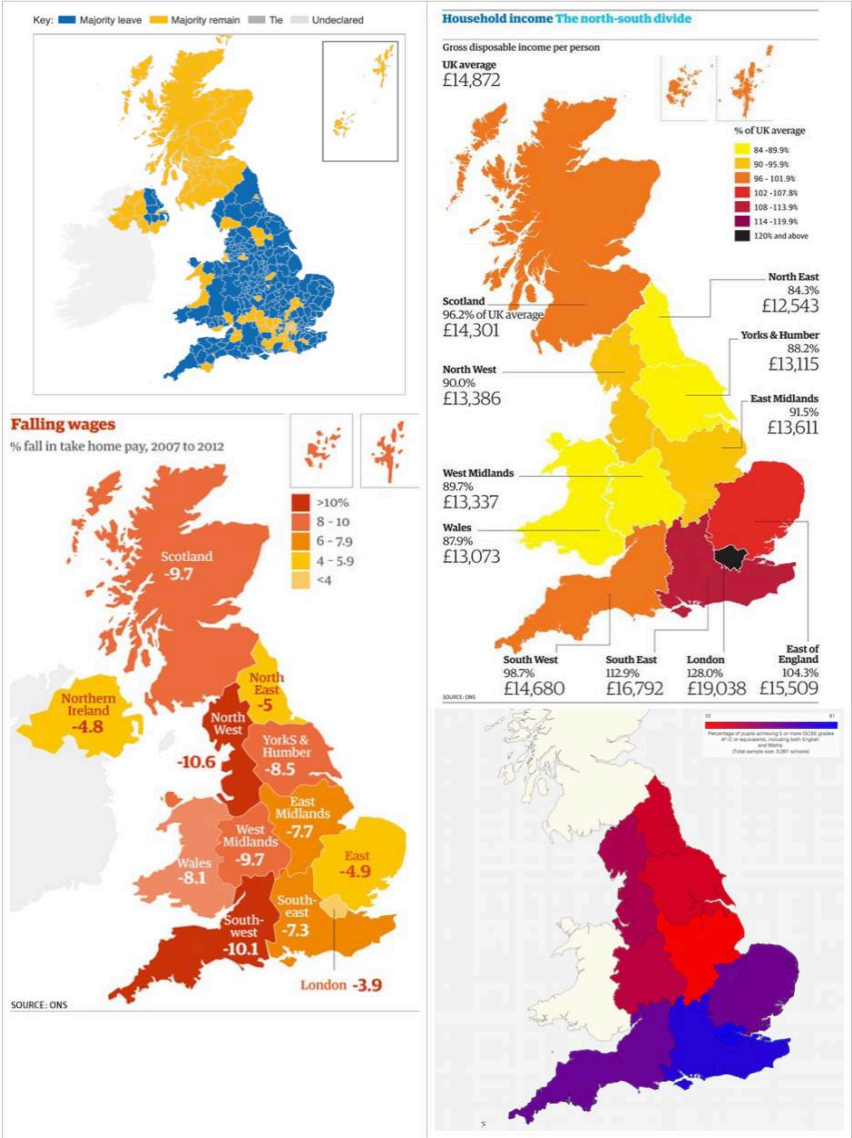
Class, Social Mobility, and Brexit

While a critic of the class-based argument of Brexit may argue that the above information points to a distinctly sector-based discrepancy—the high levels of manufacturing jobs in the "Leave" Midlands and North compared to the high levels of service jobs in the "Remain" South—one has to consider the cyclical relationship between income, education attainment, and sector employment; low initial family income tends to translate to lower education attainment which in turns translates to low future income (Cooper and Stewart 2013). If low education attainment, a symptom of low income, is synonymous with low skills (Levin and Santos n.d.), it stands to reason that poor and less educated citizens will be forced into low-skill jobs in labor intensive sectors. As such, a sector analysis has inherent class overtones. Wealthier citizens will enter high-paying service jobs while poorer

citizens will enter low-paying labor intensive jobs. This relationship of initial income to future income can help explain the increasing wealth inequality phenomenon pervasive globally; the wealthy get wealthier while the impoverished citizens' income either stagnates or decreases. Such inherent inequality present in British society was seized upon by Vote Leave and their "anti-establishment" message resonated deeply with the poor and "left behind."

In order to support the theory posited above, Figure 2 illustrates the correlation between income, change in wages, quality of education, and Brexit voting patterns. What becomes clear upon visual analysis, is that the regions with high levels of falling wages for the most part correlate with the poorest regions in terms of household income. Unsurprisingly, these disadvantaged regions also correlate with regions with low quality of education—measured as the percentage of students earning five or more on the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams. Taking these visual correlations between quality of education, household income, and falling wages and comparing them to the Brexit electoral map, the similarities are striking. The regions with the lowest values (or highest in the case of falling wages) in all categories corresponded to those regions that voted to Leave in the referendum, suggesting that the Brexit vote indeed fell along class lines.

Figure 2
Region Level % Fall in Wage Data vs. Household Income vs. Education Attainment (GSCE Levels) vs. Constituency Level Voting in EU Referendum



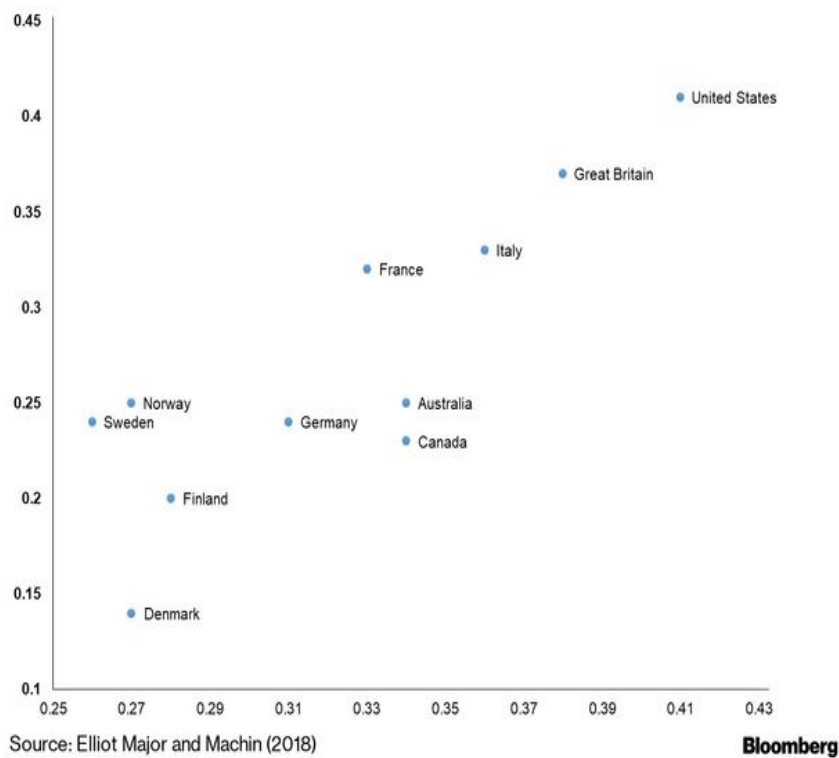
(Allen 2013; Rogers 2010; Hannay 2015; BBC n.d.)

Benjamin Disraeli, a former UK prime minister (1874-1880) and founder of “one-nation conservatism,” in his 1845 novel, *Sybil; or, The Two Nations*, portrays the United Kingdom as

Two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other’s habits, thoughts, and feelings, as if they were dwellers in different zones, or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws . . . The rich and the poor. (Disraeli 1845)

Shockingly, Disraeli’s observations seem to hold true today. In a report published in 2019 by the House of Commons, researchers note that “In 2017/18, 42% of all disposable household income in the UK went to the 20% of people with the highest household incomes, while 7% went to the lowest-income 20%” (Harari and McGuinness 2019). Furthermore, the report states that “OECD figures suggest that the UK has among the highest levels of income inequality in the European Union” (Harari and McGuinness 2019). In a paper entitled *Social Mobility and Brexit: A Closer Look at England’s ‘Left Behind’ Communities*, researchers using multivariate regression tools concluded that in “areas that voted to remain in the EU: 1) the median salary is generally higher (the only region where this is not the case is the North East where only Newcastle voted to remain); 2) the ratio of average house price to salary is higher; 3) the share of professionals and managers is higher; 4) the share of people earning less than the living wage is lower” (Sensier and Devine 2017). These findings corroborated research by the Centre for Economic Performance at the London School of Economics that found a “very strong spatial correlation between low social mobility and voting to leave the European Union” (Tanzi 2019). Figure 3 depicts relative social mobility trends globally; what is shocking is the four outliers (the United States, Great Britain, Italy, France) that exhibit decreasing social mobility and increasing wealth inequality have all experienced a surge in radical populism in recent years: Donald Trump in the United States, the rise of Matteo Salvini in Italy, Marine Le Pen in France, and Brexit in the United Kingdom.

Figure 3
Intergenerational Social Mobility Plotted Against GINI Coefficient



(Tanzi 2019)

Preying on social mobility, or lack thereof, is the single most useful tool in the populist arsenal as it feeds strong feelings of being left behind. Seizing upon these sentiments, Brexiteers and Eurosceptics have painted the European Union as the bogeyman who has institutionalized globalization, and thus has seemingly solidified the wealth inequality described above. As such, Vote Leave, I would argue, became a symbol of working class solidarity against the seeming tyranny of the elitist metropolitan class, thus setting up a Poor vs. Rich dynamic not unlike the two nations Disraeli observed 171 years prior (Calhoun 2016).

Opposing Viewpoints

Michael Hiscox in *Commerce, Coalitions, and Factor Mobility* argues, albeit within an American context, that “Class distinctions between voters are more economically and politically salient when interindustry mobility is high; when mobility is low, industry distinctions become more critical and tend to split apart broader political coalitions” (Hiscox 2020). However, one must challenge Hiscox’s assumption, particularly with regard to labor factor mobility. As the research discussed earlier argues, skill transferability, a key component in the mobility of labor (can a cheese worker suddenly succeed at being a chemist?), is inherently tied to education. The more educated a laborer is, the more transferable his skills are, as evidenced by the necessity for extensive skill-training programs in low-income and low-educated areas to assist with navigating an ever changing economic landscape (Mitchell 2017). However, as argued above, if educational attainment is impeded by low income, skill transferability and labor factor mobility are intrinsically related to class structure.

Hiscox is not entirely incorrect. Research has suggested that “workers in the manufacturing, construction and retail industries are significantly more likely to support Leave,” thus suggesting an industry-based cleavage (Alabrese et al. 2019). However, what is the role of class in the initial formation of said industry? Construction and manufacturing are labor intensive, usually low-skilled, blue-collar jobs; thus if we accept the notion that low income = low education = low skills then it stands to reason that more impoverished citizens will make up these specific industries. More succinctly, what is the probability that a child of middle or upper income parents will end up working a low-wage, labor intensive job? Furthermore, the same study that found differences in sector voting, found that “workers in manufacturing, construction and retail sectors have lower educational attainment on average while the opposite is true for workers in the financial sector,” thus supporting the idea that industry make up is tied to education (Alabrese 2019). The above quote is especially poignant with respect to Figure 2; London had the lowest percentage in falling wages, the highest national income levels, the highest GSCE levels, and voted overwhelming to Remain. Additionally, London is not reliant on manufacturing and blue-collar jobs as a percentage of its economy

(Figure 1). Conversely, the Midlands and the regions surrounding it, have an enormous dependency upon manufacturing—and thus also suffer from high falling wages, low household income, and low education attainment—and citizens there overwhelmingly voted to leave the European Union. Thus, while the European Union referendum vote did fall along sector and industry lines, it was also largely underpinned by underlying class differences: Blue-Collar and a Poorer North vs. White-Collar and a Wealthier South.

As such, I would argue that class distinctions within the context of Brexit, due to the associated implications of education attainment, social mobility and income, are *more* critical when factors of production are both mobile and immobile than that of industry distinction, thus refuting Hiscox's claim.

Conclusion

There is no denying that globalization and neoliberalism have had unprecedented benefits for societies around the world. However, one would be remiss not to investigate the associated inequality of such a system, given that said inequality is rapidly reshaping our political and economic landscape as populism is on the rise globally. In order to avoid the mistakes of past centuries, most pointedly the horrors of the 20th century, we must rigorously investigate the pitfalls of our current system such that reform can blossom. Class can function as the most effective mechanism for such an investigation, as it exposes vast inequalities in employment, health care access, education attainment, and other social indicators.

If one were to investigate only the changes in political and economic landscapes in relation to industry and sector, one would overlook the human consequences of such changes. Politics and economics define how people live in the modern world where social mobility is a legitimate possibility. Class, rather than sector of employment, better defines how a given person in a given nation will live. Any exclusion of the person dilutes the study of politics and economics to an abstract and emotionless science, when such fields have real world consequences. In order to defeat the existential threat populism poses to liberal democracy, social scientists must expose how

elements of class either allow or disallow the rise of populism in a given society. Until then, as inequalities of wealth and opportunity increase in societies, we can expect to see more Brexit-esque elections and referendums world-wide. Brexit was a cry for help, a desperate plea for political and economic recognition in a rapidly changing world. If we truly want to eradicate extremism and populism, *we* must be the change we want to see in the world.

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CHAPTER FOUR

The Chinese Belt and Road Initiative's Impact on the Political Autonomy of African Nations

Kyle Jordan Smith

This research attempts to answer the question “to what extent has Chinese infrastructure development through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) impacted the political autonomy of African nations?” This is achieved by utilizing a historical approach to examine the centuries of Sino-African relations that have led to the creation of the BRI and by defining political autonomy as Africa’s ability to establish its own political, economic, and security interests, and the state of human rights for African citizens following a BRI agreement.

Africa’s need for infrastructure development, especially as Africa’s traditional Western partners have scaled back their investments and commitments throughout the continent, combined with the centrality of the BRI to Chinese state interests suggest that China’s ties to the continent will only expand in the years to come. This strategic relationship has the potential to have a profound impact on the lives and livelihoods of African citizens. Therefore, the impact of this research is to uplift the plights of the diverse peoples of Africa who have historically faced systemic oppression and remain severely disenfranchised by current global systems.

Review of Literature

Contemporary African political autonomy cannot be understood without reflecting on Africa’s history of foreign relations from mutual trade agreements to colonial exploitation. Antwi-Boateng (2017) reveals that the history of Sino-African relations dates back well over two thousand years to the time when Chinese officials were first sent to Africa. Jinyuan (1984) also illustrates that during this period historical

records indicate that the indirect exchange of products between China and Africa also occurred.

In the period preceding the BRI, European conquests drastically affected the political trajectory of the continent. The nineteenth century Berlin Conference and the Scramble for Africa that followed marked the beginning of an era of European colonization that stripped Africans of their right to self-governance and created a legacy of political fragmentation that remains today (*Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2019).

The earliest similarities to today's BRI and the use of Chinese laborers in its construction can be seen in South Africa during the initial years of the twentieth century. During this era, 70,000 to 100,000 Chinese laborers were recruited by White colonialists to work in mines (Richardson 1971). Following the Korean War, the relationship between China's modern-day government, the Chinese Community Party (CCP), and Africa began to emerge (Jinyuan 1984, 247).

In 1956, Egypt became the first African country to establish diplomatic relations with China (Sun 2014, 3). This followed the 1955 Bandung Conference of the Asian-African countries which fostered the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement during the height of the Cold War (Antwi-Boateng 2017, 178). Following this, there was a notable shift in the power dynamics of Sino-African relations with the creation of the Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Organization whereby Chinese economic aid to Africa began to occur. Between the mid-1950s and mid-1970s, China gave approximately 2.5 billion USD to 36 African countries in aid and sent ten thousand doctors, engineers, and specialists to assist with African development including several infrastructure projects (Le Pere and Shelton 2007, 56).

On the world stage, Sino-African relations helped to secure a UN Security Council seat in 1971 for the People's Republic of China and international legitimacy during China's diplomatic competition with Taiwan (Antwi-Boateng 2017, 178). By the 1990s, the volume of trade between China and Africa had increased 700 percent (Antwi-Boateng 2017, 178). In 2009, China surpassed the United States as Africa's largest trading partner (Albert 2017).

In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping launched the BRI to achieve the CCP's twin objectives of "achieving national rejuvenation and restoring China as a great power" (Nantulya 2019). The BRI is

composed of two components: the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road (Nantulya 2019). The Silk Road Economic Belt has six land corridors that connect China's interior to Central Asia and Europe. The Maritime Silk Road connects a chain of sea ports from Africa to the South China Sea. To describe the BRI simply as an economic endeavor would misinterpret the history of Sino-African relations and the strategic objectives of the CCP under President Xi.

Zheng (2010) debates whether China's presence in Africa is neo-colonialist, ideological, or business-oriented, highlighting that this discussion is not a novel one. Antwi-Boateng (2017) utilizes a historical approach to compare contemporary Chinese actions in Africa with those of previous European colonial empires. However, while existing literature has examined Sino-African relations in these respects and even the impact that the BRI has had on these relations, few studies have evaluated what impact the BRI has had on the contemporary political autonomy of African nations as this research seeks to do.

Chinese Strategic Interests

The BRI has been leveraged as a critical asset toward achieving a variety of Chinese state objectives, particularly, the creation of what the Chinese government calls a "community of common destiny for mankind" (Tobin 2018, 155). This community is a new China-centric global system encompassing economic, political, and security spheres. The political environment that existed in several African countries when the BRI was launched made increased Chinese development a possibility. China's support of anti-colonial and anti-apartheid movements during the twentieth century as well as the foreign policy alignment of China and Africa in critical areas like the diplomatic recognition of the One China policy helped create an openly collaborative atmosphere toward Chinese development. This combined with the decreased presence of Western powers in Africa all but handed Beijing an opportunity that it seized.

Africa plays an important role in China's geostrategic interests. Beijing is currently facing several territorial disputes in the near seas region with countries like Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, South Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Brunei (Nantulya 2019). The

21st Century Maritime Silk Road portion of the BRI that links China to East Africa creates an alternative shipping route to various Chinese ports. However, China's increased presence in East Africa over the last decade has expanded beyond simply economic ties. In several countries, including Djibouti and Namibia, China's infrastructure developments have been followed by naval deployments of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and the creation of military agreements (Nantulya 2019). Although China maintains that its expanding military role in Africa is defensive, Beijing's rivals remain acutely aware of what they view as military and political posturing. Therefore, the BRI is a part of a larger Chinese geopolitical strategy that advances economic, political, security, and diplomatic elements.

African Strategic Interests

The BRI has been a crucial element toward achieving the infrastructure investments that Africa requires to grow its economy and support regional economic integration— notions recognized by the African Development Bank in support of the African Union's (AU's) infrastructure master plan. Several studies by a variety of entities and intergovernmental organizations have found that investments in infrastructure are critical in this regard. A finding by the World Bank estimates that "Africa will need up to 170 billion USD in investment a year for 10 years to meet its infrastructure requirements" (Nantulya 2019). A similar finding by the UN Economic Commission for Africa highlighted that East Africa's exports could "increase by as much as 192 million USD annually" if BRI projects are profitably leveraged (Nantulya 2019). Furthermore, Africa has been a beneficiary of Chinese industrial materials including coal, cement, steel, glass, and aluminum needed for infrastructure development (Nantulya 2019).

The need to protect what many African nations view as a decades-long investment in BRI infrastructure has given rise to security and defense partnerships between African nations and China. The China-Africa Action Plan signed by African leaders in 2018 prioritizes the security of "domestic economic projects" and pledges cooperation in intelligence and security areas (Nantulya 2019). Chinese efforts to

thwart piracy and terrorism have also driven security partnerships that achieve African objectives.

Implications for Africa's Political Autonomy

The BRI has fostered a new generation of Sino-African relations that the Chinese government has leveraged as its commitment to supporting the development of Africa. However, BRI agreements have not given China and Africa equal footing as trade partners. Instead, the BRI has had a myriad of implications that have unsettled and even alarmed some African leaders in light of China's track record in areas like debt collection and asset seizure. The concept of "political autonomy," as it is analyzed in this section goes beyond the actions that sovereign governments are able to take and questions the ability of African citizens to have fair economic opportunities, civil liberties protection, and the right to hold their governments accountable following BRI agreements.

Economic and Environmental Implications

The BRI required a significant financial investment by East African countries totaling approximately 29 billion USD in borrowed funds from China (Nantulya 2019). China has seized strategic assets during debt repayment crises with other countries in the past in what some scholars have called China's debt trap. In 2017, Beijing seized Hambantota port in Sri Lanka after the country defaulted on an infrastructure loan (Nantulya 2019). Similarly, Beijing has seized the Piraeus port in Greece, the Gwadar port in Pakistan, and has stakes in over a dozen European and African ports (Kakissis 2018). While President Xi has announced debt forgiveness policies for intergovernmental zero-interest loans, for example, these types of loans make up only a fraction of Africa's debt to China (Sun 2020). The increasing levels of debt in Djibouti and Kenya raise serious concerns about the long-term prospects of a similar Chinese takeover in these countries (Nantulya 2019).

While China's presence in Africa has received an overall view of "somewhat or very positive" according to data by Afrobarometer, there have been a variety of economic grievances that African leaders and

workers have levied against China including resource exploitation, poor workplace safety and environmental standards, unfair labor practices, and intra-regional trade competition with China (Albert 2017). The Chinese policy that requires the employment of Chinese laborers for BRI projects has raised serious concerns that economic opportunities for native African workers are being diminished by unfair practices. African resentment of the Chinese has even led to protests and deaths of Chinese mine managers (Albert 2017). Kenya's economic competitiveness declined in 2017 after its cement exports to the region dropped due to the increased importation of Chinese materials. Local non-governmental organizations have also highlighted issues of environmental degradation and the need to protect and preserve wildlife.

Security and Defense Implications

China's military presence in Africa has increased precipitously within the last decade during the rollout of the BRI. The shared goal among China and African nations to protect BRI investments has played a role in the military buildup and proliferation of security agreements. From 2013 to 2017, China supplied 27 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's weapons imports, making it the top supplier of weapons to the region (Nantulya 2019). In 2015, Beijing called for "deepened military engagement, technological cooperation, and capacity building for Africa's security sectors" and passed a law that allows its security forces to be deployed internationally (Nantulya 2019). In 2018, the China-Africa Defense and Security Forum was held allowing nearly 50 African countries to develop priorities around Chinese security partnerships (Nantulya 2019). In the same year, China conducted 45 bilateral agreements with African countries on defense technologies and capabilities (Nantulya 2019). After signing onto the BRI, Beijing sent its PLA's naval forces to ports in Cameroon, Ghana, and Nigeria. Chinese private security firms can also be found in a variety of countries including Angola, Ethiopia, and Somalia. Additionally, of the UN peacekeepers who disproportionately serve in Africa, China contributes the greatest number of any member of the UN Security Council (Nantulya 2019).

Security agreements between China and Africa may affect African military structures and infringe on citizens' civil liberties in the years to come. With the establishment of Chinese military preparatory schools in Africa, Beijing has acted on its goal to double military training and preparation of Africans (Nantulya 2019). The spread of the Chinese military model has included the use of authoritarian tactics and measures. The Chinese approach to the military, which relies on the cult of personality and complete subordination to the CCP, stands in stark contrast to the approach in African nations where constitutional dictates grant civilian control and legislative oversight of the military (Nantulya 2019). The introduction of intrusive Chinese surveillance technologies like facial recognition software, internet monitoring tools, and biometric sensors have also raised concerns about the protection of citizens' rights and liberties (Gwagwa and Garbe 2019). Africa is not unique in this regard. China has also exported these types of intrusive technologies to Venezuela, the United Arab Emirates, and Malaysia as part of a larger effort to export authoritarian views and methods around the globe (Sherman and Morgus 2018).

Diplomatic Implications

In the past, Beijing has leveraged aid to developing countries in order to obtain support for the One China policy and legitimize its role as representative of China. In the same fashion, the BRI has been used to obtain support for Chinese strategic interests on the world stage, leading some scholars to describe China's efforts as neo-colonialist (Agbleke 2018). When the BRI was launched, most African countries had already legitimized China instead of Taiwan—weighing the economic benefits of a diplomatic relationship with China more heavily than the principles of self-determination that African countries know all too well (Ndzendze 2020). Taken with the democratization that occurred during the 1990s and 2000s, Ndzendze contends that the desire for increased economic ties with China was spurred by leaders seeking domestic electoral dividends that would result from increased economic performance and poverty reduction. This evidence suggests that the advent of Chinese infrastructure investments through the BRI has resulted in greater diplomatic engagement between BRI signatories and China.

Protecting African Political Autonomy

The legacy of European colonization and the obstacles that Africa has since faced in obtaining investments demonstrate that African political autonomy was in jeopardy during much of the twentieth century. Chinese infrastructure investments through the BRI have similarly altered African economic, security, and diplomatic policies. However, African countries have made progress on a number of fronts including poverty reduction and economic growth since the era of European imperialism and now have the ability to leverage their power to protect their political autonomy. Accountability and oversight by African nations, an engaged citizenry, and employing the lessons of the past can ensure that African nations are given equal standing in future negotiations with China and lessen Africa's reliance on Chinese investments.

Transparency and Oversight

BRI negotiations are generally conducted privately without the opportunity for the public to weigh in. To protect African political autonomy in this respect, Nantulya (2019) declares the need for greater transparency and oversight by legislative bodies, the public, and outside entities. Outside scrutiny of China's role in Africa has begun to take place in countries like Zambia where anti-Chinese sentiment rang high following the shooting of protesters by Chinese managers at a local coal mine (Albert 2017). Increased transparency will push negotiators to remain responsive to local demands and allow citizens to hold their governments accountable for the labor and employment standards that result from BRI agreements.

African Economic Integration

To protect African political autonomy there is also a need to reevaluate Africa's current economic levels of economic integration. Martin (1982) illustrates that regional and continental economic integration are essential to solidifying the continent's economic independence and self-reliance. African political and economic integration has progressed since the early 2000s. However, according to the UN, intra-African trade only accounts for 16 percent of Africa's total trade, significantly behind Asia and Europe which are at 59 and 69

percent respectively (Shaobin 2019). In this regard, former Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah's plan for pan-Africanism remains as applicable today as it was following decolonization (Martin 1982, 237). Nkrumah's vision for pan-Africanism laid the groundwork for African continental integration through the establishment of a "Union Government of African States," an integrated monetary zone, and common currency (Martin 1982, 237). His plan, which includes a variety of additional proposals, could have a significant impact if fully implemented today. For example, increasing intra-African trade through the elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers to trade could double the rate of trade between African countries according to the UN Economic Commission for Africa (Mohamed 2020). The formation of the AU, the New Economic Partnership for African Development, and the African Continental Free Trade Agreement are promising signs that Africa's economic integration will progress over the course of the next decade.

Multilateral Trade Agreements

While African countries continue to integrate their economies, the need for engagement in the rules-based multilateral trading system remains a strategic necessity if Africa is to achieve greater economic and political independence from China. The precipitous growth in world trade over the last 70 years and the social and economic benefits associated with this increase illustrate that Africa can benefit from continued engagement in multilateral trade forums (Mohamed 2020). Through continued engagement with leading World Trade Organization members and developing countries often left at the margins in global trade discussions, Africa can leverage the multilateral trading system to attract foreign direct investment and improve living standards independent from China's BRI (Mohamed 2020).

Conclusion

While it is undeniable that the BRI has sown benefits for African countries, one must ask at what cost? African nations have been pushed into military and defense agreements that have addressed African anti-piracy concerns but also employed the use of intrusive Chinese

surveillance and intelligence technologies, which have harmed citizens' political freedoms. Beijing's BRI investments throughout the continent have accelerated African construction and infrastructure developments but have also ensnared countries like Kenya and Djibouti with high levels of debt and the fear of asset seizure. Through the BRI, jobs have been created but poor workplace conditions and unfair labor practices toward African workers abound. African political autonomy has been impacted by the BRI and while the debate as to whether the net benefits outweigh the net costs will continue, it is important to recognize that Africa's political autonomy can and should be strengthened in the years ahead.

Over fifty years ago former Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah articulated a vision for African integration that would allow Africans to chart their own path forward—at the time independent of European rule. Today, Africans must reclaim their political autonomy and leverage their power to ensure that outside actors do not exploit the continent's riches—both in labor and natural resources. It is also incumbent upon the leaders of existing global systems and structures to right historical wrongs that have harmed the continent's development for far too long. This type of multifaceted approach will have the greatest positive impact on Africa's development in the years to come.

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CHAPTER FIVE

The Impact of Racial Politics on Black Gubernatorial Candidates

Marc N. Younker

The first governors in the United States were elected in 1776. However, American citizens did not elect their first Black governor—Douglas Wilder of Virginia—until 213 years later in 1990. Following suit, 16 years later in 2006, the second and last Black governor was elected in Massachusetts—Deval Patrick. Fast forward to 2018 and Stacey Abrams lost her highly contested election to become the third Black governor and first Black woman governor in US history. With these kinds of statistics, Black governors are essentially an endangered species. Paralleled to the governorship, it is noteworthy that the United States has only elected one Black person to the office of the Presidency. Electing Black representation in the highest executive offices in the land has been a struggle since the inception of this nation. Where are the Black governors? Is the lack of Black executives within government a result of lackluster civic involvement from the Black community or is it from political inequity? It is imperative to analyze why there are so few elected Black governors and what barriers must be removed to ensure there are no factors holding candidates back from running for the office. In this paper, I will critically dissect gubernatorial elections for Black candidates and provide insight into how the United States can better support Black individuals who would like to pursue the office of the Governor.

Why Black Governors Matter

Governors are pivotal to the direction and prosperity of a state. Being that governors are popularly elected in all 50 states, governors are directly representative of the popular demand of the people. While the scope of gubernatorial powers varies from state to state, governors

generally have either control over or influence on state legislation, the budget, and confirmation on executive and judicial appointments, in addition to leading political agendas. Gubernatorial discretionary powers over the budget, including the line-item veto power, play a significant role in determining how resources are allocated. Additionally, governors have the opportunity to mobilize public opinion, and the power to propose policy initiatives, and utilize executive orders or veto measures to enact legislation for the benefit of the people. Beyond what is written in a state's constitution, governors are placed as leaders of their political party and can influence local elections to support particular candidates who are fighting for the same mission. Moreover, all governors have the authority to appoint individuals to sit on their "cabinet" and for judicial nominations. These positions are key to enforcing and interpreting laws for the state. While nominations have to be approved by both houses of the state legislature, this authority gives governors the power to place people in positions that can shape society for long after their official term. Overall, the roles of the governor are crucial to determining how the citizens of a state will work, live in their communities, and make decisions for their future.

While the majority of Black people remain on the outside of the United States' government's powers, Black people have consistently held America accountable to its ideals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Black abolitionists, civil rights leaders, women suffragists, and community leaders have been key social engineers pushing America towards an equitable society. Thus, it is critical to ask what might have happened if more historical leaders from the Black community had been able to attain the governorship. Would they have had the power to execute the change around which they organized their life's work? While the argument cannot wholly be made that all Black elected officials contribute the same effort in the fight against injustice and the fight for prosperity, the argument can be made that all Black elected officials, especially governors, bring a perspective that has largely been left out of American state-level politics. Gubernatorial representation of the Black community is well needed because Black voices offer a platform for marginalized groups to weigh in on consequential matters like the state budget. Black governors have the

opportunity to insert the Black experience into the political narrative that has unfortunately neglected and even harmed Black people. Therefore, Black governors are pivotal in the work necessary to heal America's racial divide and construct a unified nation.

Since governors have the capability to forge the destiny of their state, citizens need to elect governors that represent their short-term and long-term interests. While democratic republics function best when all people, regardless of racial identity, have a chance to represent their community; governors throughout US history have predominantly been White males. This is no accident. Because racial identity has been systemically woven into the fabric of all things American, the politics used to obtain an elected office are cut from this same cloth. Specifically, when politics are more "macro," racial identity is more likely to influence the dynamics of the campaign and the outlook of voters.

Barriers Facing Black Gubernatorial Candidates

The Impact of Demographics and Political Parties

In his article, "Can Black Candidates Win Statewide Elections?" (1990), Sonenshein compares Black candidates who run for local positions rather than statewide positions in order to expose why Black candidates struggle to succeed on a larger political platform. Black people comprise a large portion of the population in most urban areas and upwards of 80 percent of Black people self-identify as Democrats. Black candidates typically must develop racial coalitions while simultaneously winning over majority-White voting districts to win elections (Terkildsen 1992, 1032). In conjunction with the challenges of a large demographic area, a reputation typically as the more liberal candidate, and living in largely Democratic cities throughout the country, Black candidates also face more intra-party challenges. It is intra-party issues, rather than external factors, that prove to be the major obstacle. Intra-party challenges are often disputes over potential policy proposals or campaigning styles. In order to overcome these challenges, local Black candidates must simply garner the voting and economic support of White liberals or party reformists—neither of which are hard to find in an urban area. Thus, Black candidates for

mayoral and city council elections have a more equitable chance of winning their election because their politics are not as easily subjected to racial pressure in order to win over votes.

While cities typically have larger demographics of Black people, no state outside of the South has a Black demographic exceeding 20 percent. Although states like South Carolina, Mississippi, and Alabama have the largest populations of black people, there is still a rough political terrain for potential Black gubernatorial candidates, as non-Black areas tend to be more rural or suburban and subsequently less left leaning. As mentioned before, it is typically easier for Black candidates to run for local positions in urban areas. These areas tend to be very liberal. This political terrain causes rookie Black politicians to run for office in majority-Black areas. Consequently, this defines them when they seek higher office. The only plausible way to move up is to spend years after the first win constructing a political identity that transcends race or partisanship, or which associates the politician with ideological moderation (Harvie 2014). Sonenshein argues that “without the large base of Black voters, Black statewide candidates must appeal to a mostly white electorate” (222). In this regard, the racial attitude of White voters is critical to the success of Black candidates because plurality systems require solidarity amongst coalitions. However, coalitions are more difficult to build when voters have racial prejudices, therefore causing a discrepancy in equal opportunity within politics.

Polarizing rhetoric from a Black candidate increases their likelihood to face backlash from groups that are crucial to winning such as White moderates. According to research conducted at the London School of Economics Centre on American Politics and Policy, “a moderately liberal Black candidate is nearly twice as likely as a moderately liberal white candidate to be seen as extremely liberal, and roughly 15 percent more likely than an otherwise identical white candidate to be seen as somewhere to the left of moderate” (Jacobsmeier 2015). Historically, Black political candidates have been automatically connected to issues like civil rights or criminal justice, which has provided a stereotype that Black candidates are in favor of “big government” or are “soft on crime.” This can be seen in the 1982 Californian gubernatorial election between Tom Bradley and George Deukmejian. The political mood in California at the time was

unsympathetic towards minority groups. Particularly, Californians (both Democrat and Republican) believed that the government was already doing too much for the Black community in terms of policy initiatives such as affirmative action and criminal justice reform (Critin and Sears 1985, 77). This impacted how Tom Bradley navigated his campaign as he had to dampen his political ideology to seem less radical or left-leaning in order to win over the White-moderate (Critin, Green, and Sears 1990, 86). Although Bradley came out of the election unsuccessful, the racial attitude of White voters coupled with intra-party conflict makes the race for a statewide election much more difficult for Black candidates. Given that the racial attitude of White voters, coupled with inter-party conflict, makes the campaign for statewide more difficult, the candidacy should be seen as a “win.”

The Impact of Racism and Colorism

In addition to the social playbook in politics that makes it more difficult for Black candidates to win governorships, systemic racism creates a struggle for Black people to reach this position as well. Throughout history, many Black Americans have been unable to exercise their right to vote due to literacy tests, poll taxes, and other intimidation tactics, and thus, could not support Black political candidates. After much effort to uphold the rights of citizens, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA) banned racial discrimination in voting nationally. More specifically, section 5 of the VRA placed teeth behind the federal legislation by enforcing preclearance restrictions that prohibited certain districts from implementing voting laws without approval from the US Attorney General or a District court in order to prevent discrimination against minorities. Subsequently, this “led to gradual and significant increases in voter participation and that these gains persisted for over 40 years, bolstering turnout by 4–8 percentage points in recent elections. Examining state-level turnout by race, these effects were due entirely to increased participation among minorities, who were 17 percentage points more likely to vote in the 2012 election as a result of preclearance coverage” (Ang 2019, 3). However, due to the US Supreme Court’s ruling in *Shelby v. Holder*, striking down section five from the Voting Rights Act of 1965, thousands of polling locations closed in predominantly Black counties.

A contemporary example of this struggle can be witnessed in the Stacey Abrams campaign in Georgia. In 2018, Abrams, the former minority leader in the Georgia legislature, lost her gubernatorial election by a margin of 1.6 percent of the popular vote. Joe Feagin asserts that systemic racism is “far more than a matter of racial prejudice and individual bigotry. It is a material, social, and ideological reality that is well-imbedded in major U.S. institutions” (Feagin 2006). Therefore, it can be argued that the United States political and electoral system is also saturated with institutionalized racism. This is important to analyze because, if elected, Abrams would have become the first Black woman governor in the United States. What is also crucial to understand is that it is possible for systemic racism to have caused voter suppression, which may have well led to Abrams’ defeat. Abrams criticized the state of Georgia, which was once under the supervision of section 5 in the VRA, for using targeted voter suppression tactics such as removing 1.4 million voters from the rolls. Additionally, according to the Center for American Progress, “in Georgia, several hundred voted absentee ballots were found to have been discarded without proper notification by election officials because voters’ signatures on their ballots did not exactly match the signatures the state had on file. Of those discarded ballots, more than one-third came from the racially diverse Gwinnett County, where more than half of the rejected ballots belonged to African American or Asian American voters” (Root 2018, 1). Furthermore, in the 2018 Georgia gubernatorial election, the Center for American Progress found that “Georgia officials failed to provide power chords for voting machines in Gwinnett County” (Root 2018, 1). The lack of available voting machines caused voters to wait in long lines and even caused some to leave the line altogether. As mentioned prior, Gwinnett County is largely African American. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the lack of access to voting in predominantly Black precincts was intentional and consequently affected the chances for a Black candidate to become governor.

The theory being posed—that Black candidates lack an equal chance to become governors—can be witnessed through the experience of Black candidates such as Abrams. However, two Black politicians have defied the odds to become governors of their states. As mentioned earlier, Douglas Wilder of Virginia was America’s first elected Black

governor. Wilder built his political career in a manner that would strongly support his candidacy as governor, most notably by becoming Virginia's first Black lieutenant governor. His election victory did not randomly occur nor was it without diligent politicking. The assistance of the media spotlight also greatly helped Wilder win the state that used to be the capital of the confederacy. Out of all printed newspapers by *The Washington Post* during the campaign season, 30 percent of the articles mentioned Wilder or discussed a story relating to his campaign for governor. Likewise, throughout the season, 44 percent of *Culpeper Star-Exponent* printed stories covered Wilder's campaign (Jeffries 2002, 693). While much of the coverage was acknowledging the first credible race a Black man posed for the governorship, it also allowed many Virginians to gain more knowledge about Wilder's politics. Often Black statewide candidates lack the resources to purchase airtime to broadcast advertisements. Due to the lack of concentrated wealth in the Black community, paired with racist beliefs, it takes more work for Black candidates to gain monetary support. Thus, news coverage is critical for Black gubernatorial candidates as it provides a free exposure of the candidate to groups the candidate might not otherwise reach. For all candidates, access to voters is necessary because without news coverage it is more difficult to reach constituents on one's own, albeit an element of difficulty is added for Black candidates to overcome who will need as much exposure as possible to disrupt presumptive racist and harmful narratives.

Individuals outside of cities have to become just as accepting of potential Black candidates in majority-White areas as they are of White candidates in any other situation. In order to appeal to majority-White voting districts, Black candidates often have to abandon discussing issues that are key to their identity, such as race. Not only do Black candidates have to abandon key issues to avoid creating a divide within their potential voter base, but they must also steer away from taking radical stances. In her book *Contours of African American Politics*, Georgia Persons emphasizes that radical candidates try to articulate an entirely new agenda, which is often "found objectionable [by voters] on ideological grounds" (Persons 2014, 73). Black candidates do not have the opportunity to take part in radical platforms because their race triggers bias within voters to perceive their platform as more left-

leaning than it truly is. Douglas Wilder showed how centrism complemented his blackness for political victory. For instance, Douglas Wilder was careful to avoid direct attacks on his White opponent, cautiously avoiding racial issues that may separate the candidates. Despite being a Democrat, Wilder “sought and received the endorsement of conservative white leaders” (Sonenshein 236). Although most Americans prefer centrist politics, Black candidates like Wilder must reach across the aisle to dilute the radicalism that is attached to Blackness.

Colorism can be defined as prejudice or discrimination especially within a racial or ethnic group favoring people with lighter skin over those with darker skin. It is important to note that colorism extends beyond shaping narratives in social settings; it also dictates voter perception of political candidates. In a test conducted on over two million people by the Implicit Association, results have shown an overwhelming preference for lighter skin compared to dark skin. More specifically, 68 percent of test participants were quicker to match dark-skin with negative words and light-skin with positive words than the reverse (Weaver 2012). Additionally, this study underscored that the positive attributes attached to lighter skin contribute to voters’ perception that lighter-skinned candidates hold the skills deemed necessary to hold political offices such as intelligence, relatability, and honesty. America’s only two Black governors have been light-skinned, subsequently making them more palatable to a broader electorate.

In contrast, Stacey Abrams, a dark-skin woman, was not granted the same privilege as Douglas Wilder. While each candidate faced racist jeers, Abrams was forced to prove her character in areas that were not typically asked of Wilder. The complexion of her skin combined with her womanhood made Abrams difficult for voters to digest and to perceive her as a candidate holistically. In a message to CNN, Abrams stated that she is “not like what has preceded [her]. [She looks] very different” (Connley 2018). Abrams often spent time on the campaign trail answering questions regarding why people should vote for the first Black woman for governor. She would respond saying that she doesn’t want people to vote for her because she will be the first Black woman governor but rather because she is the best candidate in the race. Not only did her Blackness detract from her potential as a

viable candidate, but her darker complexion further did not allow her the opportunity to avoid speaking on race in the way Governor Wilder focused campaign conversations elsewhere.

How to Change the Narrative

In essence, racial politics often hinder Black candidates from ascending to their greatest potential. The lack of Black governors pushes a narrative to voters that Black governors are rare or do not exist. The lack of Black governors is by no means the fault of the Black community. Potential Black governors can be found in numerous states, including Michigan, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Illinois, Virginia, and Maryland. These are all states that currently have a Black lieutenant governor and a White governor at the helm. If the lieutenant governor should be capable of taking over the role of the governor at any given moment, then we must understand how racist barriers are maintaining an environment where Black politicians can be elected lieutenant governor but seldom the governor itself.

Democratic candidates, especially Black Democratic candidates, are largely disadvantaged from being able to garner the voting power and support of minorities without equal access to voting. Voting rights and infrastructural support for physical voting must be expanded to combat this suppression of voters and, effectively, candidates. More specifically, to upend racism from communities in the spirit of constructing fairer democracy, the first step in the right direction is to reauthorize the Voting Rights Act with the full weight of federal enforcement. The VRA can dismantle systemic racism preventing obstacles to voting and by creating environments where voters are more likely to exercise their right to vote. If this is done, Black candidates have a more equitable opportunity to run for and be elected into governorships against their racial counterparts and make a difference for their state. America can and must collectively do this work in order to create a fair playing field for all prospective elected officials. This impact can change the narrative and potential of the American governor.

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PART II

IMPACT IN EDUCATION & HEALTH

CHAPTER SIX

The Impact of Racism on the Esteem and Efficacy of African American Students

Michael J. Alonzo

Racial injustice has been prevalent in the United States since before its founding. Even as the nation matured and great strides towards racial justice took place, there have always been barriers to true equality. As the 13th Amendment ended slavery, sharecropping and incarceration took its place. When Black people began to thrive during Reconstruction, statehouses instituted Black Codes and Jim Crow laws. When the *Brown v. Board* decision ended segregation in public schools, many districts stalled in making real change. Even today desegregation is still incomplete in many of the nation's schools with more than half being either 75 percent White or non-White (Meatto 2019). Much work has been done on the impact of racism in higher education, but significantly less has been done on its impact in high schools. The experiences in high school play a crucial role in determining access to higher education, future careers, and other opportunities. Therefore, it is necessary to develop an understanding of the ways in which racism affects the experience of African American students at the high school level.

Two factors are critically important in determining the future success of students: self-esteem and self-efficacy. Self-esteem is the extent to which one values himself (Blascovich and Tomaka 1991, 115). Self-efficacy refers to “an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments” (Bandura 1997, 191). Self-efficacy has been shown to be better at predicting future success than previous academic achievement, gender, socioeconomic status, or intelligence (Zuffianò et al. 2013). Self-esteem development was shown to be effective in mitigating the effects of negative environmental and experiential

occurrences that, without intervention, often lead to poor behavioral and academic outcomes (Cunningham et al. 2002; Zimmerman, Ramirez-Valles, and Maton 1999). It is critically important that these two characteristics are nurtured and supported in African American students, especially in predominantly White institutions, where due to institutional and instructional microaggressions, African American students face an undue burden. Only through a conscious effort to support and uplift African American students through culturally affirming education and instructor training, can these schools seek to ameliorate the harm done in these White spaces.

Critical Race Theory

As we discuss the systemic ways in which racism affects African American students, it is necessary to examine the theory on which much of the previous research is based. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is the framework used to examine how race and racism are prevalent throughout culture, institutions, and systems. Through the lens of CRT, it is possible to understand the ways in which these facets of society affect the perception and treatment of African Americans. CRT has been used to investigate how institutional policies and practices are used to subjugate African Americans (Solorzano 2000).

Significant inequality exists within the US education system. The educational resources granted to students often vary dramatically based on zip code. This disparity puts African Americans at a disadvantage due to the deep-rooted impact of racist housing policies such as redlining, as well as persistent wealth inequality. As previously segregated high schools were forced to open their doors to African Americans, efforts were made to maintain the existing racial disparities. Today, as African Americans enter predominantly White high schools, the remnants of these policies serve as institutional microaggressions that undermine the development of self-esteem and self-efficacy by entrenching and perpetuating existing inequalities.

Racial Microaggressions

While less blatant than cross burning, microaggressions cause real and lasting harm to African Americans. “Microaggressions are the

brief verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory, denigrating, and hurtful messages to people of color” (Allen 2013). Microaggressions play a key role in chronic stress-related health issues amongst members of racial minority groups (de Castro, Gee, and Takeuchi 2008; Williams and Mohammed 2009; Meyer et al. 2008; Guyll et al. 2001) such as depression, anxiety, trauma and erosion of self-esteem (Jang et al. 2010; Mezuk et al. 2010). Specifically, microaggressions pertaining to the underestimation of personal ability have been shown to lead to increased levels of stress (Torres et al. 2010). The microaggressions experienced by African Americans in high school have an adverse effect on their educational well-being as insensitive instructors have been shown to negatively impact the self-efficacy of African American students (Cokley et al. 2006).

Institutional Microaggressions

Certain institutional policies constitute systemic microaggressions committed against African American students. These practices and policies must be identified and dismantled for the sake of the physical, mental, and educational well-being of African American students. Color-blindness is the microaggression that serves as a foundation for all others. An attractive idea to those who have the privilege to hold it, color-blindness is the belief that race is no longer a factor in society. This subtle microaggression allows institutions to ignore the reality of racial disparities while claiming equality. African American students are held to the normalized White standard without consideration of historical and broader socio-political factors that make it difficult to achieve said standard. Color-blindness entrenches White privilege and legitimizes Black subjugation (Williams et al. 2006).

Perhaps the starkest way in which color-blindness negatively affects African American students is through practices such as academic tracking. Under such policies, students are placed on rigid tracks based on standardized test results. As standardized tests have been shown to favor White students, it should be no surprise that minority students are disproportionately assigned to lower academic tracks (Chambers 2009). Methods for sorting students into gifted and

advanced programs often act as a better predictor of class and privilege than intelligence (Oakes and Guiton 1995). Even when African American students achieve the same scores as White students, race is still shown to be a factor in predicting academic track (*Education and Sociology: An Encyclopedia* 2014, 243).

In high school, these separations often result in students being directed to take courses that do not prepare them for advanced-level college preparatory courses. (Kelly and Price 2011). The effect is especially pronounced in critical areas such as science and mathematics (Hoffer 1992). Those on higher tracks are offered more and higher-quality educational opportunities, while students on lower tracks encounter less rigorous expectations, lower quality curriculum, and less experienced teachers (Werblow et al. 2013). Instead of correcting inequalities, academic tracking entrenches them, as a lapse in education that occurred in first grade has the potential to affect a student's ability to enter the college of his choice.

Academic tracking can also have a profound effect on students' self-esteem. By placing students in a perpetually lower educational caste, the institution engrains a sense of inferiority. Students are able to perceive when instructors have low regard for their abilities and low expectations for their academic success. When students feel as if their work is not valuable or substantive, it has real and lasting effects on their mental health. Research has found symptoms of depression and anxiety present at higher levels in schools with tracking (Lipps et al. 2010). It has been shown that students in higher tracks often enjoy a higher social status in school and lower tracked students often suffer social alienation, exacerbating negative mental health effects (Levinson 2014, 243).

The effect on self-efficacy is equally pronounced. The lack of quality education and rigor does little to motivate a student to achieve. From very early on a student can determine the maximum course level he can achieve, based on the level where he starts. There can be cases in which a lower tracked student's maximum level is less advanced than the higher tracked student's beginning level. When faced with this reality and with no opportunity to advance outside of his track, the lower tracked student loses drive. This dynamic may account for the 60

percent increase in the dropout rate of lower tracked students (Werblow et al. 2013).

The negative effects of school tracking are widely understood, yet, the practice continues. One reason it continues is that it is the way things have always been done. The belief that students must be separated based on their “inherent ability” is widespread amongst educators and parents. Even as research has shown that high achieving students do not suffer in a detracked system (Slavin 1990), parents often threaten to leave schools when these policies are proposed, fearing that integration with other students might hurt their own children’s success (Rubin and Noguera 2004; Loveless 1999). However, it is not the institution’s job to satisfy a single parent or even a group of parents. Instead, it is the institution’s job to provide education that prepares all students to succeed and thrive.

Not only are the educational opportunities afforded to students limited by academic tracking, but the content of these courses is manipulated through curriculum violence. Curriculum violence is defined as “the deliberate manipulation of academic programming in a manner that ignores or compromises the intellectual and psychological well-being of learners” (Ighodaro and Wiggan 2007, 2). Outside of advanced placement courses, to which African American students have limited access, schools control their curriculum, deciding which cultural norms, historical points of view, and values are imparted to their students. Often these norms and values are alien to the experience of African American students. One study based in Newfoundland found that curriculums that teach values and realities inconsistent with student experiences leave students feeling demotivated, devalued, and disengaged, thus increasing the dropout rate (Gedge 2006).

Through color-blindness, academic tracking, and curriculum violence, many predominantly White high schools negatively impact the efficacy and esteem of African American students by creating a system in which their experiences and education are undervalued. However, the institutions themselves are not the only ones with a responsibility to students. Instructors play a crucial role in shaping the day to day experience of each student, therefore an investigation into the role teachers play within these institutions is required.

Instructional Microaggressions

Teachers' perceptions play a role in multiple aspects of their interactions with students. In order to have a positive relationship with an African American student, a teacher must first have a positive disposition towards that student (Vega et al. 2012). An instructor's assumption that intelligence level or social class is the cause of underachievement can cause that teacher to devote fewer resources and less attention to a student. This "deficit thinking" is a form of victim-blaming that places the responsibility for inequalities in the system on those who are disadvantaged by it.

African American students are most likely to fall prey to deficit thinking, as seen by their over-designation as "at-risk" and underrepresentation in gifted and talented programs even when their performance is the same as their White peers (Ford 2014). The mechanism through which deficit thinking affects students is expectancy. In their iconic experiment, Robert Rosenthal and Lenore F. Jacobson demonstrated the Pygmalion Effect, in which instructor expectancy creates a self-fulfilling prophecy. They demonstrated that students whose teachers told them that they were expected to be high performers, did indeed achieve higher scores and showed more improvement as compared to other students. Multiple factors contribute to this effect. When teachers expect more from a student they dedicate more time to that student (Allington 1980; Rowe 1974; Taylor 1979), call on him more to participate in class (Rubovits and Maehr 1971), give him the benefit of the doubt in grading situations (Finn 1972), and pay more attention to him overall (Adams and Cohen 1974; Kester and Letchworth 1972). Even differences in the level of eye contact and use of tone were observed between teacher interactions with expected high and low achievers (Chaikin, Sigler, and Derlega 1974). The effects of this different treatment are real as it communicates different cues about how a student should behave and what is expected of him. If a teacher does not often call on a low achiever, he is less likely to pay attention in class, unlike the high achiever who must always pay attention as the teacher calls on him frequently. Differences in expectancy can account for a five to ten percent difference in raw scores (Brophy 1983).

Low expectations disadvantage African American students more often than White students. In the Education Longitudinal Study of

2002, conducted by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics, it was shown that the percentage of African American 10th graders that teachers expected to go to college was lower than their expectation for White students by 21 percentage points. Of that same cohort, 49 percent of White students ended up attending a four-year college compared to only 29 percent of non-White students, a twenty point difference (Lauff and Ingels 2014).

In another important study, students with previously identical reading scores were ranked by their teacher based on reading ability. African American students were ranked an average of seven points lower than White and Asian students, although reading scores were empirically equal. Over the course of the year, the scores of the students ranked lower significantly decreased in comparison to higher-ranked students (McKown and Weinstein 2008). By expecting less of African American students, instructors hamstring their potential.

This is not new information. Psychologists have been using expectancy to improve outcomes for decades. A direct increase in positive expectancy has been shown to increase both self-esteem and self-expectancy within students (Meichenbaum and Smart 1971). Students who have been told that their instructor expects great things from them show signs of increased self-motivation (Bomia et al. 1997). Positive expectancy not only impacts mental well-being but also performance. Mediation techniques that employ positive expectancy have been used to improve scores in mathematics and literacy (Trusz 2018). Instructors who hold a negative disposition towards African American students deprive them of these benefits and create a self-fulfilling prophecy that damages the motivation, efficacy, and esteem of the African American students who most often fall prey to negative expectations.

Recommendations

Color-blindness, academic tracking, exclusionary curriculum, deficit thinking, and negative expectations define systemic racism within education. Deliberate efforts must be made to tackle this problem effectively. For example, the practice of academic tracking must be eliminated and replaced with an integrated classroom policy,

which ensures that all students receive an equal education. In a study conducted over a 40-year period, it was found that detracking reduced the achievement gap between high and low performing students and increased performance overall (Rui 2009). Instructors must modify their teaching methods in order to bring out the full potential of each student if the gap between the achievement of African American students and White students is to close.

Next, institutions must incorporate culturally affirming education into the curriculum. Culturally affirming education is that which promotes positive self-image, supports the development of racial identity, and honors the historical contributions of different racial groups (Allen 2013). Affirming education reinforces self-esteem by teaching students to be proud of their history and culture. Self-efficacy is also improved by giving examples of high achieving members of their racial group. Instead of seeing differences between students as a barrier to overcome, it can be used as a vehicle to uplift.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, administrators and instructors must abandon the belief that color-blindness is the best way to accommodate African Americans in their schools. The negative effects of racism and the different perspective students have must be openly and routinely discussed, acknowledged, and accounted for in boardrooms, teacher conferences, and daily interactions with students. Cultural competence must be developed through acceptance and respect for racial and cultural differences and by allocating time and meaningful effort to understanding the background, communities, and histories of African American students.

The systems and practices that have created the achievement gap between African American students and their White peers are pervasive. They have not all been covered in this paper and cannot all be solved through the recommendations found in it. The work needed to reverse the harm done to African American students by racism cannot begin in high school. From a young age, work must be undertaken to prevent the damage from being perpetuated, not only in schools but in every institution, social sphere, and interaction. This requires acknowledgment, empathy, and action on the part of those in power. Only then will racial injustice cease to negatively impact the lives and achievements of African Americans.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

The Impact of Food Deserts on American Health

Pierce X. Alston

The Threat to American Wellness

The United States faces an issue that seems to be unique among prosperous countries; disadvantaged geographic areas, denoted by a low income and high proportion of African Americans and Latinos, are underserved by food retailers in comparison to more advantaged areas, denoted by a middle or high income level (Beaulac, Kristjansson, and Cummins 2009). According to published reports, approximately 23.5 million people live in food deserts but this is an underestimate because the classification system that assists in the collection of data places neighborhood stores in the same category as supermarkets (United States Department of Agriculture. Economic Research Service 2009). In urban environments this means that there are no healthy food vendors within one mile; in rural areas the radius is expanded to ten miles. The health and economic impacts of these food deserts on the American public are evident.

Heart disease has been the leading cause of death in the United States since 1921 (Greenlund et al. 2006). Cardiovascular disease, which accounts for both heart disease and strokes, costs the United States \$550 billion in direct medical costs and averaged indirect costs in the year 2016; in this calculation, medical costs included operations, care, hospital stays, etc. and indirect costs were based on the lost income and productivity resulting from death or a health related inability to work (American Heart Association 2017). Cardio-vascular disease continues to be a prevalent issue because it develops in younger populations as a result of poor health and nutrition.

From 1999 to 2018, the rate of obesity increased twelve percent with severe obesity rising by five percent in the same timeframe (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, n.d.). There has also been an increase in the rate of type 2 diabetes, both in children and adults.

With both of these ailments being avoidable or mitigated by maintaining a healthy diet, the impact of healthy food insecurity on public health is evident. In the United States, there is a proven inverse correlation between the rate of obesity and income and education levels (Ogden 2017).

Food deserts are among the main reasons that lie behind this correlation; these are locations characterized by low income levels, low education levels, and reduced levels of access to healthy or nutritious foods. A lack of supermarkets, farmers markets, or other affordable healthy food vendors results in a dependence on convenience stores and small neighborhood stores in order to acquire foods; the latter usually offering few, if any, of the healthy options or variety of nutritious foods that could be easily obtained in the former. As food deserts are characterized as a lack of healthy food vendors, one method to combat an increase in obesity and cardiovascular issues among populations in food deserts is to introduce new vendors into neighborhoods that will offer healthier food choices. Other methods include efforts to increase nutritional knowledge and reduce the dependence on fast or processed foods.

The following is an investigation into food deserts and the effectiveness of the tactics employed to increase the general health of the populations within a food desert. By comparing four sets of paired low-income statistically similar areas, one within a food desert and one that is not, we should arrive at a more exact conclusion about the impact of food deserts on the well-being of low-income populations. Next, we will observe the changes that have occurred when a zone that is classified as a food desert receives aid to reduce the negative effects associated with the lack of a healthy food vendor. Last, we will explore possible solutions to combat the food desert issue and the greater health problems that it affects.

Direct Comparison

By comparing two counties with similar characteristics, with the status of food desert being the main difference between them, we can note the impact of a healthy food disparity upon the economic group that is at the greatest risk of acquiring the health issues we identified

above. Using the US Department of Agriculture's (USDA) online *Food Access Research Atlas* in conjunction with the *County Health Rankings and Roadmaps* database developed by the Population Health Institute, we have selected the following counties for use in our comparison: Carroll and Patrick counties in Virginia, Val Verde and Schleicher counties in Texas, Keya Paha and Brown counties in Nebraska, and Norman and Clearwater counties in Minnesota (USDA Economic Research Service 2019; University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, n.d.). The USDA categorizes food deserts in four different ways. The four sets of paired counties were chosen based on the category specified earlier, which is the absence of a health food vendor within one mile in an urban area and within ten miles in a rural area. As the USDA food desert map uses census tracts, which are areas bounded by city limits, towns, or administrative zones, the counties that we choose to compare must fall mostly in the category of food desert or non-food desert. The census tracts for Patrick, Val Verde, Keya Paha and Clearwater were almost, if not all, designated as food deserts.

In the next sections, there will be a direct breakdown of each county and its health statistics in comparison to its in-state counterpart. For comparison, we will examine the rates of adult obesity, diabetes prevalence, and the percent of people with poor or fair health. Data will be presented by stating the percentage related to each of the above statistics. For the purpose of the test, each county pairing selected has a similar poverty rate and similar median income.

Virginia

The following is a list of the health statistics for Patrick County: roughly thirty percent of adults fall in the range of obese; diabetes has a twelve percent prevalence; and thirty percent of the residents have poor or fair health.

In Carroll County, approximately thirty percent of adults fall in the range of obese; diabetes has an eleven percent prevalence; and thirteen percent of the people in the county have poor or fair health.

Texas

In Val Verde County, about twenty-eight percent of adults fall in the range of obese; diabetes has a ten percent prevalence; and thirty-one percent of county residents have poor or fair health.

In Schleicher County, roughly thirty percent of adults fall in the range of obese; diabetes has a ten percent prevalence; and seventeen percent of the people have poor or fair health.

Nebraska

In Keya Paha County, approximately twenty-seven percent of adults fall in the range of obese; diabetes has an eleven percent prevalence; and twelve percent of residents have poor or fair health.

In Brown County, about thirty-one percent of adults fall in the range of obese; diabetes has an eleven percent prevalence; and twenty-one percent of the county residents have poor or fair health.

Minnesota

In Clearwater County: thirty-two percent of adults fall in the range of obese; diabetes has a ten percent prevalence; and nine percent of the people have poor or fair health.

In Norman County: thirty-one percent of adults fall in the range of obese; diabetes has a ten percent prevalence; and twelve percent of county residents have poor or fair health.

Results

Each county pairing revealed similar obesity and diabetes statistics. The most noticeable difference lies in the quality of health. In Virginia and Texas, the counties that contained census tracts that were identified as food deserts each had a significantly greater percentage of citizens with poor or fair health in comparison to their partner. The percentage in Virginia was thirty percent vs. thirteen percent and in Texas, thirty-one vs. seventeen percent. Nebraska's and Minnesota's pairings had percentages that defied the expectation. In Nebraska, twelve percent vs. twenty-one percent and in Minnesota, nine percent vs. twelve percent. Clearwater and Keya Paha both sported better percentages for poor or fair health, despite being food desert census

tracts. One reason for this discrepancy may be the density of fast food establishments.

Areas with a high density of fast food vendors are categorized as food swamps. Food swamps appear in the same type of neighborhoods as food deserts, and a significant part of the difference in classification rests in the fact that an area may be categorized as a food swamp regardless of the number of healthy food vendors in an area. Two markers of a food swamp are a high rate of income inequality and a reduced rate of resident mobility. (Cooksey-Stowers, Schwartz, and Brownell 2017). The study concluded that higher rate of income inequality was important to note as unhealthy food retailers would have an incentive to do business in these communities as people with low-income are more likely to purchase food from their restaurants. When looking at the income equality levels of the Nebraska and Minnesota pairs, we note that the Minnesota pair both have high levels of income inequality and that the Nebraska pair have differing scores. Keya Paha's level of income inequality is similar to the nation's average, while Brown's income inequality is closer to the levels in the other food desert pairs. Given this information, it is possible that Keya Paha is a food desert, but that the density of fast food vendors may be significantly lower in comparison to the density in Brown; this would be a positive indicator that Brown and the other counties we examined may be food swamps. These results elucidate the healthy food disparity in America. Even among counties with similar income levels, lack of options to access to healthy food and the extensive availability of cheap fast food are major deterrents to general health and cardiovascular health. The increased prevalence of health issues within these food desert and food swamp communities is indicative of a positive correlation between living in a food desert/swamp and poorer health. Given this data, it is imperative to take the necessary steps to combat the health issues that plague these communities in order to reverse the damage and create positive health trends to benefit future generations.

A Look at Implementation and Solutions

A study was conducted in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania that sought to investigate the potential health benefits that may arise from the

introduction of a healthy food vendor in a food desert. Two communities were chosen with low economic status, similar racial demographics, and a similar distance from a preexisting supermarket that falls within the categorization of a food desert. One community planned to have a new supermarket introduced nearby; the other community did not, and was thus chosen as the comparison community. The results of this study indicated that while the consumption of sugars, fats, and alcohol had declined in the community with the new market, the consumption of fruits and vegetables had not changed significantly in either community. The general health of the participants from both sides of the test had remained roughly the same and the introduction of the supermarket had little impact on accomplishing the intended goals. The only significant change brought on by the introduction of the supermarket came from the outlooks of the individuals who were interviewed for the study. After the new supermarket opened, people's awareness of healthy diets and the ease of purchasing healthy food reached higher levels, but the study did not find that the new opinions led to the expected changes in behavior. (Dubowitz et al. 2015) Another study conducted in Philadelphia came to the same conclusion. The individuals they surveyed had a better outlook on the availability of healthy foods, but the consumption of fruits and vegetables had not gone up and the body mass indexes of subjects of the study had no significant changes. Again, both neighborhoods were similar in race, income, demographic profile, and were food deserts (Cummins, Flint, and Matthews 2014). These studies suggest that the introduction of health food vendors will not solve the issue on its own; other forms of intervention are required in order to create lasting changes in food desert communities. It is also not enough to improve the knowledge of healthy food availability; actions must also be taken to both improve the outlook of a healthy diet and promote its adoption. The following are solutions with the potential to improve health and nutrition statistics.

Greater Convenience

One theory is that supermarkets and healthy food vendors receive less use because they are less accessible in comparison to corner stores and fast food restaurants. As many of the people living in food deserts

also live in food swamps, it is imperative to place supermarkets within food deserts in areas close to popular transportation routes. If a market opens but is out of walking/biking distance or distant in reference to public transportation routes, then it may have little noticeable impact on general health. A study conducted in Pittsburgh brings up another important point to consider when looking at supermarkets: what do individuals purchase at these stores? The study involved an analysis of the purchases of individuals living in a food desert by looking at the receipts from one month's grocery purchases. The results showed that the majority of the unhealthy foods that individuals were purchasing in stores came from supermarkets (Vaughan et al. 2017). It is evident that while supermarkets need to be made more accessible for the members of the population without easy transportation, it is also important that efforts are made to increase the appeal of healthy foods and to decrease the appeal of unhealthy foods. Within the supermarket, this can be done by providing subsidies to companies in order to reduce the prices of healthy foods, thus making them more available to consumers. Outside of the supermarket, planning new architecture around the aforementioned accessibility goals and implementing zoning laws to reduce the number of fast food purveyors in a given area can potentially increase the traffic to supermarkets. Another way to increase the purchase of healthy foods is through the introduction of nutritious foods by way of a community garden.

Nutritional Action

The implementation of community gardens can be a way to educate people about nutrition as well as a way to introduce a greater quantity of fruits and vegetables directly into the community. A Denver study of the impact of community gardening and the consumption of fruits and vegetables reinforces this claim. In one year, the gardeners consumed fruits and vegetables an average of 5.7 times daily in comparison to the 3.9 times daily that non-gardeners were consuming. Fifty-six percent of the gardeners reached the national consumption recommendation in comparison to twenty-five percent of non-gardeners (Litt et al. 2017). Interviews conducted also pointed towards the development of collective efficacy, a form of shared trust and responsibility for the common good of the neighborhood. The social

cohesion that stems from collective efficacy has been associated with decreased health issues, including obesity. (Teig et al. 2009) Given these results, it is possible that a mass implementation of community gardens to supplement the introduction of new supermarkets could increase the consumption of fruits and vegetables and potentially lead to a stronger social community to reinforce positive behaviors. The act of growing and consuming fruits and vegetables will introduce a greater quantity of healthy foods into the diets of these neighborhoods, and could potentially lead gardeners and their families to purchase foods similar to the ones they grow in their garden.

Brighter Tomorrow

The plague of malnutrition and poor health can be fought, and we can improve our nation's well-being. If efforts to introduce better nutrition into food deserts continue, the threat of cardiovascular disease will begin to decrease nationally, bringing obesity and diabetes numbers down with it. Establishing grocery stores in these neighborhoods will increase access to the fruits and vegetables that are essential to beneficial eating habits. By strategically locating new supermarkets in high traffic places, we can make it possible for individuals with limited transportation avenues to purchase the nutritious foods that were once considered out of reach. Working to reduce the availability of fast food vendors through zoning changes can begin to remove fast food from the diets of those living in food swamps. The formation of community gardens will spur the consumption of fruits and vegetables and promote a tighter sense of solidarity within communities. This solidarity will foster a shared responsibility to live healthier through the consumption of wholesome foods. When fruits and vegetables are in the gardens on every block and families begin to add them into their meals in greater quantities, the change will not only be mental—a widespread positive outlook—but it will also produce real physical change in the quality and quantity of nutritious food consumed by people in areas previously stricken with healthy food inequality. By working to remove food deserts and the underlying problems that allow them to persist, the United States can secure a healthier future for generations to come.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

The Impact of Racial Discordance on the Quality of Care Black Patients Receive

Jaelen King

A Brief History on Race and Medicine

“We have a general distrust in this community. I call it ‘subconscious rejection.’ The attitude is, ‘I’m going to rebel against this. You people have been telling us lies for years. Why should I believe you now?’”—Lucenia Dunn, former Tuskegee mayor (Morrison and Reeves 2002).

The medical system has mistreated and abused Black people since its conception. The mishandling of the Black body has been normalized due to its foundations in slavery. Historian of slavery Stephanie Smallwood states that chattel slavery “reduced people to the sum of their biological parts, thereby scaling [Black] life down to an arithmetical equation” (Smallwood 2008, 43). Any medical attention a slave received was not for their own benefit but rather their master’s. Disregard for the overall well-being of Black people is inherently intertwined with the practice of medicine in America. The lasting effects of these deeply ingrained anti-Black beliefs have impacted American medicine for its entire existence.

Although slavery was officially abolished in 1865, White Americans continued to treat Black people as inferior and undeserving of equality. Some White physicians wrote Black people off as a “debauched, ‘syphilis soaked,’ unfit race,” and the medical system of the late 19th and early 20th century had no regard for the well-being of Black people in America (Byrd and Clayton 2001, 95). Racial segregation was instituted as national policy, so Black people were denied access to many basic health care resources. Black students were only allowed to attend Black medical schools, of which there were few: “Meharry Medical College and Howard University School of Medicine

functioned as virtually the sole sources of trained black medical and health care professionals between 1910 and 1970” (205). The options available to Black people were limited, and, coupled with the socioeconomic disparities present in America, made obtaining adequate healthcare virtually impossible for a Black person through the middle of the twentieth century.

In the 1960s, Black people made progress in a variety of social, political and economic areas, and the healthcare system was not immune to these changes. Due to “increased access for large blocks of the African American population to some health care, often for the first time, and the initiation of federal funding for health services,” there was an observed improvement in Black health status for a short time period (Byrd and Clayton 2001, 215). While many of the policies and reforms put in place were superficial and did not adequately address the negative social determinants that caused the disparities in the first place, they did lay the groundwork for incremental improvements, which have continued. For example, the difference in life expectancy at birth between Black and White people consistently decreased from 2000 to 2014 (National Center for Health Statistics 2016, 37). However, this trend does not eliminate the fact that health inequities continue to pervade medical treatment and thus caused Black people to often receive worse care when compared to their White counterparts.

Lack of Black Representation in the Medical Field

The profession of medicine has large racial disparities. According to a study done by the Association of American Medical Colleges, over half (56.2 percent) of the active physicians practicing in America are White, while there are only a little over 45,000 Black physicians (5 percent of the total physician field); the other 38.8 percent of physicians identify as either Asian, Hispanic, Multiple Race Non-Hispanic, American Indian or Alaska Native, other, or they chose to not identify and thus were listed as unknown (Association of American Medical Colleges 2019). As a result, racial discordance in patient consultations is a common occurrence. Racial discordance refers to the situation in which a patient is of a different racial identity than their physician. Due to the high prevalence of racial discordance,

there has been a plethora of studies published that examine the effects this situation has on the quality of care Black patients receive. Unfortunately, the results are not promising. While all physicians go through various classes, internships, and residencies in order to receive their medical degrees, there is not a large emphasis on gaining cultural knowledge. There are certain things that one cannot learn from a textbook but rather must garner from life experiences. Since physicians are often not of the same race as their patients, the amount of similar experiences the two parties may have had is often minimal, if not nonexistent. Furthermore, the training that physicians receive does not expose them to an adequate variety of social circumstances. This disparity negatively impacts the way White physicians treat Black patients. Because of their ignorance, both unintentional and willful, of common issues a Black patient may experience, White physicians tend to be more callous when it comes to addressing topics that are sensitive to the Black community.

The hardened response of White physicians when it comes to the problems of Black patients is often a product of their own inherent anti-Black biases. While social culture has shifted away from explicit anti-Black racism, there is still a high level of implicit bias White people (and consequently White physicians) hold that negatively affects treatment of Black individuals. Medical researchers like Janice Sabin have found that “the majority [of physicians] held implicit preferences for Whites over Blacks” (Sabin, Nosek, Greenwald, and Rivara 2009, 906). However, it has been shown that Black physicians fight back against this anti-Black narrative. Sabin also argued, “African American MDs . . . showed no implicit racial bias, on average” (906). Black physicians provide for a less biased care environment that is, therefore, conducive to more positive health outcomes for Black patients. Although Black physicians at large are better able to relate to Black patients and consequently provide more considerate care, it does not mean that they are never involved in instances of prejudice. These moments often come up while Black physicians are in medical school learning the art of being a medical professional, as their position as a student renders them powerless against anti-Black preconceptions.

Dr. Damon Tweedy laments this sad plight in his memoir, *Black Man in a White Coat*. He recounts the story of a young, Black man who

suffered an unexpected stroke. When the man was brought to the hospital, Dr. Tweedy was a first year medical student and therefore was shadowing Dr. Wilson, a faculty neurologist. Dr. Wilson, who was White, posed questions to the students about the risk factors for stroke, and he placed particular emphasis on race, explaining “some would say that this is the most important variable of all” (Tweedy 2016, 3). During the consultation, he also “rattled off damning statistics about race and stroke” (3). Dr. Wilson had no personal connection to this information; they were simply statistical facts that affected the way he would view this Black patient. For Dr. Tweedy, the story was different.

In contrast to the perspective that Dr. Wilson provided, Dr. Tweedy had been exposed at an early age to the impact strokes have on Black families. During his teenage years, he saw one family member die from a severe stroke and another develop dementia due to a series of minor strokes (3). When Dr. Wilson rattled off the statistics related to racial disparities in strokes, Dr. Tweedy undoubtedly remembered those family members, and he was able to personalize the numbers. To Dr. Tweedy, the information Dr. Wilson provided was not simply random statistics to memorize; it meant something. The fact that he was personally invested in this situation allowed him to connect with the patient on a more humane level. This occurrence is but one example of how the racial background of a physician has a significant effect on their ability to diagnose issues objectively and develop effective treatment plans. Another area affected by racial discordance is the quality of communication present between physicians and patients.

The Importance of Communication

Communication is essential to the success of any relationship, but good communication has an especially significant impact on patient-physician relationships. Being a physician is a job that requires a high level of social interaction. Because of its gravity, there has been much investigation into what exactly effective communication does for patients and physicians.

Researchers have delved into a variety of ways in which patients interact with their physicians. Some areas of focus include “quality of patient-physician communication, patient-physician communication

satisfaction, information giving, partnership building, participatory decision-making, positive and negative affect or tone of physicians, as well as talk time and length of visit” (Shen et al. 2017, 3). While there is more to a doctor’s visit than the conversation between the physician and the patient, this experience plays a large role. The physician at hand can only address what the patient lets them know about. If the patient does not feel comfortable disclosing valuable details related to their ailment, the physician will be left in the dark. Although physicians are equipped with extensive medical knowledge that allows them to think of a host of underlying conditions that may cause a certain symptom, they cannot serve the patient effectively unless the patient lets them know about that symptom.

Just as important as the patient’s ability to communicate with the physician is the physician’s ability to communicate with the patient. “In fact, research has shown that effective patient-physician communication can improve a patient’s health as quantifiably as many drugs,” John M. Travaline and his team of fellow practicing physicians reveal. (Travaline, Ruchinskas, and D’Alonzo 2005, 13). It is the responsibility of the patient to maintain the health suggestions their physician recommends, but, if the patient cannot understand these recommendations, then they become impossible to follow. Oftentimes, physicians become so accustomed to using medical terminology that they fail to remember their patients are not as well versed. Susan Koch-Weser points out that “[m]edical terminology is often complex . . . It is not surprising, then that patients find it difficult to understand the words that their doctors use or misinterpret their meaning” (Koch-Weser, Dejong, and Rudd 2009, 371). Given the fact that this medical terminology can be so hard to comprehend, physicians must often rely on their ability to translate terms into common vernacular for their patients. This task is difficult enough as is, and its complexity is only exacerbated when the physician lacks full understanding of the patient’s background. Not being able to relate personally to one’s patients dramatically devalues the quality of care the physician can provide.

Racial Discordance

Due to the aforementioned principles, racial concordance has been deeply studied by the medical field, and a wide range of studies have examined the effects that racial concordance has on patient outcomes. The following section of the paper will present a broad overview of some of that research. There will be a primary focus on the quality of the relationship established between patient and physician. This research will demonstrate that, overall, racial discordance is synonymous with worse health outcomes for Black patients.

Racial discordance in patient-physician encounters refers to the scenario in which the patient being treated is not of the same race as the physician performing the treatment. When this situation presents itself, it tends to lead to certain obstructions in communication between the patient and the physician. Somnath Saha and co-authors elaborate, “barriers might arise from cultural or linguistic incongruity between patient and physician, from lack of mutual trust, or from racial discrimination” (Saha et al. 1999, 997). It is logical for the Black patient to possess an inherent distrust of the medical field, and for good reason. The treatment the Black body has received from American medicine throughout history has been far from ideal. Some prime examples of this abuse are J. Marion Sims’ gynecology experiments (Owens 2018) and the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment (Tuskegee University 2020). In both studies, White researchers took advantage of the Black body in order to advance the work in their field. However, the studies were specifically designed to profit White America and did little to advance the proper treatment of Black people. When this scarred history is paired with present day disparities, it makes for a tense relationship between the patient and their physician.

The best solution to resolve this tension is for the physician to find some sort of common ground in order to relate to their patient on a more personal level, outside of their role as a care provider. Sadly, it is often difficult for White doctors to find these commonalities with their Black patients. Bernice Kennedy and her coauthors explain, “patients and physicians that belong to the same race or ethnic groups are more likely to share cultural beliefs, values, and experiences in society, which in turn makes them more comfortable with each other” (Kennedy, Mathis, and Woods 2007, 58). A physician’s failure to

establish this level of comfort forces patients to be more closed off, thus making it harder for their physician to obtain necessary information from them. Failure to obtain the entirety of necessary information leads to insufficient treatment of the medical problem, which only reinforces the patient's presupposition that the physician is not truly invested in making them better. This vicious cycle of distrust and dissatisfaction has a negative effect on the health outcomes Black patients experience from these physician-patient interactions.

Communication is not only disrupted due to a disconnect in cultural background between the patient and the physician. As stated earlier, there is an implicit anti-Black bias present in the medical system. Building on this declaration, a study by Elizabeth N. Chapman and her coauthors investigated the implicit bias physicians have, as well as its effects on their medical decision making. Across a variety of studies, the research team found "a significant pro-White bias" present among physicians, and they also determined that participants "implicitly associated Blacks with uncooperativeness, particularly regarding procedures" (Chapman, Kaatz, and Carnes 2013, 1501). Since the physicians already viewed White patients in a more positive light, they were more inclined to provide them with better treatment. Since the physicians assumed the Black patient would be less cooperative, they felt less inclined to devote a significant amount of time to planning out a personalized treatment for each Black patient. Physicians have a hectic and time consuming job, so if they feel like their time would be wasted on a Black patient, they are not going to pay much attention to them. Even though physicians' bias may not be explicit, it is still noticed by patients, and it forces the patients to have a more negative view of their experience.

Black patients often feel ignored by their physicians, disregarded and written off before they are even given a chance. A study done by Lisa J. Staton and her collaborators concluded that "physicians underestimated pain in 33% of nonblack as compared to 47% of blacks" (Staton et al. 2007, 533). This discrepancy is rooted in slavery ideology that biologically differentiated Black people from White people. Slaves were believed to carry a "Negro disease [making them] insensible to pain when subjected to punishment" (Caplan and Cartwright 2009, 35). There was no sense of restraint or hesitation from

slave owners during beatings and whippings because slaves were not considered worthy of humane treatment. When modern day physicians fail to properly diagnose a Black patient's pain, they evoke these long-standing, anti-Black sentiments (for further study of this topic, see Hoffman, Trawalter, Axt, and Oliver 2016). Many Black patients are distrusting of the medical system, so having physicians discount the pain they feel solidifies their skepticism. The medical system must work to find creative ways to break down this suspicion and earn the trust of the Black patient.

Potential Solutions

There are two main ways that the medical field can address this issue. First and foremost, there must be a concerted effort to increase the number of practicing Black physicians in America. Increasing this number will allow for there to be more racially concordant patient-physician relationships, which can lead to better health outcomes for patients. Secondly, there must be an increase in cultural competence training, which "can improve the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of medical trainees" (Jernigan et al. 2016, 150). These improvements will better equip physicians to treat patients who may come from differing backgrounds. Medicine is an ever changing field, but at its core, its main purpose is to provide treatment to people in need. Until adequate steps are taken to address the disadvantages plaguing the Black community, this simple objective will never be realized.

Having Black physicians has been proven to have a positive effect on Black patients' health outcomes. For example, Alsan, Garrick and Graziani suggest that increasing the number of Black doctors could reduce the Black-White male gap in cardiovascular mortality by 19 percent (2018). This anticipated improvement would result largely from the fact that Black physicians are less likely to have such drastic implicit bias dominating their mental psyche when dealing with Black patients (see Table 1 in Chapman, Kaatz, and Carnes, 2013). Since they are better able to relate personally with these patients, Black physicians are more likely to listen intently and actively pursue the best treatment method possible. Therefore, Black physicians are able to better resist

the anti-Black biases present in medicine. This aptitude allows for Black physicians to take better care of Black patients.

This paper does not argue that a physician has to be of the same race as their patient in order to relate with them. Another of Dr. Tweedy's reflections illustrates how racial discordance can be overcome. Dr. Tweedy had been assigned to a racist patient who had claimed that he "did not want any 'nigger doctors' taking care of him" (Tweedy 2016, 108). However, after about a week and a half of care, he started to open up to Dr. Tweedy. Dr. Tweedy was able to relate with him over sports, and breaking down this initial barrier allowed for more open dialogue to ensue. The patient ended up dying while in the hospital, but his family expressed their gratitude for the care Dr. Tweedy gave, even going so far as to say, "my granddaddy [the patient] liked you" (127; see chapter 5 "Confronting Hate" for the complete story).

Dr. Tweedy was able to overcome the initial racial barrier in order to establish a positive and productive relationship with the patient and his family. Sadly, this triumph is often not the case. Rather than work to overcome difficulties, either the physician writes the patient off as noncompliant, or the patient deems the physician insincere. These rash conclusions negatively affect the health outcomes of the patient, as their treatment is often truncated. Increasing the amount of racial bias training and cultural exposure medical students receive would produce more understanding doctors who are more willing to put the extra effort in to develop positive relationships with their patients. Present research has proven that "there is room for improvement in the relationships that physicians have with patients of nonconcordant backgrounds" (Saha, Komaromy, Koepsell, and Bindman 1999, 1003). In order to obtain this improvement, we must actively and intentionally seek out new strategies that address the implicit bias present in medicine. Not only must the bias be addressed, but we also must implement new trainings that actively work to destroy it.

Conclusion

This paper sought to demonstrate that the present healthcare system is dominated by an inherent anti-Black bias that negatively affects health outcomes for Black patients. The impact of the American medical system's troublesome history in the era of slavery can be seen in the way Black people are treated. Failure to have an adequate number of Black physicians causes racially discordant patient-physician relationships, which in turn can have a negative impact on physician-patient communication. This shortcoming, when coupled with the implicit bias many physicians already possess, causes Black patients to have poor health outcomes. Until the medical system is restructured so that Black life is valued, racially discordant patient-physician relationships will continue to negatively impact the Black patient experience.

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CHAPTER NINE

The Impact of Extraversion in Loneliness, Social Isolation, and Quarantine Mental Health Interventions

Ryan Mijumbi

When Coronavirus (COVID-19) first became a global pandemic, many nations began to create regulations and strategies to slow the spread of the novel disease. In the United States, many states instituted stay-at-home orders. In addition, health experts recommended social distancing, the practice of keeping space between oneself and other people outside of one's home (Centers for Disease Control 2020, Prevent). Whether or not a person was diagnosed with COVID-19, people who were non-essential workers, along with those able to work remotely, found themselves effectively quarantined in their own homes. Many workers lost their jobs and students across the country had to continue their coursework via "virtual learning."

A belief that extroverts and introverts were experiencing the quarantine differently was put forward through social media. The belief suggests that extroverts were distraught that they could not socialize with people, while introverts were content with being at home and not being around others. Although the light-hearted posts and videos likely stem from stereotypes, they might be minimizing the fact that people with certain psychological characteristics may be more vulnerable to the effects of being quarantined at home than others (Kecmanovic 2020). In addition to advocating for public health measures to reduce the spread of coronavirus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recognized that social distancing can cause people to feel lonely and isolated while experiencing increased stress and anxiety from the pandemic itself (CDC 2020, Coping with Stress).

Although research on the relationship between quarantine and mental health is fairly recent, there is already a substantial amount of

scholarly literature on the relationship between personality traits and responses to loneliness and social isolation. Furthermore, personality traits, such as extraversion, play a role in coping strategies (Amirkhan 1995) and can alter the impact of certain mental health treatments (Thalmayer et al. 2018). By understanding how social isolation and loneliness affect extroverts (high extraversion) and introverts (low extraversion) respectively, health practitioners and those quarantined can apply the research findings to develop and execute quarantine interventions that might better account for differences in personality traits among people. In this literature review, *extrovert* will refer to people who score high on the trait of extraversion while *introvert* will refer to people who score low on the trait.

Extraversion: Type versus Trait

People who talk about introverts and extroverts typically think of them as different personality types, but most scholars see them as variations of a single personality trait. The idea of personality characteristics being qualitatively different stems from the typological approach; whereas the idea that they are quantitatively different stems from the trait approach. The typological approach treats differences between people as a matter of kind and divides people into clearly distinguished types (Funder 2016). Swiss psychologist Carl Jung, who popularized the concept of extroverts and introverts, believed extroverts focused their energy outwards (e.g., toward other people) while introverts focused their energy inwards (e.g., solitary) (Waude 2017). In contrast to Jung's original idea of where one's energy is oriented, most people today define *extroverted* as sociable and outgoing and *introverted* as shy and withdrawn (Meyers & Briggs Foundation, n.d.).

The trait approach describes the differences among people as a matter of degree and rates people by measuring how low or high they score on one or more personality traits (Funder 2016). Most contemporary research on introverts and extroverts is based on the personality trait extraversion, which is a part of the Five Factor Model (Big Five). The Big Five comes from a subset of the trait approach known as the *essential-trait approach*, which tries to narrow the list of personality traits to only those that are most essential to predicting and

understanding behavior. After 70 years of research using the *lexical hypothesis*, an argument that important aspects of human life are labeled and exist in all languages under many words, the Big Five identified five core personality traits: *openness to experience*, *conscientiousness*, *extraversion*, *agreeable-ness*, and *neuroticism* (Funder 2016).

Each Big Five personality trait represents a broad dimension of personality and they are each *orthogonal*, meaning that getting a high or low score on one trait does not predict high or low scores on any of the others (Cherry 2019; Funder 2016). For example, the personality trait extraversion represents a continuum between extreme extroverts and extreme introverts, since, in reality, most people lie somewhere in between the high and low ends (Cherry 2019). Additionally, in their work, Costa and McCrae (1995) have divided each Big Five trait into six facets, which helps to identify more specific traits in an otherwise complex label (cited in Funder 2016). For extraversion, the six facets are *warmth*, *gregariousness*, *activity*, *excitement seeking*, and *positive emotion* (Funder 2016). While many people like to focus on how extroverts and introverts differ on social aspects (i.e., gregariousness), there is more to extraversion than sociability, or gaining or losing energy in social settings.

Loneliness

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, public health experts were already concerned about America's growing *loneliness epidemic*. The line between acute loneliness and chronic, long-term problems is not generally agreed upon, and the common experience of loneliness is not clinically defined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM-5). Nevertheless, loneliness often goes hand-in-hand with different mental disorders due to the difficulty of discerning whether loneliness is a symptom or a cause of a mental health condition, like depression. Nevertheless, recent surveys on coronavirus-related loneliness reveal that feelings of loneliness affect everyone, everywhere, and all ages of adulthood (Ducharme 2020).

Loneliness is the feeling of not experiencing one's desired quantity and quality of social relationships (Mund and Neyer 2019).

Since humans are social beings and desire social inclusion, feelings of loneliness are often drowned out by attempts to reestablish social ties and re-affiliate with others. However, studies and meta-analyses have shown that a substantial proportion of individuals seem to feel lonelier than others, based on their disposition. Additionally, individuals high on the loneliness measure use a specific pattern of information processing that responds to cues of social threat with increased vigilance. This hypervigilance seeks to protect the lonely individual from further harm rather than to attempt re-affiliation with the threatening cues of social exclusion (Mund and Neyer 2019). In other words, the urge of a lonely person to keep safe from social exclusion paradoxically prevents that person from connecting with others in order to shed the feeling of loneliness.

The Relationship between Loneliness and Extraversion

Next we should ask, “How does loneliness relate to personality traits, especially extraversion?” In their meta-analysis, Buecker and her associates discovered that one of the key reasons for investigating the relationship between the Big Five and loneliness was to help identify subgroups of individuals that may be at risk of developing loneliness. Their discovery can inform future research on which personality traits are protective and which are risk factors for loneliness. When it comes to the interplay between extraversion and loneliness, studies have found a negative association. High levels of extraversion predicted greater participation in social activities, preference for engaging in social interactions, greater social networks, and more perceived support from peers. Additionally, individuals high in extraversion are more likely to engage thoroughly in everyday life situations, and they are associated with positive interpersonal outcomes like popularity and likability. Overall, the results from this meta-analysis showed that extraversion and neuroticism had the strongest relation with loneliness out of the Big Five, and that the average lonely person has low levels of extraversion and high levels of neuroticism (Buecker et al. 2020).

Interestingly, since finding friends is more important for younger people than older people, the negative relationship between extraversion and loneliness is stronger in adolescents than in older

adults due to the outgoing personality youths need in order to make friends (Buecker et al. 2020). In the study conducted by Teppers and her coauthors, both peer-related and adolescent-parent-related loneliness were negatively correlated with extraversion (Teppers et al. 2013). Furthermore, some studies have found that high extraversion has a negative association with positive attitudes towards aloneness (cited in Teppers et al. 2013). In 2016, Mund and Neyer conducted a longitudinal study on the associations between loneliness and personality development across adulthood. They found that increased levels of loneliness predicted lower levels of extraversion fifteen years later (cited in Mund and Neyer 2019). However, in their most recent study, no evidence of loneliness substantially predicting personality trait development was found in a period of four years (Mund and Neyer 2019).

Social Isolation

Social isolation and loneliness are often lumped together but, according to Perissinotto, they are two different concepts (cited in Ducharme 2020). Social isolation is the tangible absence of strong and supportive social networks with objective structural factors, like living alone (Taylor 2019; Thompson et al. 2020). In 2019, the US Census Bureau released data showing that the number of American households with just one person rose from 17 percent in 1969 to 28 percent in 2019 (Ducharme 2020). This does not mean that all individuals living alone experience feelings of loneliness, but the risk for developing loneliness is increased. Since older adults typically have smaller social networks than younger adults and have faced more separative life events (such as retirement or death of loved ones), social isolation and loneliness can pose significant problems to older adults (Taylor 2020).

Despite social isolation being commonly perceived as an issue for older adults, reports have shown that it also impacts children and adolescents (Nguyen et al. 2020). Social isolation is associated with several negative health outcomes, including mortality, greater physical health morbidities, worse self-rated physical and mental health, greater psychological distress and depressive symptoms, and greater cognitive decline and impairment (Taylor 2020). For adolescents, the intense role

of peer, parent-adolescent, and romantic relationships in social development can make feelings of loneliness or isolation especially difficult during this stage of life. Self-perceived experiences of peer exclusion or “being an outsider” have been associated with emotional stress, loneliness, hopelessness, and sadness (Thompson et al. 2020). Lastly, the results from Taylor’s study on older adults show that greater overall social isolation was associated with greater loneliness, even after controlling for key socio-demographic factors (Taylor 2020).

The Relationship between Social Isolation and Extraversion

Although there is very little data on the relationship between social isolation and extraversion, Pucker, Temes, and Zanarini conducted a study that looked into the prevalence of social isolation in patients with borderline personality disorder (BPD) over a twenty-year interval to try to identify the best baseline predictors for social isolation in patients with BPD. According to past studies that have used social network analysis (SNA) to examine the quantity and quality of BPD patients’ relationships, the SNAs revealed that patients with BPD, as compared with subjects without personality disorders, had fewer social relationships and reported more conflict and dissatisfaction in their existing relationships (cited in Pucker et al. 2019). By utilizing a longitudinal study to examine the differences in social isolation between patients with BPD and comparison subjects, Pucker’s team found that a significantly higher percentage of BPD patients were socially isolated across twenty years of follow-up, in comparison to subjects with other psychopathologies. This suggests that the differences found in the cross-sectional SNAs’ findings are stable longitudinally. Additionally, since personality traits in childhood and adolescence are predictive of many long-term outcomes, the study also revealed that low levels of extraversion and agreeableness predicted social isolation in multivariate analyses. The researchers reasoned that lack of positive emotions and sociable demeanor (high extraversion) and lack of cooperation and compassion (high agreeableness) would lead a person to have fewer emotionally sustaining relationships.

Current Mental Health Interventions and Extraversion

In April 2020, a survey by SocialPro, a social-advice company, found that roughly a third of Americans reported feeling lonelier than usual since stay-at-home orders were instituted (cited in Ducharme 2020). Neither living situation nor gender were predictors of coronavirus-related loneliness. At least twenty percent of respondents from each age group polled (18-75) reported loneliness due to COVID-19. Even with technology allowing video-chat platforms and social media networks to keep people connected digitally, studies are showing that elderly adults are benefitting from video-chats and instant messages while younger adults are feeling lonelier due to feeling left out by social-media posts and missing out on valuable, in-person interactions (cited in Ducharme 2020).

One positive that Perissinotto sees in COVID-19 is that it is making loneliness easier to talk about, which could encourage people who struggle with loneliness to seek help and reach out to the personal connections they do have (cited in Ducharme 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) and the CDC have shared information and recommendations regarding mental well-being and coping strategies to deal with the mental health implications of the COVID-19 pandemic (Panchal et al. 2020). Mindfulness training and cognitive-behavioral therapy can be taught by mental health professionals via telehealth, which will allow people (young and old) to reframe the way they perceive social support. This training can also provide anti-loneliness techniques (Ducharme 2020). Unfortunately, this pandemic is likely to have both short- and long-term implications for mental health and substance abuse, and the pandemic is spotlighting both existing and new barriers to services that address these problems (Panchal et al. 2020).

The knowledge gained from researching the relationship between personality and loneliness can inform prevention and intervention strategies against loneliness and point out personality-typical behavior related to loneliness that can be considered in therapeutic settings (Buecker et al. 2020). The Big Five personality trait dimensions have been consistently associated with mental health disorders and have been shown to relate to virtually all measurable life outcomes (such as health, longevity, friendships, and success) (Thalmayer 2018). For

example, regarding the trait of extraversion, Thalmayer found that high extraversion led to successful formation of a therapeutic alliance and more successful termination outcomes in individual therapy; it also predicted better response to both psychotherapy and medication treatments. Additionally, several studies have found that high extraversion is linked with active and direct coping (such as seeking information or support to change the stressful situation) and mature coping (rational, persevering, adaptive, and positive responses) (Amirkhan et al 1995). In two studies conducted by Amirkhan, Risinger, and Swickert, extraversion proved to influence the choice of a coping strategy significantly by predisposing gregarious extroverts towards support-seeking responses. The researchers speculate that attributes like warmth, positive emotionality, and assertiveness (rather than gregariousness or excitement seeking) lead extroverts to seek help much sooner than introverts. Additionally, the ability of extroverts to attract and maintain large networks of friends complements their assertive character and enables them to call upon their social support systems in times of trouble (Amirkhan et al 1995).

Discussion

With COVID-19 confronting so many Americans with the challenges of loneliness and social isolation, is it fair to assume that one end of the *extraverted* spectrum has it better than the other? In its April 2020 survey, Greater Divide, a Virginia-based research and consulting firm, found that people who scored high on extraversion were less likely to experience mental health issues as a result of quarantine (Travers 2020). As discussed above, individuals high in extraversion are predicted to have greater social networks (Buecker et al. 2020), to have support-seeking coping strategies (Amirkhan et al 1995), and to experience more frequent and intense positive emotions (Travers 2020). In contrast, individuals low in extraversion are more likely to experience loneliness (Buecker et al. 2020), to be socially isolated (especially among BPD patients) (Pucker et al. 2019), and to be less likely to seek help quickly than are extroverts (Amirkhan et al 1995).

Now, this is not to say that extroverts are better at coping with mental health and loneliness than introverts. It is possible that COVID-

19 has thrown everyone into recurring confrontations with feelings of loneliness and reminders of one's socially isolated state. But, health professionals and the general public alike need to understand that, despite their differences, extroverts and introverts need to maintain relationships and social contacts to protect their emotional well-being (Kecmanovic 2020). Extroverts demonstrate that people experiencing coronavirus-related loneliness and social isolation can use social media, video-chats, calls, and texts to reach out to their social networks for support (Ducharme 2020). Introverts demonstrate that proactive efforts from their social networks and mental health interventions mediate feelings of loneliness, but over-stimulation from numerous virtual chats can also drain them just as much as in-person social functions (Kecmanovic 2020).

Due to the recency of the COVID-19 pandemic, research on the direct relationship between quarantine and extraversion is fairly new. In contrast with the research done on extraversion and loneliness, not much research has been done on the relationship between extraversion and social isolation. Although the findings of the study that Pucker and her colleagues undertook are likely not generalizable to people without mental disorders, they can still serve as a jumping off point for analyzing the relationship between social isolation and personality traits in normal-range psychology. Additionally, the Big Five trait *neuroticism* was found to be positively correlated with loneliness in some of the literature. This shows that each Big Five trait accounts for different parts of loneliness and social isolation.

Conclusion

No matter one's level of extraversion, people require interpersonal connections, coping strategies, and mental well-being when faced with stressful and isolating circumstances. To deal with coronavirus-related loneliness, we need to encourage everyone to reach out to peers and seek help from professionals. Despite people with high extraversion benefitting from support networks (Buecker et al. 2020) and positive emotions (Travers 2020), everyone on the extraversion spectrum needs to learn to reframe feelings of loneliness, even if they cannot change their social isolation. To do this, an individual needs to

recognize the social supports they currently have and re-affiliate with them in times of loneliness (Mund and Neyer 2019). If Americans are to recover from both the loneliness epidemic and the COVID-19 pandemic, then we need to take loneliness and social-isolation seriously, and the health care system needs to implement measures to spread awareness and screen people of all ages for feelings of loneliness (Dumarche 2020). By researchers and mental health experts utilizing correlations with personality traits, mental health interventions can take into account these predictive, protective, and risk factors that contribute to individuals developing chronic and long-term loneliness.

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CHAPTER TEN

The Impact of Federal Court Rulings on Pupil Assignment and School Demographics in Wake and Mecklenburg Counties in North Carolina

Samuel S. Timmons

Over 65 years have passed since the United States Supreme Court's landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which invalidated segregating schools on the basis of race. Yet, today, the nation's schools are more segregated than they were nearly 50 years ago. This reality does not have one single cause; the cessation of court-ordered busing, rapidly changing city demographics, and the mass movement of pupils to private and charter schools have all played a role in resegregating the nation's public schools. Two of the principal causes for resegregation, however, are the persistent reality of segregated neighborhoods and the end of court-mandated, racially-proportionate pupil assignment. For the purpose of this project, I will focus on these factors. I seek to explain how federal court rulings in *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools*, *Eisenberg v. Montgomery County Public Schools*, and *Tuttle v. Arlington School Board*, invalidating school assignment policy based on race, impacted pupil assignment and school demographics in Wake and Mecklenburg counties in North Carolina between 2000 and 2010. These counties, the two largest in the state, have interesting histories.

I will provide a historical background of desegregation and school assignment policy in Mecklenburg and Wake. I will describe how the two school boards retooled their pupil assignment policies in response to federal court rulings. I will explain the demographic impact and effects on student outcomes in both districts. Finally, I will summarize my conclusions and provide commentary on the intersection of race and poverty as it pertains to the law and pupil assignment policy.

Historical Background

The *Brown v. Board of Education* decision faced fierce opposition from Southern leaders, prompting many of them to attempt to circumvent the Court's ruling to desegregate the schools (Byrnes 1956). The Supreme Court reasserted its commitment to desegregation in a follow-up decision, commonly known as *Brown II*, asserting that desegregation should occur "with all deliberate speed" (*Brown*, 349 S. Ct. 247). The North Carolina General Assembly passed multiple laws seeking to hinder desegregation efforts without appearing belligerent to the federal government. The Pupil Assignment Act devolved control over desegregation policies to the local school boards and included a taxing appeals process in order to discourage integration attempts, while the Pearsall Plan further empowered local school boards (Smith 1960). Although not as brash as other Southern states, North Carolina engaged in systematic efforts that slowed the pace of integration by making the process more arduous for families seeking to integrate schools.

Mecklenburg County, which includes Charlotte, the largest city in the state, engaged in "token integration," meaning it practiced minimal desegregation in order to be technically in compliance with *Brown*. By 1964, only 21 of the 109 schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System (CMS) housed both Black and White students. In 1969, Judge James McMillan of the Western District of North Carolina ruled that CMS's desegregation efforts were inadequate. Two years later, the US Supreme Court upheld McMillan's decision in *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg* (1971). The Court held that: (1) racial quotas were acceptable tools for integration that represented starting points rather than inflexible requirements; (2) one-race schools were not inherently problematic, but necessitated strict scrutiny if they laid in a mixed-race district; (3) district courts were empowered to alter school districting lines; and (4) busing was an acceptable tool for desegregation, provided that bus rides were not onerously long (*Swann*, 402 S. Ct. 25-31). The decision established by federal law that busing was an appropriate desegregation measure in school districts that theoretically would have one-race schools if they maintained neighborhood school assignment policies. This led to widespread busing throughout the South, representing a watershed

moment for the post-*Brown* civil rights era, and reasserting the federal government's power over the states in the face of both boisterous and quiet dissent.

In Mecklenburg, a Citizens Advisory Group formed and submitted a proposal to Judge McMillan that encouraged more vigorous desegregation through busing. Judge McMillan accepted this proposal and closed the *Swann* case in 1975 (*Capacchione*, 57 F. Supp. 2d 236). Charlotte was lauded nationwide as a city that had integrated schools successfully without major disruptions or violence (Grundy 2017, 81).

In Wake County, the predominantly White county school system merged with the capital city of Raleigh's system, which was predominantly Black. The two formed the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) in 1976. The system naturally created a more diverse school system because of the distinct demographics of the two prior systems. Wake also implemented a magnet school program that offered special programs for students. The magnet schools were often located in Black, low-income neighborhoods to encourage White families to voluntarily participate in busing and thereby create racially diverse schools (Carlson et al. 2020, 265). In addition, Wake implemented the 15-45 rule to keep each school in the district between 15-45 percent minority, because minorities constituted approximately 30 percent of the total district population (Carlson et al. 2020, 265). This policy continued throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

Meanwhile in Charlotte, the busing plan was falling out of favor by the 1990s. The city rapidly grew, and many newcomers found the long bus rides inconvenient (Morantz 1996, 184). Like WCPSS, CMS implemented a magnet school program to encourage diversity. It mandated that these schools be 60 percent non-Black and 40 percent Black in order to reflect the demographics of the district as a whole. It is important to note that the CMS policy was stricter than WCPSS's standard, and seats in CMS magnet schools were saved for students of particular races (*Capacchione*, 57 F. Supp. 2d 287).

In 1997, William Capacchione, a CMS parent, filed a lawsuit against CMS, alleging that its school assignment policy utilized a racial quota that violated his daughter's Fourteenth Amendment right to Equal Protection (*Capacchione*, 57 F. Supp. 2d 239). Capacchione's

daughter, a White kindergartner, had been denied admittance to a magnet elementary school in an effort to keep the 60-40 ratio intact. The case questioned whether CMS had reached “unitary” status, meaning that no “vestiges” of the previously unequal “dual school system” under segregation remained (*Capacchione*, 57 F. Supp. 2d 242). The *Swann* case was reactivated, and in *Capacchione v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1999), federal District Court Judge Robert Potter held that CMS was unitary, and was thus no longer under federal court order to desegregate. Potter analyzed the six “Green factors”—student assignment, faculty, staff, transportation, extracurricular activities and facilities—in accordance with *Green v. County School Board of New Kent* (*Green*, 391 S. Ct. 430), to determine whether school inequalities in CMS appeared to be “vestiges of the dual school system” (*Capacchione*, 57 F. Supp. 2d 255). He found that CMS had eliminated these vestiges “to the extent practicable” (*Capacchione*, 57 F. Supp. 2d 257).

Potter also held that the magnet school policy was unconstitutional because the racial quota was too rigid and not sufficiently narrowly tailored (*Capacchione*, 57 F. Supp. 2d 291). He noted that, “[m]odern Supreme Court precedent suggests that there is only one compelling state interest that will justify race-based classifications: remedying the effects of past racial discrimination/constitutional violations” (*Capacchione*, 57 F. Supp. 2d 241). Potter reasoned that there was no longer a specific historical violation to remedy, and so he released CMS from court order, declared the district unitary, and enjoined it from using race-based policies to assign students to schools (*Capacchione*, 57 F. Supp. 2d 294).

During the same year, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, which includes North Carolina in its jurisdiction, invalidated school assignment policies that assigned students on the basis of race in Arlington County, VA in *Tuttle v. Arlington County School Board* (1999), and Montgomery County, MD in *Eisenberg v. Montgomery County Public Schools* (1999). In *Tuttle*, the Court ruled that Arlington’s weighted lottery that accounted for race was unconstitutional. The Court noted that while it was unclear whether diversity was a compelling governmental interest, Arlington could have

implemented a policy to promote diversity that was more narrowly tailored and did not include a “race test” (*Tuttle*, 195 F.3d 707).

These cases illustrate that the tide was turning during the 1990s. Busing was unpopular. In addition, increasingly conservative courts were questioning what means were acceptable for achieving diversity, how long federal desegregation efforts should last, and whether diversity was even a compelling governmental interest. The final question is still a pressing one in 2020, but independent of the “diversity for diversity’s sake” question, the socioeconomic implications of resegregated schools are noteworthy. In response to these federal court rulings, Wake and Mecklenburg adopted vastly different approaches that triggered vastly different demographic and student outcomes.

Changes in School Board Policy

In 2000, the Wake County Board of Education unanimously decided to implement a new school assignment plan that did not consider race. At each school, Wake sought to limit the number of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch (FRL) and the number of students performing below grade level to less than or equal to 40 percent and 25 percent, respectively (Carlson et al. 2020, 266). In this manner, no school would have an extremely high concentration of low-income students nor a high concentration of underachieving students. Beginning with the Coleman Report of 1966, a breadth of educational research has indicated that student achievement is strongly linked to socioeconomic and neighborhood considerations (Coleman 1966). Therefore, a socioeconomic (SES) integration policy could be less controversial than a racial integration policy, and more sound from an educational research standpoint.

Because of the unfortunate correlation between income and race in the United States, the SES integration policy preserved some level of racial desegregation in Wake County. Observing the timing of its implementation, it is tempting to assume that Wake implemented the policy purely as a means to preserve racial integration by using SES as a proxy for race. However, a number of factors led to the decision. During the 1990s, Wake collected data on student performance and

published reports that included data regarding race, SES, and achievement. Authors of one such report summarized findings in regard to low-income students: “the risk factors for individual [low-income] students can be ameliorated by extra support and academic assistance to ensure academic success.” It continued, “a high concentration of low-income students in a school, however, appears to have negative effects on students, teachers, and the school, and these effects extend beyond the effect of the individual students’ economic condition” (Wake County Public School System 1999, 1). Authors of this 1999 report concluded that “students are most successful when they are in heterogeneous classes in socio-economically diverse schools in which concentration of poverty is kept as low as possible” (Wake County Public School System 1999, 3). This conclusion underlines a reason to avoid maintaining high-poverty schools. The report noted that Norfolk, Virginia’s decision in 1986 to abandon desegregation and rely on neighborhood schools had resulted in “severe concentrations of poverty in the segregated schools,” and widened the gap in test scores between Black and White students in the district (Wake County Public School System 1999, 3). These reports indicate that school leaders in Wake County were studying the correlation between race, socioeconomic status and student achievement before deciding to implement its SES policy in 2000.

It is clear that the timing of the policy change can be somewhat attributed to the rulings in *Capacchione*, *Tuttle*, and *Eisenberg*. In a recent interview, Bill Fletcher, a Wake school board member, explained that he felt that SES was more of an indicator for student achievement than race, because students from affluent families have access to resources that can help them inside the classroom (Fletcher 2020). This too, points to the indirect benefit of racial desegregation, which historically had inherently facilitated SES integration. Although research highlights the many benefits derived from diverse schools in preparing children for a multiracial society, the glaring difference in achievement is as socioeconomic as it is racial, and thus gives both SES and racial integration credence.

Fletcher recounted that:

The tom-toms were sounding in Mecklenburg County that *Swann* was going to be overturned . . . And so, we knew that we were going to have to do something different if Charlotte was declared unitary. We were looking at our options, and again, my bias was toward SES because that gave us more information as to the specific needs of the students. Others were looking at SES because it was somewhat of a proxy for race. So, we had both pools of thought there. (Fletcher 2020)

It is evident that although board members had different schools of thought, they all felt that a diverse classroom, be it racially or socioeconomically diverse, was crucial to the education of students. One can think of their differing reasonings as “hard” or “soft.” Regardless, all board members were unanimous in their decision, and remarkably pragmatic in their efforts to encourage diversity and improve achievement of low-income students. Wake County Board of Education Attorney Ann Majestic was quoted in the *Raleigh News & Observer* at the time as saying, “We’re really trying to look at educationally driven factors that might have [integrated schools] as a byproduct” (Silberman 1999). The federal court rulings demonstrably impacted the *timing* of the switch to SES pupil assignment policy in Wake County, if not the policy itself. It certainly moved the board’s hand in a manner that would affect school demographics for the next decade.

In Mecklenburg, the Board of Education appealed the *Capacchione* decision, but two years later, the Fourth Circuit upheld Potter’s decision that Mecklenburg was unitary (*Belk*, 269 F.3d 305). In 2001, CMS adopted its Family Choice Plan. The plan primarily relied on neighborhood schools, but provided magnet schools and gave the option for students to transfer out of high-poverty¹ schools (Mickelson, Smith, and Southworth 2009, 136). The Board feared substantial resegregation due to residential segregation throughout the district, so it

¹ Although WCPSS set its target for 40 percent FRL, mid-high poverty schools are characterized by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) as those where 50.1-75 percent of students are eligible for FRL and defines high-poverty schools as those where over 75 percent of students eligible for FRL. From https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/pdf/coe_clb.pdf.

included the Equity Plan within the Family Choice Plan to provide resources to high-poverty schools. The Equity Plan provided for lower teacher-to-student ratios, salary supplements for teachers, and improved facilities (Mickelson, Smith, and Southworth 2009, 135-36).

Arthur Griffin, the African-American school board chair at the time, was the only member to vote against the new pupil assignment policy. Griffin was later quoted in the *Charlotte Observer*: “It was my toughest time—to be that one vote” (Flono 2014). Griffin felt that the safeguards provided by the Equity Plan would not be adequate to save high-poverty schools (Flono 2014). Time would prove his theory correct.

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board’s adoption of its race-neutral policy was a direct result of the *Capacchione* ruling. Ironically, although CMS had sought to remain under court order, it had been ruled against. As a result, the Board could no longer pursue diversity under the auspices of being under court order. Without a government mandate to facilitate racial desegregation, the Board was susceptible to the pressures from the community, which resulted in its decision to implement a neighborhood school policy. This policy resulted in widespread resegregation and adverse effects, particularly for low-income African-American students, which I will detail in the next section.

Racial and Socioeconomic Demographic Impact

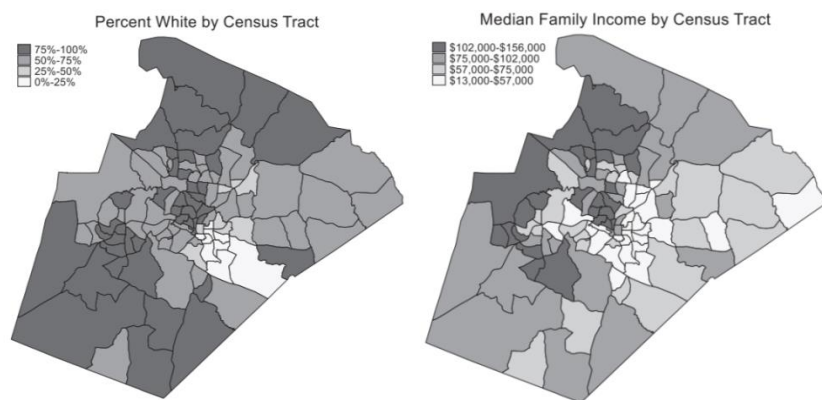
Wake’s cognizance of the dangers of having several high-poverty schools was well-reflected in its SES integration policy, which remained in place from the 2000-01 school year until 2009-10. The policy successfully limited the number of high-poverty schools. As detailed by Gary Orfield and John Charles Boger in their 2005 book, *School Segregation: Must the South Turn Back?*, over 75 percent of Wake County Schools adhered to the 40 percent low-income and 25 percent student achievement diversity caps during the first two years of the policy (275).

At the same time, the policy somewhat preserved racial desegregation. The number of racially desegregated schools decreased from 64.6 percent to 60 percent when the policy was first introduced,

and then increased to 63.3 percent in the second year of the policy (Orfield and Boger 2005, 275). A comprehensive 2019 study on the Wake SES policy noted that Black-White exposure decreased over the years that the policy was in place, but attributed this to the fact that the overall share of White students in WCPSS decreased from 59.7 percent in 2003 to 50.7 percent in 2010 (Carlson et al. 2020, 280). The study concluded that overall, SES integration did *not* substantially change the racial segregation of schools for the average student, but it substantially changed it for students who otherwise would have attended majority-minority or 75 percent minority schools. For Black students who theoretically would have attended schools that were greater than or equal to 75 percent minority, these schools would have been 14 percent White; in reality, these Black students attended schools that were 38 percent White, indicating that the SES policy did make a difference in racial segregation, at least for students who theoretically would have attended racially isolated schools (Carlson et al. 2020, 285).

The study noted that, as in many places across the country, wealth gaps between Black and White families contribute to residential segregation in Wake County. Researchers included a figure juxtaposing maps of the county, also here as Figure 1, and noted “considerable overlap between low-income tracts and majority-black tracts” (Carlson et al. 2020, 293). In 2007, the median income for White families in Wake County was \$90,000, while the median income for Black families was roughly half of that amount (Carlson et al. 2020, 293). This income inequality, fueled in part by the history of redlining and disparities in educational opportunities, naturally facilitates residential segregation. On a grander scale, this residential segregation can result in concentrations of minority students at high-poverty schools, or schools with fewer resources than more affluent schools in the same district. This can corrupt equality of opportunity, as some students are relegated to worse schools and are more likely to have worse educational outcomes. In short, income disparities + residential segregation + neighborhood schools = segregated schools with disparities.

Figure 1
Wake County Demographics



Note. This image details the racial composition and socioeconomic composition of Wake County in 2007. The light areas displaying lower White populations (left) and lower median family incomes (right), overlap, illustrating the correlation between race and income. (Source: Carlson, et al. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219851729>).

In Mecklenburg, the neighborhood school plan predictably resegregated schools and created high concentrations of low-income students. It is worth noting that CMS had a larger non-Black population than Wake (66.5 percent compared to 48.9 percent) during the 2009-10 school year (North Carolina Public Schools Statistical Profile n.d.). Still, 95 of Mecklenburg's 167 schools had a minority population greater than or equal to 75 percent, compared to just 20 such schools in Wake County. Table 1 displays the extent of segregation in the two systems. Ultimately, the SES policy in Wake preserved some semblance of racial desegregation in Wake, while the Family Choice Plan in Mecklenburg did not.

The socioeconomic demographics were equally concerning in Mecklenburg. According to a 2014 *Charlotte Observer* article, one in seven CMS schools had poverty rates of at least 75 percent in 2001, compared to one in three schools in 2006 (Flono 2014). The trend appears to have stagnated: CMS records indicate that approximately one in three CMS schools met or exceeded this poverty rate during the 2009-10 school year (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools 2009). This

demonstrates that inequality between schools widened after the implementation of the Family Choice Plan. This was exactly what Wake had sought to avoid: high concentrations of low-income students. Although 52 of Wake’s 169 schools did exceed the 40 percent FRL threshold by 2009-10, the effort to reduce the number of these types of schools was not at all mirrored in Mecklenburg. In Mecklenburg, 117 of the district’s 176 schools exceeded the 40 percent FRL threshold during the same school year (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools 2009). A greater proportion of Mecklenburg’s overall student population was eligible for FRL (50.9 percent) than in Wake County (31.2 percent), and so necessarily one would expect there to be higher concentrations of FRL students in CMS schools (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools 2009). Perhaps CMS could have considered an FRL threshold higher than 40 percent to account for its own socioeconomic demographics, but the Board declined to make any effort to limit concentrations of low-income students. Instead of seeking to avoid the creation of high-poverty schools, CMS allowed for the creation of these schools and implemented the aforementioned Equity Plan to mitigate the consequences.

Table 1
Number of Majority-Minority CMS and WCPSS Schools during 2009–10

School System	Number of System Schools	White Population (%)	Non-White Population (%)	Number of Majority-Minority Schools (≥50% Minority)	≥75% Minority Schools	≤10% White Schools
Charlotte-Mecklenburg	167	33.5%	66.5%	103	95	61
Wake	176	51.1%	48.9%	75	20	3

Note. 2009–10 was the last year that WCPSS utilized its SES policy. (Source: Statistics obtained from CMS and WCPSS records.)

Summary of Effects on Student Outcomes

One cannot understand the intersections of race and poverty within the context of schools without some reference to student outcomes. Therefore, I will reference a few statistics and studies to provide a brief overview.

Wake's policy seems to have positively impacted low-income students after a few years of implementation. During the 2004–05 school year, 63.8 percent of low-income high school students passed their end-of-course exams, compared to 47.8 percent of low-income students in Mecklenburg (Kahlenberg 2007, 1553-54). Although correlation is not causation, this data indicates that diversifying classrooms in regard to SES and achievement can lead to better outcomes for students than classrooms that are homogenous.

A 2013 study linked resegregation in Charlotte-Mecklenburg to rapidly widening inequality gaps in outcomes between White and minority students (Billings, Deming, and Rockoff 2014, 437). The same study linked resegregation to an increase in crime among minority males in Mecklenburg (Billings, Deming, and Rockoff 2014, 438). This indicates that resegregation in CMS worsened outcomes for minority students and broadened inequality gaps between racial groups due to the socioeconomic factors at play in the given schools.

Commentary and Conclusions

The *Capacchione* decision impacted CMS pupil assignment policy to a greater extent than it did WCPSS policy. In Wake, an active school board was prompted to move away from race-conscious policies to a policy driven by other education-related factors such as SES and student achievement. Fletcher summarized: "I think we made good decisions and good policy about how to better educate the children in our community while keeping one eye toward what was happening in the courts." In Mecklenburg, leaders did not use this innovation and the end of racially-proportionate pupil assignment led to rapid school resegregation brought about by residential segregation. More importantly, resegregation appears to have not only changed the demographics in CMS schools, but also widened achievement gaps and hurt student outcomes. As illustrated by Figure 1, Wake likely would

have experienced similar resegregation if it had resorted to neighborhood assignment. As of 2020, Wake uses a policy that considers SES among several other factors (Board of Education 2013). Mecklenburg, too, briefly employed an assignment policy that included SES diversity among other factors, but in 2019 reverted to a choice plan that does not mandate diversity (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools 2019). It is interesting to note that in 2016, the Obama administration implemented the “Stronger Together” grant program, which encouraged SES integration, suggesting that Wake’s policy from 2000–2010 was ahead of its time (US Department of Education 2016). The “Stronger Together” program was unique in that it focused on integrating low-income students into middle-class schools rather than focusing on “fixing” high-poverty schools (Richards 2017).

Based on the findings presented, *Capacchione* was the catalyst for the change in assignment policy for CMS and WCPSS, and it can be asserted that the ruling in this case worsened school inequality and harmed students in Charlotte-Mecklenburg. Just as the original *Swann* plaintiffs and Griffin from the CMS Board predicted, resegregation became problematic.

In *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (2007), the Supreme Court struck down student assignment on the basis of race, although it did concede that diversity was a compelling state interest (*Parents Involved*, 551 S. Ct. 701). As a result, school districts nationwide can no longer use race as the primary factor for assigning an individual student to a school. Thus, the experiences of CMS can be repeated in districts across the country. Chief Justice John Roberts wrote in the plurality opinion that “[t]he way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race” (*Parents Involved*, 551 S. Ct. 748). However, it is important to consider the socioeconomic effects of racially isolated schools. Chief Justice Roberts’ statement does not account for the fact that eliminating race as an assignment criterion often allows for the creation of one-race, high-poverty schools under neighborhood schooling. Racially segregated schools can limit opportunities for minority students because they are more likely to be concentrated in high-poverty areas. As researchers of a 2019 Stanford University study concluded, “[r]acial segregation matters, therefore, because it

concentrates black and Hispanic students in high-poverty schools, not because of the racial composition of their schools, per se” (Reardon 2016, 49). According to the Economic Policy Institute, as of 2020, 72.4 percent of Black students nationwide attend high-poverty schools (García 2020). Furthermore, median household income for White families is nearly 70 percent more than that of Black families (US Census Bureau 2018), and the typical White household holds nearly ten times as much wealth as the typical Black household, suggesting systemic inequalities of opportunity (McIntosh et al. 2020). Until the correlation between race and wealth weakens, resegregated schools present a threat to equality of opportunity.

This research raises broader questions regarding the intersection of race and poverty within the context of education. Research with more robust data is needed to fully consider matters concerning SES, achievement, poverty, school resources, and crime nationwide. However, the experiences of Wake and Mecklenburg counties illustrate the consequences of school resegregation as it relates to poverty, school demographics, and student outcomes. Compared to CMS, the WCPSS policy from 2000-2010 provided for more racially and socioeconomically diverse schools that potentially aided marginalized minority and SES groups.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Impact of Zoning Laws and Use on Health Outcomes of Low-Income African Americans

Brandon D. Vincent

Homes are meant to be a place of comfort and safety for residents, yet many people, in particular African Americans, are met with circumstances that make their homes anything but safe and comfortable. Historically and continuing today, the intersections of race and socioeconomic status have limited the locations that African Americans could call “home” and this limitation has had a severe and lasting detrimental impact on their safety, health, and overall quality of life.

These limitations are by-products of policies and practices such as redlining, exclusionary zoning laws, and discriminatory bank loan decisions. From 1934 until it was declared illegal in 1968, redlining disproportionately affected low-income, African Americans seeking a mortgage. Though it claimed its policies were race-neutral, the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) offered access to mortgages that “often was isolated to new residential developments on the edges of metropolitan areas that were considered safer investments, not to inner city neighborhoods” (Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston n.d.). Despite this claim, African Americans fell short of this mortgage opportunity as they were typically of lower social class. Most middle class families were White and deemed more suitable candidates for this investment. Even after the official practice of redlining was outlawed, the discriminatory intent behind it continued to transpire through the strategy of exclusionary zoning.

Thus, for much of the 20th century, African Americans had only limited opportunity to establish wealth through homeownership. Furthermore, as more White people began to relocate to suburban areas, America’s cities became increasingly segregated racially and

economically as Whites of the middle class and African Americans of lower class were living in different areas of towns. The negative effects of redlining were extensive and persistent, affecting access to schooling and other amenities. Redlining and exclusionary zoning laws have also led to many African Americans having to live in areas that are environmentally toxic.

Exclusionary zoning laws and other land use regulations allowed big petrochemical companies to expand into geographic areas where the population was largely African American. There is insufficient attention paid to what these companies are releasing into the air, water, and soil of nearby areas, along with insufficient regulation of these emissions. Many studies by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other policy actors have sought to heighten awareness of these issues and to propose solutions. Personal pleas about the problem also have been expressed often. Nevertheless, on the local, state, and federal level, these recommendations and reflections have often been ignored. This paper proposes that altering zoning laws and land use ordinances in mixed residential-commercial areas to decrease pollution and decelerate the expansion of petrochemical plants would have a transformative impact on health outcomes in low-income, African American communities.

Prime Examples of the Problem

Southeast Louisiana is home to an area residents coined “Cancer Alley” and later “Death Alley.” It is a petrochemical corridor which extends between the many miles of the Mississippi River from Baton Rouge to New Orleans. The population in this region includes a high density of low-income, African Americans. The residents of Cancer Alley are continually exposed to toxic emissions from the petrochemical plants.

Multiple hardships exist in Cancer Alley including a lack of affordable and safe housing and a dearth of major health facilities like hospitals. Many areas within it are poverty stricken and may also be categorized as food deserts (Wilson, Hutson, and Mujahid 2008). In looking at the condition today of Cancer Alley and similar areas around the country, it seems clear that they were not designed with the quality

and longevity of residents' lives as a priority. Zoning laws in the 19th century focused on improving sanitation and, thereby, the health of city residents; however, in the 20th century, cities shifted to using zoning laws to support economic opportunities, including ventures such as petrochemical companies. It seems that economic gain was Louisiana's goal in allowing such a great expansion of petrochemical plants in the state (Wilson, Hutson, and Mujahid 2008).

Today, we see this urge for expansion in St. James Parish, home to future Formosa sites by 2022. Formosa is a Taiwanese plastics company and this project is the largest and most expensive to date in Louisiana. While many have argued that the state economy will gain from this expansion, there are also many in opposition to it. Although the project might cure unemployment in this area, it will not cure the many diseases and other health impairments residents are likely to experience as a result of exposure to harmful toxins. This company is planning to emit chemicals such as "ethylene oxide, a substance that a 2016 Environmental Protection Agency study concluded can cause cancer even with limited exposure" (Younes 2019). Citizens are outraged by this—with good reason—as they are already barraged by the toxins other companies are releasing in the region. Residents' cries for protection have fallen on deaf ears, as the governing officials continue to approve Formosa's expansion. Louisiana's citizens overall have limited means to make their views known with regard to zoning since the state code specifically allows municipal governments full authority to decide land use ordinances without obtaining recommendations or suggestions from a designated zoning commission (Land 2013).

The Magnitude and Implications of the Problem

Today, "one-in-four [African Americans] and one-in-six Hispanic-Americans" reside in high poverty stricken areas (Rigsby 2016). The shameful history of restrictive covenants, redlining, and discriminatory zoning laws have each contributed to creating these high-poverty locales. The 1968 Fair Housing Act explicitly prohibits racial discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing; nevertheless, African Americans and other racial minorities remain

disproportionately trapped in areas of high poverty and have been unable to move into other areas—in part because even today zoning laws have such a huge role in allowing industrial plants into certain residential areas (Rigsby 2016). Thus, the people who live in high-poverty areas continue to be exposed to industrial waste and emissions, and a large percentage of residents in such areas are persons of color.

The presence of petrochemical plants and other industrial sites that emit toxins within residential areas signals to the people dwelling there that their lives and well-being are not prioritized by government officials. In her research, Julia Mizutani uncovers the politics behind the situation, writing that “environmental assessments and siting boards also cause environmental hazards to be placed in vulnerable communities because placing hazards in these areas is often less costly and more politically preferable given that underserved communities have less political power” (Mizuntani 2019). African Americans in these areas are being taken advantage of as they have no champion representing and advocating on their behalf regarding these concerns. Property values within these areas remain low for many reasons. One reason is that major corporations do not want to locate there because of “heightened” crime rates and the accompanying high insurance rates. Many individuals have tried to argue that the petrochemical and other industrial facilities are not intentionally acting on a racist basis when they target these vulnerable communities, yet we cannot help seeing the political power-based dynamic and means of political representation at work when zoning laws protect property values in more affluent communities.

The effects of zoning and land use can take a myriad of different forms, but what is consistent is the disproportionate exposure African Americans in particular have to waste and toxins in comparison to other racial groups. The previous section of this paper discussed the impact of this disproportionate exposure on two communities in Louisiana: Cancer Alley and St. James Parish. The next section of the paper will describe examples of community residents coming together to seek and implement solutions. The people’s voice matters, and the people in Mossville, Louisiana and Baltimore, Maryland found ways to make their voices heard.

Examples of Solutions

West of the Mississippi River, the residents of Mossville, Louisiana also experienced environmental injustice as a result of discriminatory zoning laws and land use ordinances (as well as lingering effects of redlining). Activists and scholars alike use the term *environmental racism* in their analysis of “the many ways that communities of color—in the United States, [African-American] communities in particular—face greater harms from environmental factors [like] siting of industrial uses; in proximity to power plants and factories; to higher exposure to emissions from mobile sources of pollution” (Hines 2015). The Mossville community is predominantly African American and faces a number of environmental, economic, and political battles.

The target of their environmental battle is the high rate of emissions of Dioxin, a carcinogenic substance released in this area particularly through “vinyl chloride production plants, a majority of which” are extensively concentrated in Mossville (Berkovitz 2020). Like their counterparts in Cancer Alley, “Mossville residents began complaining of a variety of illnesses and they attributed their deterioration of health to the toxic emissions that are being released into their environment” (Hines 2015). These residents felt keenly the impact the polluting industry was having on them, so they began to strategize, implement, and initiate a movement that aimed to address their concerns (Hines 2015). They created Mossville Environmental Action Now (MEAN), a coalition of individuals affected and outraged by the environmental racism they and other African Americans faced routinely. Even when they sought redress for wrongful treatment, they often encountered further injustice when reporting issues of environmental racism. They later partnered with other environmental justice groups and the EPA. The national attention they received allowed them to leverage their efforts and to produce detailed statistics on the types and amount of carcinogens being released into their environment.

Mossville stands as a model of the collective efforts that are needed in order to combat environmental racism. Through their partnership with the Bucket Brigade, an environmental group based in California, MEAN acquired EPA-approved air sampling devices, and

the skills to employ the devices (Hines 2015). This strategy allowed Mossville to gather solid evidence of their exposure to airborne carcinogenic substances. MEAN saw that “the initial air samples that were taken showed elevated pollution levels that exceeded state health standards” (Hines 2015). Residents then put this data to effective use. They were able to use these devices and to report if these companies violated emission regulation. This brought more awareness to their issue and caused other organizers to join in the efforts.

A second example of a community taking effective action against environmental injustice comes from Baltimore. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) studied the environmental racism occurring in Baltimore, how it was addressed, and its impact on residents’ health. They found the community organizing there to be a model and potential source of inspiration for feasible and effective ways to tackle such issues.

In Maryland, “low-income communities and communities of color face higher risks from hazardous air pollutants” and this has been seen to disproportionately affect children as they have unusually high rates of asthma (Baptista, Sachs, and Rot 2019). In Baltimore, residents created a coalition that advocated to decrease the expansion of the crude oil export trains, which were in close proximity to their neighborhoods. Similar to the Mossville residents who created MEAN, these concerned Baltimore residents did two strategic things that not only brought attention to their issue, but also effectively leveraged it to show the importance and potential positive impact of addressing the problem. First, they established a target terminal they knew many in the community wanted to see be closed. They understood that public input can play a huge role in policy development. Thus, they constantly put pressure on the Targa Terminals, where the company was hoping to expand, and caused them to withdraw their expansion proposal (Baptista, Sachs, and Rot 2019). Secondly, the Baltimore coalition conducted research regarding the links between exposure to crude oil and negative health effects. This sound statistical evidence helped them win their battle. From these efforts, Baltimoreans were able to ban crude oil trains from entering their city all together. Thus, they were less likely to be exposed to toxins which may have been released due to the expansion of this terminal.

How to Apply the Lessons from Mossville and Baltimore

In both Mossville and Baltimore, gathering accurate data and conducting solid research were essential components in establishing a persuasive argument about the negative impact of petrochemical plants and oil export traffic on the health of African Americans and other people living in the vicinity. While the hands-on data collection done in those locales worked, a better approach across the country would be to require all chemical and other industrial plants to provide detailed accounts of emissions that they release into the air, water, and soil. Furthermore, local governments need to ensure that these companies are accurately reporting their emissions. They can do this both by conducting their own, independent tests of air, water, and soil and by providing residents with the means to conduct such tests themselves. Grassroots organizations in conjunction with other environmental justice based organizations stand as a full force ready to address and fight these problems. Louisiana is home to several organizations like this—as are other states—but these organizations need the support and funding from the government to carry out testing, data collection, and research.

While much research has been done already, further research is needed about the connection between the toxins from chemical plants and the health outcomes of those who live near them. The EPA has tirelessly reported known carcinogens that have been released from petrochemical companies in Cancer Alley and elsewhere, but a more effective approach is needed. Cities could partner with colleges and universities and other researchers to conduct more testing and analysis. This research should not be limited to the biochemical impact of exposure to toxins, but should also include sociological and economic studies of multi-generational, community wide impact. Generational health issues are relevant because many individuals in high-poverty zones do not have the opportunity to move their families out of these environments. The interactions between income and health are complex. For example, low-income, African American individuals may miss work at a higher rate than others because of their health issues, which could also leave them unemployed. Furthermore, access to adequate health care is often limited—few health care facilities are located in “the other side of town”—or unaffordable. As more and

broader studies are completed, we can better understand and evaluate the next steps necessary to ameliorate the experiences of residents in these toxic environments.

Municipalities must also change their approach to zoning laws and other laws within their span of authority. In addition to requiring petrochemical plants to report on the toxins they emit, the localities could also impose limits on the release of carcinogens. Most importantly, municipalities need to alter zoning laws so as to avoid perpetuating the location of dangerous chemical manufacturing in close proximity to residences. Changes in zoning should result from meaningful and broad conversations—city by city and region by region—about how to support business while also protecting citizens, especially the most vulnerable citizens.

Even while more research is being done, work to develop new and better policies and law should get underway. Policy actors like local environmental justice groups must be part of the conversation. Citizen participation is also essential. Where they do not already exist, commissions are needed in order to address these issues of environmental racism, regulate the existing companies, and ensure these underserved, underrepresented, and often unheard communities have proper representation to advocate for themselves. The work of policy development should start with in-depth reviews of existing policies and zoning regulations. The goal should be “to adopt an environmental review process that can address or mitigate environmental justice concerns” (Batista, Sachs, and Rot 2019). This approach was used in Newark and Cincinnati who created municipalities for environmental purposes in order to better address issues surrounding residents’ exposure to waste and other toxins.

As has been argued throughout this paper, zoning laws and land use ordinances play a huge role in the health of residents. African Americans in particular would be positively impacted by the reconsideration and revision of many existing policies, ordinances, and laws connected to land use. This process of review and the implementation of revised laws would usher in the opportunity for healthier environments, where residents will not only be physically active, but politically active as well. Appropriate revision of zoning laws and land use ordinances could not only decelerate the expansion

of dangerous chemical and other industrial sites within residential areas; it would also create opportunities to bring other necessary amenities such as health care facilities, parks, and other recreational spaces to these communities to address their health issues in a comprehensive way and positively impact the lives of low-income, African Americans.

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PART III

IMPACT IN SPORTS & MEDIA

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Impact of Four National Basketball Association MVPs on their Communities

Michael Charles

“It’s just a game.” This sentiment is often echoed to belittle the impact professional sports have on our world, society and communities. While on the surface the statement may carry some truth, the reality is that professional sports and its athletes are an essential part of our society, especially in the Black community. Yet, for too long, Black athletes were discouraged from expressing opinions outside of the realm of sports. Statements such as “Shut up and dribble,” uttered by Fox TV Host Laura Ingraham in 2018 in reference to LeBron James (Sullivan 2018), were used to undermine the immense impact these athletes have on and within their communities. Despite these extra burdens that are thrust upon them, many Black athletes are making it clear that enough is enough. No longer will they allow an oppressive system to quiet their voices and no longer will they allow the label “just an athlete” to minimize their existence and influence.

“How are they doing this?” you might ask. Black athletes, today more than ever before, are giving back to their communities by investing their time, resources and wisdom to bring about positive change. These athletes help educate, motivate, support and uplift future generations so they can thrive. In this piece, I highlight the philanthropic work done by four world-renowned basketball players who are taking the lead in investing in their communities. They are pillars of excellence in their sport, with all four hoisting the National Basketball Association Most Valuable Player trophy during their careers. For all four, their impact on society reaches far beyond the basketball court; they exemplify the massive impact that athletes and their philanthropic endeavors can have on society and set the example

for future generations of athletes to follow. The players are LeBron James, Kevin Durant, Stephen Curry and Russell Westbrook.

LeBron James

Though LeBron James is considered one of the greatest players ever to dribble a basketball, his meteoric rise to stardom was not always a slam dunk as it appears today. Before he was an international superstar, three-time NBA champion and four-time NBA MVP, he lived a challenging life in Akron, Ohio. He and his single mother were often forced to move from apartment to apartment as Gloria James attempted to find work to support her family. When reflecting upon his childhood in Akron, James emphasizes the role that the Akron school system had on his life. He acknowledges the structure and stability that school provided him and how that allowed him to dream of greatness before it was remotely on the horizon. Through his words and actions, it is abundantly clear that James' upbringing left a lasting impression on the man he would become and the legacy he hopes to leave behind. Akron pushed James to be more than just an athlete and his dedication to his community proves that he never took that challenge lightly.

From the outset of his career, James chose to share his wealth through reinvestment in his local community. His primary focus has been on supporting young people, especially those of Akron, as he remembers the struggles of his own childhood. In 2004, during his second season in the NBA, James established The LeBron James Foundation. At the time, James was playing for the Cleveland Cavaliers, which provided him the perfect opportunity to give back to his hometown. The foundation, whose goal is to positively affect the lives of children and young adults through education and co-curricular initiatives, would serve as the cornerstone for James' philanthropic endeavors. In 2011, James began the *I Promise* program, which "serves more than 1,400 Akron-area students by providing them with the programs, support and mentors they need for success in school and beyond." By 2015, the *I Promise* program had further evolved, resulting in the *I Promise* scholarship. Through a partnership with the University of Akron, James' program offers four-year scholarships to all students who graduate from high school while meeting specified

criteria in school and in their community. This scholarship program has enabled hundreds of children from Akron to receive a free college education, propelling them on their path to success. James also created the *I Promise* Institute, a resource on the Akron campus that helps *I Promise* scholarship recipients to adapt successfully to college life. Since 2004, LeBron's philanthropic commitment has continuously grown, culminating with his most powerful pledge yet, the *I Promise* School in Akron.

Established with the assistance of the Akron Public School System, the *I Promise* School opened in 2018 with the goal of serving the most at-risk youth and their families by delivering essential support services to meet the challenges they face daily. The school's curriculum emphasizes social-emotional learning and includes a family resource wing that assists parents with non-educational matters, thus creating a stable and supportive environment both in the classroom and at home. The *I Promise* School provides free tuition, in-school meals, uniforms, bicycles and transportation to and from school, as well as a food pantry for the families of children who attend the school. While these advantages may seem trivial to some, a lack of these stabilizing factors is often the reason that high-risk children shy away from school and therefore education (The LeBron James Family Foundation 2020). These benefits generate an excitement about school that can jumpstart a child's ambitions. Though still in its early stages, the *I Promise* School is thought to be having a tremendous impact on Akron already. By refusing to be confined to simply being an athlete, James has become a catalyst for change in his hometown.

James also has extended his impact beyond the Akron community, most recently through his involvement in establishing the voting rights organization "More Than a Vote," which seeks to advocate for voter turnout while simultaneously combatting voter suppression (Reimer 2020). James, along with other prominent players such as Trae Young, Skylar Diggins-Smith and Draymond Green, has injected substantial capital into the initial funding of the organization and its projects. James' actions in this moment of widespread social unrest mirror the work done by earlier generations of athletes like Bill Russell, Muhammed Ali and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. In regard to his impact not only on Akron but on society as whole, James eloquently

stated, “Hopefully, someday down the line, people will recognize me not only for the way I approached the game of basketball, but the way I approached life as an African-American man” (Martin 2020).

Kevin Durant

Another example of effective philanthropy is Brooklyn Nets forward Kevin Durant, widely regarded as one of the most talented offensive players the NBA has ever seen. At nearly seven feet tall, Durant can score in every way imaginable, even in the most pressure packed moments. His accolades throughout his career include two NBA championships, two NBA Finals MVPs, four NBA scoring titles and being a ten-time NBA All-Star. Very similar to James, Durant had to overcome obstacles before reaching the level of greatness. He grew up in a single-parent household in Prince George’s County, Maryland, where his mother, Wanda, worked hard to provide for her children and keep them safe.

As Durant’s NBA resume grew, so did his efforts to support the community he calls home. In 2019, he opened the Durant Center. The goal of this facility is to provide resources in all aspects of young people’s lives, including academic, financial and social support, to enable them to prepare for and successfully attend college (Babb 2019). To achieve this, the Center provides tutoring services, college scholarships and assistance with career development beyond college graduation. With a planned donation of \$10 million over the next decade, Durant hopes to grow the reach of his Center in the coming years to benefit the lives of even more children in the Washington, DC area.

While the Center is extremely impressive, Durant’s philanthropy extends beyond its walls. He is looking to pass down his passion regarding entrepreneurship to the next generation through the “Different Kind of Leader” program. This two-day leadership program, held at the Durant Center, is focused on stimulating the entrepreneurial interests of young people. Additionally, his “Build It and They Will Come” basketball court renovation initiative provides more high-quality basketball courts in his community and around the world to fuel the next generations’ passion for the game (The Kevin Durant Charity

Foundation, 2020). Regardless of the avenues Durant chooses to pursue for advancing his charity, it is abundantly clear that he is making an impact by igniting the dreams and aspirations of young people in many facets of their lives.

Stephen Curry

Stephen Curry is another NBA superstar who has sought to impact his community positively through philanthropy. While his upbringing and path to stardom differ significantly from many of his peers, including former teammate Durant, he shares a commitment to giving back to his community. Despite Durant's personal disadvantages growing up in Prince George's County, he was a highly touted high school player, which allowed him to secure a scholarship to play at the University of Texas, before being drafted second in the 2007 NBA Draft. Curry, on the other hand, lived a privileged life as the son of a former NBA player, but his path to college and the NBA was obstructed with doubts about his small physique. He attended Davidson College, a small liberal arts college in North Carolina, where he caught the attention of NBA scouts. After three years with the Wildcats, Curry was selected seventh in the 2009 NBA Draft by the Golden State Warriors. He has won three NBA titles, two NBA MVPs and solidified his reputation as one of the greatest shooters the NBA has ever witnessed.

While Curry's underdog narrative is admirable, more impressive is his use of his superstar platform to enact positive change. He is making a difference in Oakland, funding several programs to support youth in the community. His Eat.Learn.Play Foundation, which he co-founded with his wife, Ayesha, seeks to ensure an equal road to success for all children "by unlocking their amazing potential" using three strategies: ending childhood hunger, ensuring students have access to a quality education through college, and providing safe places to play and be active (THE FOUNDATION – EAT.LEARN.PLAY. 2020).

Curry has also been extremely active in his community during the COVID-19 pandemic. He has used his foundation to ensure that children who are dependent on schools to provide them two guaranteed meals per day would continue to be fed. The Eat.Learn.Play.

Foundation, in collaboration with the World Central Kitchen, Oakland Unified School District and Alameda County Community, is providing over one million meals to students who could not attend school (Elassar 2020). With so many facets of life disrupted by the pandemic, the Curry's' generous donation has addressed a critical need for those struggling to keep their children fed. While Curry continues to focus on winning championships for the Warriors, he is also focused on creating opportunities for the youth in his community to become champions.

Russell Westbrook

Another player whose philanthropy exemplifies his dedication to his community is Houston Rockets point guard Russell Westbrook. Born in Long Beach, California in 1988, Westbrook dreamed of making it to the NBA but as a 5'8" freshman in high school, his dream appeared to be a longshot. However, a growth spurt before his junior year altered his game and he soon found himself on the radar of many elite college basketball programs. Westbrook would go on to play two seasons for the UCLA Bruins before being drafted fourth in the 2008 NBA Draft by the Seattle Supersonics. Since then, Westbrook's game has continued to evolve as he remains one of the premier point guards in the NBA. He has already etched his name into the history books by becoming the second player ever to average a triple double (10+ points, 10+ rebounds and 10+ assists) for an entire season. He then went on to become the first player to average a triple double in back-to-back seasons before taking it one step further to complete the trifecta of three straight seasons. Westbrook led the league in scoring twice and was named NBA MVP in 2017. Like the three MVPs mentioned above, Westbrook's basketball resume is stellar. And like the others, Westbrook takes as much pride in his philanthropy as he does in his basketball success.

On the court, Westbrook is known for his intensity. Off the court, he is a compassionate man dedicated to helping those in his community and across the nation through several different projects of his Why Not? Foundation. Established in 2012, the Foundation's goal is to inspire the next generation of youth to chase their ambitions without any limitations. Westbrook's slogan "Why Not?" stems from a message

often echoed by his parents to him and his brother. When faced with doubt or a difficult challenge, these brothers received parental advice to ask why they could not do something to ensure that they did not limit themselves or their potential. Through his foundation, Westbrook hopes to pass this sentiment on to the next generation. The foundation seeks to teach the youth perseverance while supporting them and their families as they progress through school so they can pursue their dreams to the fullest.

As a result, Westbrook's foundation has tackled many projects covering a wide range of issues that affect the youth of America. Most recently, he attempted to alleviate the stress placed on families in Los Angeles, his hometown, stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. Through the Angeleno Campaign, Westbrook, with added support from the Mayor's Fund, raised \$10 million, which will be allotted to 20,000 families who have experienced economic hardship during this trying time in order to keep them afloat. Another example of Westbrook's work is the Westbrook/Brownstein Green Tech Program, whose goal is to take at-risk Los Angeles youth off the streets and bring them into classrooms. Education was always emphasized in his family's home and Westbrook hopes to instill similar values in young people in Los Angeles. As part of this program, students will be trained for careers in areas such as coding, computer literacy and computing engineering, which are essential, growing fields of expertise (Russell Westbrook Why Not? Foundation 2020). This program allows Westbrook to open avenues for the youth that they themselves did not even know existed. Westbrook's charity has become a staple of Los Angeles as he attempts to give back to the very same community that raised him. He is an MVP both on and off the hardwood.

While athletes often serve as role models on their field of play, these four MVPs have taken their responsibility as athletes far beyond the call of duty and have invested in their communities to provide greater opportunities for the youth to thrive and reach their full potential. In addressing the expectation often placed on Black athletes, NBA Hall of Famer Charles Barkley stated that during his playing career, he never intended to be a role model for youth and even made an advertisement with Nike to make that clear. Barkley felt that there was immense pressure placed on Black athletes to be role models and

to save their communities; similar pressure was not placed on White athletes. Barkley also felt that the Black community had been brainwashed to think that Blacks could only be entertainers or athletes and he wanted to end that way of thinking. The four players highlighted here have learned from the wise lessons of Barkley and have invested most of their community efforts outside the realm of sports. They are attempting to ensure that children have the resources and support they need to be successful in any dream they wish to pursue. These four athletes are well known for their success on the basketball court but their biggest impact in life results from their philanthropy.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Impact of the Commercialization of Consumer Data by Social Media Companies

Rasheed Christian

Social media platforms make a large portion of their revenue from the exploitation of data that belongs to consumers, depriving users of any sense of privacy. As it was reported in 2019 that over 79 percent of the United States population use social media, it is essential that all users have access to equal resources and information (Clement 2020). For my research, I intend on discovering how the commodification of user data by social media companies impacts the experiences of users on these platforms. In addition, I will use my experience as a young Black user of social media to analyze the specific impact it has on users as a whole. To accomplish this task, I will specifically analyze Facebook and Twitter, as they are measured to be the most popular social media platforms among young Americans today. I will engage with both academic and non-academic articles about this subject to gather my research and, being an avid user of social media myself for most of my life, I wish to compare my research to my own experience on social media to provide a personal, anecdotal perspective to my argument. I argue that while this practice can be seen as beneficial for curating an experience that reflects an individual user, it is dangerous as it is wholly based on the misuse of consumer data. I will conclude my paper with recommendations, informed by policy precedence, on how to control this commercialization of consumer data in order to ensure all users the freedom to explore the digital arena with their privacy protected.

The Problem

A few months ago, I texted my colleagues to express my desire to try a new item at a popular fast food restaurant. That same day, I

noticed that an advertisement appeared on a mobile application that I was using for the exact item that I mentioned to my friend. While I easily shrugged it off due to the fact that the item was heavily marketed and trending through various social media platforms, I felt a sense of intrusiveness, as if my actions on my cellular device were being watched and recorded without my knowledge. A few days later, when scrolling through the social media platform Twitter, I noticed a post that included a picture of a group of Black millennials eating from the same restaurant that was mentioned in my text conversation. This particular “tweet” was formatted in a way that made it seem as if someone that I voluntarily followed had shared it to my “timeline,” where all content from people I follow appears in reverse chronological order. Upon further inspection, however, I noticed that a miniscule banner on the bottom left of the tweet indicated that it was indeed a “promoted tweet;” I instantly felt a wave of discomfort as I attempted to piece together how this food item went from simply being mentioned in a private text conversation to being subtly placed on my timeline as an advertisement.

I would have simply attributed this as a coincidence if it were not for the fact that I’ve noticed similar content on different digital platforms, such as web browser searches. This event shined a light on the commercial nature of my social media presence and how sensitive, personal information can be collected without any form of alert and then used in order to produce an advertisement. Furthermore, I noticed that the advertisement specifically depicted young Black people. This made me question whether I would have gotten the same advertisement if I were a White American browsing social media.

When consumers register for a popular social media platform, whether that be Instagram, Facebook, or Twitter, they unknowingly are signing away their privacy. Using a variety of methods to gather information on users, these social media organizations use this data to profit through advertising. When most consumers utilize social media, they are unaware of how much data is collected with each minute of their usage. Furthermore, they are not informed as to how this data is being used and with whom it is being shared. Consumers are not provided with much privacy or security when interacting with social media platforms; furthermore, these platforms work actively to prevent

users from discovering this. While these meticulously curated advertisements catered to a consumer's specific interests, the practices used to gather information are far from transparent. The current pervasiveness of social media in the lives of Americans has shaped an atmosphere in which data has been taken covertly, stripping consumers of their privacy, in order to increase profits, particularly through the intrusive form of native advertising.

Native Advertising on Social Media

Social media effectively rules the world. According to Rainie, seven in ten Americans navigate social media for a variety of purposes, including as a means of participating and engaging in civic and political activities. Each year, the number of users on the most popular social media platforms—Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter —increases by millions. Social media's positioning as the most widely used software tool amongst today's society has made it convenient for the controlling companies to take advantage of consumers by using their data for advertising purposes. The ubiquity and popularity of social media usage, especially amongst young people, have allowed the practice of native advertising to expand in unseen ways.

Native advertising is defined as a means of advertising in which online content is blended into social media timelines by mirroring the format of the surrounding non-advertising content (Campbell and Grimm 2019). This practice, which capitalizes upon the frequency with which consumers use social media and the high number of engagements that have been seen on the various platforms, has been used effectively to sell products. My aforementioned experience of recognizing content on my Twitter timeline as a piece of native advertising highlighted how deceptive the practice can be. Native advertising appeals to unsuspecting consumers by disguising advertising content as the content that the consumer is using the social media platform for. By gathering vast amounts of information on individual users, social media companies are able to create content that appeals directly to the user, creating a social media experience that can feel intrusive upon users' privacy. Proponents for native advertising argue that this benefits today's consumers in that it makes them aware

of products likely to interest them. They additionally proclaim that weaving in this promoted content produces social media content that appeals specifically to each individual consumer. To the contrary, these native advertisements have contributed to more negative perceptions of social media. A study revealed that the more intrusive that these advertisements are on an individual feed when compared to the normal content that the user expects, the more the consumer has negative attitudes towards the brands (Huang 2019). Thus, it can be seen that diversifying advertising content, by making it stand out from other social media content, is more beneficial to users as it improves their social media experiences.

This advertising format is very profitable for social media companies as, annually, leading technology companies like Facebook sell personal data to advertisers for more than \$100 billion as they exploit personal data (Mahida 2020). When young millennials were made aware of this practice of native advertisements, they responded with overwhelmingly negative responses related to ad intrusiveness, deception through covertness, privacy concerns, and reports of the ads seeming “too personal” (Youn and Kim 2019). This native content effectively blurs the line between user-generated content and advertising content, forming a practice that has been identified as deception by the omission of alerting the users.

Privacy Policies and Security Concerns

During the current Internet of Things era, devices and social media platforms have been integrated into larger systems that govern every aspect of life. This era is evidently expanding, as the number of devices involved will reach over 50 billion by the end of 2020 (Issak & Hanna 2018). Nearly all devices used in day-to-day life, including but certainly not limited to refrigerators, televisions and cars, now have functionalities that make use of internet access. This presents ample opportunity for organizations to collect data on users that can then be utilized to produce revenue for these companies. The Cambridge Analytica scandal, in which Facebook sold personally identifiable information of over 87 million users to a data firm, familiarized many consumers with the risks of social media. Increasingly, young people

are aware of the privacy risks that exist with social media usage that leads to native advertising and they advocate for more training on cybersecurity (Bhatnagar and Pry 2020). Students only trust Facebook, in particular, when the issue of internet privacy is framed as a conflict of values and tradeoffs, as they then place more weight upon personal responsibility (Crocco 2020). Many consumers recognize this as an issue within today's technological society as a survey found that 91 percent of Americans agree that citizens have lost control over how their personal information is collected and used (Rainie 2018).

Furthermore, when security settings are not used and privacy policies are not read when joining a new platform, it is most often due to the fact that they are simply hard to understand. Social media platforms respond to criticism regarding their usage of personal data by arguing that when users sign up for a new account on their applications, they have to acknowledge that they have read, understand, and agree to a long privacy policy. According to Soumelidou, the low reading level of these policies can be attributed to the fact that they are usually quite verbose, dissuading users from actually processing the information. While it has been proven that placing the information into more attractive visual representations is more successful at conveying the information to users, companies have not switched over to this method. These privacy policies are said to allow the people to stay in control of their data but are intentionally designed to prevent consumers from figuring out the various ways their data will be used as this could deter them from using their platforms. Nationally, consumers lack any individual rights to own or manage their own data, including their addresses, ages, names, ethnicities, and racial backgrounds (Mahida 2020). According to Green, the Internet is a deregulated territory in the United States where technology and social media companies have been free to practice an anything-goes, laissez-faire philosophy. This lack of policy protecting the security and privacy of consumers has allowed companies to completely take advantage of them, collecting endless amounts of their sensitive, private data. These social media corporations are forced to make the choice between respecting the privacy of consumers or maximizing profits. As most corporations choose the latter, it becomes clear that large-scale mandatory action is the only way to combat this exploitation of consumer data.

Policy Recommendation

Despite this issue becoming increasingly relevant over the past decade, there has yet to be substantial action taken at the federal level. This can be partially attributed to a revolving door that exists between technology companies and the Federal Trade Commission, the governmental organization that is in charge of regulating consumer protection. Over the past twenty years, a high percentage of Federal Trade Commission officials have worked for social media and technology corporations before or after their tenure there, with more than half having direct financial conflicts of interests (Bode 2019). As the US government has frequently failed to hold these powerful organizations accountable for their underhanded tactics, despite consumer concerns, this accentuates the need for a congressional level Consumer Data Protection Act.

While a policy of this type has not been enacted on a federal level in the United States, various policies serve as precedent and a guide for tackling this issue. In May 2018, the European Union (EU) enforced the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), an act that overhauled how companies may process and handle consumer data. Referred to as an “evolution” by European Union Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham, this policy serves as the world’s strongest set of data protection rules, as it enhances how people can access information that is stored about them and places limits on what technology companies can do with personal data (Burgess 2020). Adopting a key ideology of “privacy by default,” it was effective in providing Europeans with more control over their personal data by forcing companies to ensure that they are safely collecting, processing, and storing data (Kottasová 2018). Companies, according to the GDPR, can only collect data if they have a lawful basis for doing so and explicit consent from the user. To prevent organizations from hiding these consent agreements in the terms and conditions, it explicitly states that request to obtain consent must be clear and written in plain language. Additionally, this policy is noteworthy in its wide-ranging definition of who is held under the law, as it is enforced upon any organization that holds or uses data on people inside the EU, regardless of where it is based.

While it was never passed and instituted, the Obama administration introduced a Consumer Privacy Bill of Rights in 2015, a legislative attempt to regulate the processing of electronic personal data within the country. Enshrining consumer privacy as a basic American right, this policy was centered around various themes, most notably, security, transparency, consent, and accountability. While the policy was significant in its defining of the problem, it was heavily criticized for containing various loopholes for companies to escape its restrictions (Bischoff 2018). Various proposals for congressional action currently exist, including Congresswoman Anna Eshoo's proposed Online Privacy Act of 2019. This policy would include various explicit rights such as the rights of access, correction, deletion, human review of automated decisions, and impermanence, as well as the right to be informed (Green 2020). Chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, Senator Roger Wicker, has also expressed his support of bipartisan provisions to protect the privacy of consumers.

On the state level, California has provided a strong example in its Consumer Privacy Act. Formed in response to a steady parade of acts of corporate incompetence, this policy forced companies to disclose what data is collected and to whom it is sold, thereby providing consumers with the ability to opt out of having their data sold to third party data brokers for advertising purposes (Bode 2020). Imposing penalties on companies who violate consumer trust, this act was notable in its protecting of the privacy of consumers from social media companies. As these policies show that it is possible to solve the problem, it is urgent that federal legislation protecting consumer data is pursued.

I recommend modifying the proposed Online Privacy Act to include formation of a Data Protection Agency to oversee the actions of the Federal Trade Commission in enforcing privacy safeguards, ensuring the compliance of social media companies, and providing consumers with critical information regarding the usage of their personal information. Much like the California Consumer Privacy Act, this law should provide consumers with three explicit rights, the first being the "right to know," forcing businesses to inform consumers of data they intend on storing. This act should also include the "right to

opt-out” and the “right to delete,” allowing consumers to prevent social media platforms from storing and using personally identifiable information. Finally, this law would require organizations to obtain the explicit consent, or opting-in, of users in order to store their information. Including a provision that penalizes companies with significant fines for violations, this law would make a significant impact on improving the social media experiences of consumers.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Impact of Media Stereotyping of Black Culture on Young Black Viewers

Yarayah St. Phard

Since being introduced, mass media, such as film and television, have had a radical impact on the beliefs and behaviors of people in American and throughout the world. The messages conveyed through these channels have a lasting impression on the consumer. Many studies have been conducted to examine the media's control on a viewer's personal development. Most concentrate on topics like violence, sexual activity, drug use, and gender roles. Perhaps one of the more overlooked impacts of mass media is its power to deepen the divide between races and to increase discrimination against some, specifically African Americans. Various films and television shows throughout the history of these media have had grave impact on public perception of the Black community. The impact of the film *Birth of a Nation* is especially notable. The generalizations shown through these media have contributed to unfair and damaging treatment of the Black population by other racial groups, and have even factored in lower self-esteem and a striving for dissociation within the Black population (Tukachinsky, Mastro, and Yarchi 2017, 551).

This paper seeks to assess the lasting impact of media stereotypes in reference to the Black race. To complete this analysis, I have selected a sample of sources that describe the common Black media stereotypes and detail their history and influence. The goal of this analysis is to come to a conclusion about the overall impact of stereotyping and misrepresentation on the Black community and raise the question of what could be done differently to change the adverse narrative that has been engrained into the minds of many.

History of Race on Screens

The year 1895 is often credited as the birth year for cinema. One year later, the Jim Crow laws within the United States were upheld as legal in the infamous *Plessy v. Ferguson* case. Jim Crow laws were still in effect decades later when television became popularized. During these formative years for film and television, a majority of White Americans still felt a significant disgust for the African American population, so much so that they did not want to see Black actors on the movie screen or their TVs. As Behnken explained in his book, *Racism in American Popular Media, From Aunt Jemima to Frito Bandito*, White actresses felt they needed protection from the “insatiable sexual appetites of Black men” and could only perform around White men. Most White viewers also saw blackness as so horrific that they were only comfortable viewing it when played by a White actor (Behnken and Smithers 2015, 48). When scripts could not avoid including a Black character, they used White actors with their faces covered in black paint, properly referred to as blackface. These actors would play their characters as dramatically uncivilized, unintelligent, and/or illiterate (Adams-Bass, Stevenson, and Kotzin 2014, 368). One of the most widely recognized anti-Black productions, also featuring blackface actors, was D.W. Griffith’s 1915 film *Birth of a Nation*.

Birth of a Nation was designed to tell the story of the Civil War and Reconstruction era through two families on opposite sides of the war. Part two of the film digs deep into the theme of “Negro rule” during Reconstruction in which Black people were treated as equal members of society and placed in governing positions. With scenes of African American voter fraud and Black legislative representatives who seem to be drunk, lazy, or fighting, the South appeared to need reform, which it found through the uprising of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). Griffith displayed the KKK as “saviors of the White race and southern civilization.” He presented African Americans as loyal and content slaves or sex-obsessed or politically corrupt mulattoes (Behnken and Smithers 2015, 50). Griffith hoped to use cinema as a means of educating children on American history as he saw it. This film was so detrimental to the Black society that it became the target of the first major media advocacy campaign of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The description of Black

people as inferior in this film—and many others that followed—had a negative impact on White Americans' perceptions of Black people and helped to justify their resistance to integration (Hunt 2017, 60).

By the late 1940's, actors performing in blackface became less popular but degrading stereotypes of the race remained on notable shows and movies (Behnken and Smithers 2015, 53). Even some popular cartoons were known to include racially discriminating innuendos. Behnken states that “from the Silent Era to the early years of animation's golden age, cartoons produced for either adults or children both reaffirmed and taught American audiences how to think and speak about race” (Behnken and Smithers 2015, 84). Famous 1920s character, Felix the Cat, had episodes presenting African American characters with blackface, bright wide eyes, big lips, and long ape-like arms. Even the beloved Mickey Mouse had episodes where the implied Black people were portrayed as savages and lacking intelligence. *Tom and Jerry* was also thrown in the mix with its usage of Mammy Two Shoes, a housekeeper with an uneducated dialect, exaggerated “negroid” features, and expressive colorful clothing (also a stereotype for Black women at the time) (Behnken and Smithers 2015, 93).

Across numerous 20th century shows, movies, and cartoons, viewers were taught to see Black people as a threat to the civilization of the American society. If fictional stories were not convincing enough, the news further pushed this point. Black men were overrepresented as criminals and underrepresented as victims, as Kumah-Abiwu wrote in his article, “Media Gatekeeping and Portrayal of Black Men in America.” During the Los Angeles civil disturbances of 1992, news sources connected more Blacks to the riots when the majority of those arrested were actually Whites and Hispanics (Kumah-Abiwu 2020, 76). On the other hand, by the 1990s Black actors were given the opportunity to play more diverse roles on screen. They were cast to play in more genres, primarily comedy and crime drama, and appeared in a greater range of professions. They were beginning to be seen in roles of authority, which was a step forward; however, while playing these positions, Black actors were still more commonly found dressed unprofessionally and receiving less respect (Tukachinsky, Mastro, and Yarchi 2017, 540).

The Cosby Show, created in 1984 and one of the most popular shows of the era, worked to transform the narrative that most other shows were putting forth. Centered around an upper middle-class Black family with parents working as a doctor and a lawyer, *The Cosby Show* provided the first opportunity for TV viewers to see Black people living comfortably (Stamps 2017, 412). The characters were displayed as equal members of society and racial stereotypes were rarely used. This new concept, though arguably beneficial, was still met with criticism. Some thought the show softened the racism problem in America and created an excuse for blaming Blacks for their own shortcomings (Stamps 2017, 414). The conflicts that were displayed in the episodes could be experienced by any race and were described as an “unrealistic (though positive) portrayal of Black life by promoting the American dream and myth of social mobility, which maintains that anyone who works hard can find success” (Matabane and Merritt 2014, 453). Many producers of more recent shows acknowledge being inspired by *The Cosby Show* and its spinoff, *A Different World*.

Finally, at the turn of the new century, America began to exercise greater attention to how race is presented on camera.

Modern Day Black Character Quality on TV

Several innovations of the new century, such as social media and smartphones, helped to bring about greater consciousness of and actions in response to injustices in the public sphere. Many activists are no longer sitting back and watching as the media degrade Black people. Nevertheless, stereotyping and misrepresentation in the media are still issues that have yet to be fully resolved.

Kumah-Abiwu discusses the idea that Black men are still portrayed and perceived as violent “thugs,” “criminals,” and “endangered species,” despite the election of America’s first Black president in 2008 (Kumah-Abiwu 2020, 67). The show *Atlanta*, presented by Black creator and showrunner Donald Glover, brought attention to this “thug” narrative. In the pilot, the main character, Earn, was arrested after an altercation that the audience can clearly see developed from being in the wrong place at the wrong time. Earn is seen as a respectful young adult, but was described on the news as just

another Black thug (Hunt 2017, 64). Similarly, in the 2016 incident where a four-year-old Black boy fell into a gorilla habitat at the Cincinnati Zoo, many media outlets focused attention on the criminal history of the boy's father and used it to blame bad parenting for the mishap. Whereas, a week later, when a two-year-old White boy was snatched up by an alligator at a Disney Resort, there was no media scrutiny of the parents and a plenty of sympathy towards the family involved (Kumah-Abiwu 2020, 76).

Black women are given slightly different characterizations than men in contemporary media, being presented as the Jezebel, the Sapphire, or the Strong Black Woman (a modern amalgam of the mammy and superwoman stereotypes) (Coleman, Reynolds, and Torbati 2020, 185). These stereotypes frequently appear on Black-oriented reality TV shows, as illustrated in "The Relation of Black-Oriented Reality Television Consumption and Perceived Realism to the Endorsement of Stereotypes of Black Women." Coleman states that the Jezebel archetype is an attractive, promiscuous, and sexually aggressive woman while the Sapphire is louder and more combative. The Strong Black Woman (SBW) represents a mothering figure, unable to express vulnerability. These character types are displayed across various media channels but research has shown that greater exposure to music videos and movies was linked to recognition of the SBW stereotype. It should also be noted that more Black women endorsed the SBW stereotype in a study conducted by Coleman, Reynolds, and Torbati, possibly because it has more seemingly positive qualities than the others (Coleman, Reynolds, and Torbati 2020, 185-186). The Sapphire stereotype dominates in reality TV shows, which are often at least partially scripted and/or edited and not an accurate representation of "reality."

The widespread false images of Black people presented on television is largely the result of the diversity deficiency problem within shows' writers' rooms. As Hunt explains in his 2017 report commissioned by Hollywood Color of Change, only 4.8 percent of all scripted show writers were Black at the time of his study. He also noted that 65.4 percent of examined shows had no Black writers while every single Black show runner included White writers in their writers' rooms (Hunt 2017, 7). When race representation is not present behind

the scenes, it reflects through the work presented on screen. Hunt explains that writers cannot help but to write from their reservoir of personal experiences. When White men dominate the writers' rooms, they are typically writing from their racialized views of how the character would act.(Hunt 2017, 31). Black women have the highest rate of TV consumption among all racial/ ethnic groups (Coleman, Reynolds, and Torbati 2020, 184) yet they make up a very small portion of writers. Of shows premiering in 2016–17, 82.7 percent had no more than one Black female writer on staff, and many had none (Hunt 2017, 44).

Hunt delineates three different types of writers' rooms and evaluates their effectiveness by means of race and representation. In his categorization, an "Isolated Room" has one token Black writer who is limited as to the impact they have on the way their shows present people of color. The Black characters created in Isolated Rooms are often written with no life to them in order to avoid the race conversation in the writers' rooms (Hunt 2017, 48). The Black writers in these conditions have a much harder time trying to pitch their objections to race stereotypes than writers in "Included Rooms." These rooms tend to have at least three writers of color and are described by Hunt as more open and democratic workspaces than the previous category (Hunt 2017, 50). The third writers' rooms Hunt mentions are labeled "Liberated Rooms," in which five or more writers were Black. These rooms understandably had a much better discussion about race and incorporated it into the plot lines more often than the others. Hunt states that "writers' rooms with multiple Black voices, and/or a critical mass of writers of color, were found to be much more likely than those with no Black writers or only a tokenized Black writer to flesh out well rounded and realistic Black character" (Hunt 2017, 74).

With the introduction of streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu, race representation in the media has gotten much better. The article, "Finding Diversity on Streaming Services: Viewers Look over the Top for Multicultural Casts, and Role Models," states that "the Horowitz State of Viewing & Streaming 2020 study reports that 55% of all viewers who view programming on streaming services and linear television say outlets such as Netflix, Hulu and Disney Plus do a better job of showcasing stories about and by people of color than broadcast

and cable” (Umstead 2020, 18). It also discusses how consumers are paying attention to the race representations that these shows portray and the importance of putting an end to media-based racial stereotyping in order to keep their viewership. Streaming apps have shifted the focus from obtaining viewer ratings to obtaining and keeping consumer subscriptions, which is driven by the content of the overall platform rather than that of a particular show (Hunt 2017, 29). This is a factor that each service’s executives have to consider when choosing what shows to include and whether it could potentially result in a loss of subscription holders.

The Impact of Media Stereotyping on Black Culture

It should come as no surprise that messages presented in media have a strong influence on how we act and view topics. Most people are susceptible to the power of media through young adulthood, but seniors also change their opinions and actions based on which and how much media they watch. Studies have found that a person’s opinion about race can be influenced by media consumption as much as any other factor of an individual’s psychology and behavior. What is less certain is what young Black viewers gather about their identity and future potential based on the images presented about their culture on TV and in other media.

Cultivation Theory is a term media researchers use to explain the relationship between TV viewing and message internalization. When utilized in reference to the topic of race, this theory suggests that youth internalize Black character portrayals as acceptable and predictive behavior of Black people. Since young Blacks have the highest number of viewing hours and strong preference for Black TV shows, they would be the most prone to acceptance of media-generated stereotypes. But as Adams-Bass, Stevenson, and Kotzin state in, “Measuring the Meaning of Black Media Stereotypes and Their Relationship to the Racial Identity, Black History Knowledge, and Racial Socialization of African American Youth,” the Cultivation Theory fails to take into account the nuances of Black culture, racial oppression, or stereotyping used in everyday life (Adams-Bass, Stevenson, and Kotzin 2014, 370-71).

The authors of “The Relation of Black-Oriented Reality Television Consumption and Perceived Realism to the Endorsement of Stereotypes of Black Women” also discuss Cultivation Theory to explain why some viewers internalize messages. However, this article focuses more on the idea of Perceived Realism and how it applies specifically to reality TV. Perceived Realism is a construct that gauges the degree to which media consumers believe and understand content to be a reflection of real life (Coleman, Reynolds, and Torbati 2020, 186). Black women between the ages of 18 and 25 were the center of this study. They found that 70 percent of participants’ overall TV consumption was spent watching reality TV and that 61 percent was spent watching Black-oriented reality TV (Coleman, Reynolds, and Torbati 2020, 189). The authors suggest a high level of perceived realism of TV content will likely lead to endorsement of the stereotypes in the medium (Coleman, Reynolds, and Torbati 2020, 186). However, the authors also found through this study, and similar ones, that more educated Black audiences tend to reject negative stereotypes and instead aim to maintain positive views about their culture (Coleman, Reynolds, and Torbati 2020, 190). Those who are younger or more disadvantaged when it comes to education, may not have the same views about their identity. Nevertheless, through the Cultivation Theory, Perceived Realism, and many other theories, it can be argued that Black viewers are more likely to accept and endorse these stereotypes, the more they are exposed to them.

Media outlets such as television are not the only factors that shape an adolescent’s view on one’s own culture or that of others. Education inside and outside the home, personal experiences, and other environmental factors will all have a strong impact on how willing one is to accept the messages they see verbatim. Adams-Bass details the concept of Racial/ Ethnic Socialization (R/ES) as a lens through which one appraises self-esteem, racial and ethnic identity, and coping options (Adams-Bass, Stevenson, and Kotzin 2014, 371). She also takes into account knowledge of Black history and found that youth who receive more affirming racial socialization messages are better able to differentiate positive from negative stereotypes and thus have a better sense of their identity. Consequently, younger youth, who typically have less socialization knowledge and race conflicting experiences,

were identifying more positive stereotypes than older youth. Younger youth also view more shows targeted towards their age group; typically these shows are more careful about what messages they put forth. Gender is also a factor to take into consideration. Males were less likely to identify negative stereotypes but more likely to endorse them than females. This could be largely due to differences in upbringing, earlier maturation within females, and differences in the gender stereotypes on television (Adams-Bass, Stevenson, and Kotzin 2014, 385). Even so, when asked what it means to be a Black woman, 60 percent of a sample of Black girls aged 15-22 described stereotypical images including the Jezebel stereotype when giving their answer (Coleman, Reynolds, and Torbati 2020, 186). Every individual is different and will learn and internalize media images in different ways depending on their life conditions.

From a societal standpoint, false stereotyping in media presents an ongoing effect. The stereotypes discovered in various media channels actively heighten the damaging effects of systemic racism. When other races have a limited personal experience with Black people, they often turn to the news and other media to understand their culture. These same sources are the ones that pushed (and continue to push) the ideology of whiteness as good and black/darkness as bad. These understandings have conditioned many members of society to believe Whites are deserving and ideal and others are unfavored and unvirtuous (Kumah-Abiwu 2020, 71). This is a dangerous perspective, especially if held by people in positions of authority such as law enforcement and medicine. Black people statistically receive harsher sentencing by judges, lesser access to substantial jobs and loans, and less chance of survival in encounters with police and doctors than the White race (Hunt 2017, 26). Kumah-Abiwu asserts that the success of Black men, both current and past, has been hindered by stereotypes that have established worldviews and policy regimes that affect them negatively (Kumah-Abiwu 2020, 67). These stereotypes lead to mistrust and misunderstanding of the Black race across all professions, including producers and writers, which leads to more output of false generalizations and more ignorance among viewers. These societal conditions make it hard for a young Black person, regardless of their

level of social awareness or identity appreciation, to be completely optimistic about their life prospects.

Conclusion

Black people in America have been dealt tremendous hardships and it has been a battle for them to fully assimilate and be treated as equal members of society. Mass media outlets have greatly impacted the Black plight with their degrading portrayals of the race. Stereotypes that still linger in news broadcasts, shows, and movies allow viewers to make false assumptions about a group of people, thus causing them to treat them differently, both willfully and subconsciously. Many have investigated what these stereotypes have taught other races about the Black race, but few researchers have examined how these hurtful generalizations can affect the people they purport to describe.

Through my review of a sample of the literature on this topic, I have found there is no clear-cut answer as to how Black consumers view and react to stereotypes. There are a lot of different theories and factors that need to be considered and controlled for. There is no doubt that young Black viewers are affected by what they are seeing. Education level, knowledge of Black history and self-identity, gender, and age are important distinctions that can change a person's view on the material they consume. Nonetheless, culture stereotyping and misrepresentation is a major problem that needs to be discussed more in the film industry. The content we see now has the power to impact future generations. It is our duty as consumers and subscribers to call out the wrong doings we see displayed across our screens and change the way oppressed groups are treated and presented to the masses.

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Kyle Jordan Smith is a Presidential Scholar at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where he majors in Public Policy with a minor in International Affairs. He serves in student government and on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council for the College of Liberal Arts. Before attending Georgia Tech, Kyle was a Page for the Maryland General Assembly and a student member of the Maryland State Board of Education. His hometown is Waldorf, Maryland. Advisor: Eliza Markley, PhD, Part-time Lecturer, Sam Nunn School of International Affairs, Georgia Institute of Technology.

Yarayah St. Phard is the first student from Georgia State University to participate in the Institute. He is a member of the Honors College and majors in Media Entrepreneurship. He participates in the Panther LEAP Leadership Program the Panther PRIME African American Male Initiative. After graduation, Yarayah intends to pursue a career in advertising, and manage his own advertising firm one day. His hometown is Atlanta, Georgia. Advisor: Joseph Gary Bellon, PhD, Senior Professor in Communications at Georgia State University.

Samuel S. Timmons attends the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he majors in History and minors in Education. He is a member of Honors Carolina, the Honor Court, and the Black Student Movement. He became familiar with the Institute through a program the Institute operates in Durham, North Carolina in partnership with the Alpha Tau Boulé of Sigma Pi Phi Fraternity. After graduation, Samuel will pursue a career in law. His hometown is Raleigh, North Carolina. Advisor: Genna Rae McNeil, PhD, Professor of History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Brandon D. Vincent is a Sociology major at Loyola University New Orleans, where he is the Student Government Association's Chief Justice and a Resident Advisor. During his first summer with the Institute, he interned with the National Black Justice Coalition. He hopes to work in health policy after graduation. His hometown is Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Advisor: Dennis Kalob, PhD, Economic Policy Specialist at the Jesuit Social Research Institute (Loyola University New Orleans).

Marc N. Younker majors in Political Science and Labor Studies at Rutgers University. He has interned in Senator Cory Booker's Washington, DC office, on Booker's 2020 presidential campaign, and with IMPACT Strategies, a political advocacy firm in Washington, DC. Marc intends to continue his work in the political realm after he graduates. His hometown is West Orange, New Jersey. Advisor: Saladin Ambar, PhD, Associate Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University-New Brunswick.