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Disturbing the Dream of Integration: Critical Whiteness and the History of Penn State's College of Education, 1954-1963

Cover Page Footnote

This paper was initially developed as part of Dr. Kelly Rosinger's Fall 2017 History of Higher Education course at Penn State and I am grateful for the instructor comments and peer work-shopping that helped this idea take shape. I am also thankful for the valuable feedback on early drafts provided by Dr. Alicia Dowd and doctoral students Marlon Fernandez Castro and Branden Elmore.

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Disturbing the Dream of Integration

Critical Whiteness and the History of Penn State's College of Education, 1954-1963

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— Abstract —

In this study, I drawn upon Critical Whiteness frameworks and a deconstructionist historiographical method to explore tensions between espoused and enacted 'integrationist' values within the Pennsylvania State University's College of Education in the decade following *Brown v. Board* (1954-1963). This site-specific historical approach is a response to the fact that the vast majority of higher education scholarship exploring the history of the Civil Rights era focuses on Southern institutions and their overt struggles over desegregation and racial integration. This focus is warranted given the dramatic and often violent nature of this period of Southern history, but it may serve to obscure more subtle patterns of re-segregation, sidelining, and marginalization of Black concerns on Northern campuses. By examining the curriculum and doctoral dissertations from Penn State's College of Education through a Critical Whiteness frame, this study contributes to recent scholarship of Northern colleges that seeks to disrupt the overly simplistic master narrative of peaceful campus racial integration, and calls for Northern colleges to recognize, grapple with, and atone for their own histories.

Keywords: history, Whiteness, race, Northern colleges
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With some notable exceptions, scholarship exploring the history of the Civil Rights era in higher education settings has focused on Southern institutions and their overt struggles for desegregation (Bradley, 2018; Sugrue, 2009; Wallenstein, 2009). This regional focus is warranted given the dramatic, often violent conditions of Southern desegregation, but it also serves to obscure a subtle counterrevolution occurring on Northern campuses made more insidious by its easy deniability. Northern colleges commonly prided themselves for their early integration and held themselves as paragons of intercultural harmony when contrasted with their Southern peers. This sense of exceptionality, however, frequently masked more casual forms of re-segregation, sidelining, and marginalization of Northern Black concerns during the Civil Rights era. As Dafina-Lazarus Stewart (2017a) noted in his recent book, *Black Collegians' Experiences in US Northern Private Colleges:*

> There has been little known and discussed concerning the process of integration as enacted in specific Northern institutional contexts. Public discourses would imply that integration "just happened" uniformly, rather than the more authentic reality of the uneven, partial, and paradoxical juxtaposition of inclusion and exclusion that characterized the era between World War II and the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act (p. xi).

Stewart ends the introduction of his book by calling upon education scholars to conduct in-depth institutional histories of race relations at Northern institutions in order to disrupt the overly simplistic master narrative of peaceful integration currently reflected in the literature.

While a full reckoning with institutional race relations in the pre-Civil Rights era is beyond the scope of this paper, the following text will respond to Stewart's call by exploring the site-specific history of Pennsylvania State (Penn State) University's College of Education, and the ways that topics of integrated classrooms, Black student concerns, and intercultural education were, or were not, evidenced in the departmental curriculum and scholarly output in the decade following the passage of *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954-1963). As the Association of American Colleges and Universities noted in their 1995 report, *The drama of diversity and democracy: Higher education and American commitments*, curricula and faculty-approved graduate theses serve as direct expressions of the ways in which universities understand, express, and implement their missions, and therefore provide important insights into institutional values. If that's the case, then the inclusion or exclusion of themes related to race or diversity may be indicative of the conscious and unconscious ways in which Penn State's College of Education viewed their relationship to the socio-political context of the decade following the passage of *Brown v. Board.*

My exploration of these patterns of inclusion and exclusion are informed by deconstructionist and critical-realist paradigms. That is to say, I approach the historical record as a starting place rather than a final product, and seek to uncover patterns of behaviors and discourses that provide insights into the ontological structures governing Northern White Colleges' orientations toward issues of race and racism. This search for patterns requires a level of essentialism and generalization, but, as Stewart (2017b) notes, critical realist approaches provide historiographical researchers with tools to document the "ways that the production of categories and institutional environments mediate the construction of social groups" (p. 158). Similarly, deconstructionist historiography supports the explicit use of theoretical frames to inform discussions of archival work in order to interrogate structures underlying policies and practices of the past that may be undergirding systems of power and privilege in the present. Given

the problem for inquiry in this study, and the location of Penn State as a predominantly and historically white institution, I draw on theoretical concepts from Critical Whiteness Studies literature to explore how institutional discourses, practices, and artifacts work to construct and position the identities of differently racialized members of the campus community.

Positionality

Critical realist and deconstructionist paradigms recognize that the researcher's identity and positionality has epistemic salience (Moya, 2009; Stewart, 2017b), and resist positivist assumptions about the 'value-neutrality' and 'apoliticality' of historical research. Acknowledging my social identities and the relationship I hold to the research site and questions is therefore a critical component of the research design. First and foremost, it is important to note that I am currently a doctoral candidate within Penn State's College of Education. While I attempt to maintain a critical stance in order to speak back to the institutional record, it is possible that my affiliation hinders my ability to fully critique the degree-granting processes of my home department. As a white woman with multiple privileged identities, I also recognize that I may struggle to recognize and articulate certain forms of institutionalized oppression. I have therefore been grateful for the review and feedback of a diverse group of 'critical friends' from other institutions of higher education who have helped inform my perspective

This study emerges from my prior graduate study at a large, public land-grant institution in the Southern United States which marked the 50-year anniversary of its (court-mandated) racial desegregation during my tenure on campus. The anniversary was characterized by public reckoning with the uncomfortable, often violent nature of this history, and students, faculty, and staff alike were asked to reflect on the past and present implications of this lineage. When I moved to Penn State, therefore, I found myself wondering about how the history of racial integration 'lived' at a Northern campus that had desegregated voluntarily, rather than under court order. I began my study of the Penn State College of Education anticipating that I would find curricular and programmatic artifacts during the target time period that would demonstrate a growing awareness and responsiveness of the charge on education departments to prepare future teachers and scholars to navigate increasingly racially integrated learning environments. The archives, however, led me in a very different direction.

The Context of the "Northern White College"

The landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board* Supreme Court decision threw American race relations into an uproar. Newspapers of the day lauded its passage as "the most important Supreme Court decision of all time, excepting only the *Dred Scott* decision," and as "the beginning of the end of a dual society" (cited in Payne, 2004, p. 84). Opponents of the decision, on the other hand, saw the case as a harbinger of the end of American civilization and, in particular, the decline of its economic prosperity. The decision was interpreted as a victory for Civil Rights advocates in terms of formalizing and institutionalizing an anti-racist rhetoric in regards to education. Revisionist history scholars like James Patterson (2001), Charles Payne (2004), and Anders Walker (2009), however, have noted that the largest immediate impact of the decision was the narrowing of the discussion of race-based discrimination down to a singular focus on *de jure* segregation. The high level of attention paid to 'desegregating the South' positioned the discourse as both geographically bounded (something only the South had to worry about) and narrowly focused on a singular manifestation of discrimination. This narrow focus in turn sidelined dialogue about other forms of structural oppression. As Payne notes, this language also served to "separate the act of segregation from the systematic oppression of which it was but a part by framing the racial system in a language of 'separation,' 'custom,' 'our way of life,' and 'social inequality" (p. 85).

This reception and rhetorical impact of *Brown v. Board* has particularly pernicious implications for Northern contexts given their longer history of desegregation (legally, if not in practice). Regional differences in demographics, as well as significant class-based residential segregation in Northern cities, meant that middle- and upper-class whites in the North had significant 'protection' from desegregation. The fact that their neighborhoods and schools would not be immediately impacted by the decisions meant that they could frame racial oppression as a phenomenon far removed from their lived experience, while using Southern struggles to desegregate as a confirmation of their own perceived moral superiority (Bell, 2005; Payne, 2004). The segregation-oriented rhetoric of post-*Brown v. Board* racial discourse aligned with the interests of Northern whites because it positioned them as innocent of discriminatory behavior and deflected attention away from their own patterns of race-based exclusion and oppression.

In addition to framing the national policy discourse, the rhetoric of Northern white innocence (Lensmire, 2010; Matias, 2016; Ross, 1990) also impacted how race relations were discussed at Northern institutions of higher education. A few months after the passage of *Brown v. Board,* the Executive vice-Chairman of the National Scholarship Services and Fund for Negro Students, Richard Plaut (1954), published an article in *The Journal of Negro Education* describing his understanding of race relations on Northern campuses: "While in the North there is still some *de facto* segregation, particularly on the elementary and junior high school levels, integration in higher education is a *fait accompli* to the extent that Negroes can and do wish it to be" (p. 312). He then goes on to claim that "healthy racial attitudes are well-established and taken for granted in New England, the Middle Atlantic states, and the Pacific Coast" but adds the caveat that "campus climate is usually healthier where Negroes are relatively few in number" (p. 313). This rhetoric of integration and assumption of equal opportunities on Northern campuses was echoed by institutional leaders throughout the region, often in direct response to the slowly growing resistance movement being staged by Black students at the same institutions (Williamson, 2003). The national and higher education discourse worked to privilege Northern white innocence and the dominance of the issue of *de facto* segregation over other forms of systemic oppression, and shaped the campus climates of predominantly and historically white institutions like Penn State.

Penn State: Public Integration, Private Segregation

Pennsylvania State University was founded in 1855 as the commonwealth's only land-grant institution, and originally dedicated its mission to the education of an agricultural economy (Corporate charter of the Pennsylvania State University, 1855). At first glance, Penn State has a relatively innocuous history of racial integration: the first African American graduate—Calvin Waller—finished his degree in 1899, and its athletic teams were integrated decades before many of its peers (Bezilla, 1985). Despite this public embrasure of racial integration, however, African Americans represented an exceedingly small percentage of the study body (Daisey, 2008). Narratives from the 1950s and 1960s also repeatedly document instances of differential treatment and outright discriminatory exclusion both on-campus and in the larger State College community (Daisey, 2008; Kransnansky, 2006).

Institutional and student leadership from 1954 to 1963 appears to have followed the common Northern trend of equating 'race-based discrimination' solely with the practice of official segregation (Payne, 2004; Stewart, 2017a; Sugrue, 2009), thereby minimizing patterns of racial exclusion and oppression on campus. This tension between espoused and enacted values came to a head in 1956 when racially minoritized students approached the All-University Student Council with a request that the institution take a stance against explicit instances of anti-Black racism.

According to the next day's student newspaper, a brief debate ensued before the Council adamantly declared that "there is no discrimination here" and closed discussion on the topic ("Official Says," 1956, para. 1).

In response to this 1956 assertion of institutional innocence, Penn State Psychology professor Richard Davage (1958) released a comprehensive campus climate survey focused on the experiences of African American students in the State College community, detailing a wide range of exclusions, marginalizations, and outright discrimination. The sixty-four African American students who responded to Davage's survey represented a significant proportion of the Black population on campus. At that time, Black enrollment represented significantly less than one percent of the total student body (fewer than 100 undergraduate and graduate students out of a total of over 14,500). Davage applied strict inclusion criteria when determining which discrimination narratives to document, discarding those with insignificant description or specificity in terms of time or place. Even with these limiting measures, he found that nearly half of the respondents returned acceptable accounts of discrimination in off-campus housing, 28% faced race-based exclusion when seeking tonsorial services, and 21% experienced differential services or exclusion in eating establishments in State College (p. 17). In his report Davage highlighted the fact that these statistics likely significantly underestimate the frequency of discrimination-based interactions for Black students in the community—when residential housing requirements are taken into account Davage argued that "we could reasonably infer that 70% to 100% of the Negro population would encounter racial discrimination in State College housing" (p. 18).

After providing narratives of specific and persistent themes of discrimination, the Report concluded with a series of recommendations to Penn State leadership, with strategies including an increase in compositional diversity, the hiring of a dedicated advisor or mentoring staff member knowledgeable about Black student concerns, and increased pressure on landlords to provide equal access to housing. While Davage's scholarly authority and data-driven research offered concrete, theory-guided recommendations for campus interventions, few steps were taken to publically acknowledge or address student concerns following the report's release (Disks: Walker Memoirs and Notes, undated).

The paragraphs above provide the context within which the Penn State College of Education went about its process of educating and certifying future teachers, school leaders, and education scholars. Counter-narratives provided by Dr. Davage and his student participants were certainly present, but the low level of structural diversity and active resistance on the part of the institution made it difficult for these voices to be heard. The University Council's adamant claim that "there is no discrimination here" echoed not only across the larger Penn State and State College context, but also reverberated in the scholarly and pedagogical artifacts of the College of Education that serve as the focus of this study.

Historiography and Theory

Before moving on to discuss the theoretical framework that informs this study, it is important to note that there is significant debate among historians about the appropriateness of applying conceptual and analytical frameworks to historiographic research, particularly when these theoretical models were developed subsequent to the period being studied (Novick, 1998, Goodchild & Huk, 1990, Kaestle, 1992). These debates center different onto-epistemological commitments concerning the relationship between historian and archival data, and the degree to which the past is rendered 'knowable' through the writing of history. Three different traditions of historiographic research have emerged as a result—reconstructionist, constructionist, and deconstructionist—which differ based on the degree to which they embrace empiricism and objectivism

as the root of historical knowledge (Novick, 1998). The reconstructionist tradition emerged during the Enlightenment and early modernist periods and argues that historians engage in highly empirical, realist-representationalist scholarship capable of discovering the *"truthful interpretation"* of the past (Munslow, 2003, p. 172). Constructionist historiography (e.g., Marxist historical materialism) emerged during the late-modernist period as a response to emerging social scientific methods that framed historiography as a tool for uncovering the underlying structures of the past. This second branch drew heavily upon social theories and conceptual frameworks, but positioned the historian as a neutral, objective scientist deploying these frames for the purposes of unearthing 'truths.' The more recent deconstructionist model, in contrast, argues that historiography is an act of narrative-creation conducted by an ideologically and onto-epistemologically committed historian within the bounds permitted by the archival record (Munslow 2003, 2012). Deconstructionist historiography acknowledges that historians are always already shaping their research questions, data-seeking procedures, and analytical strategies through the lens of their own agendas and theoretical leanings.

In order to apply the Critical Whiteness Studies framework, this paper follows the deconstructionist perspective as laid out by Hayden White (1973, 1987), Paul Ricoeur (1975), Frank Ankersmit (1989, 2001), and Alun Munslow (2003, 2012). These theorists argue that 'doing' history requires that events be 'turned' by a historian into a historical narrative through a process that aligns more closely with literary studies than social science. In his 2003 book, *The New History*, Munslow argues that historiography requires imagination and a creative re-envisioning of the past through the ideological and analytical lenses of the historian. As a consequence, "the historian must offer an imaginative reconstruction of the past, but one that aims at reconstructing the past of this present, the present in which the act of imagination is going on, as here and now perceived" (p. 18). This framing justifies the use of theories and conceptual lenses developed significantly later than the target time period because they provide relevant insights useful to a contemporary audience.

Theoretical Framework

In keeping with a deconstructionist perspective, I chose to examine the data through a theoretical framework that encourages attention to power dynamics, silences, and counter-narratives. Given Penn State's location as a predominantly and historically white campus, a Critical Whiteness Studies (CWS) framing is appropriate for investigating its institutional practices and onto-epistemological framings. The central components of CWS include: "(a) an unwillingness to name the contours of systemic racism, (b) the avoidance of identifying with a racial experience or minority group, and (c) the minimization of the U.S. history of racism" (Cabrera, Franklin, & Watson, 2016, p. 18). These central components focus on strategies of historical amnesia and displaced empathy in order to position white individuals and institutions as 'innocent' and 'neutral' actors in the racialized present (Applebaum, 2013; Matias, 2013; Patel, 2015). In addition, discourses of Whiteness deploy the following five strategies to further support and reinforce hegemonic racial hierarchies:

1. Color evasiveness (also referred to a racial colorblindness)
2. Assumed racial comfort
3. Epistemologies of ignorance
4. Ontological expansiveness
5. Whiteness as property (Cabrera et al., 2016, p. 18).

For the purposes of this study, I will focus primarily on the first three strategies: racial evasiveness, assumed racial comfort, and epistemologies of ignorance. Each of the featured strategies is briefly described below.

Racial Color-Evasiveness

Originally developed as the concept of "racial colorblindness" by sociologist Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2001, 2006, 2015), this theory describes how Whiteness deploys coded language in order to uphold race-based power structures without having to explicitly name race as a motivating factor. While keeping with the spirit of Bonilla-Silva's original theorizing, I acknowledge the ableist stance present in the term 'color*blind*' and prefer to adopt Annamamma, Jackson, and Morrison's (2017) reframing of "color-evasiveness." This usage also highlights the agency of whites and those engaged in Whiteness actively "evading" engagements with race, as compared to simply not seeing them.

Color-evasiveness is a significant tool for considering the post-civil rights era because while the social context discouraged expressions of *overt* racism and race-based privilege, White discourses and structures developed strategies for engaging with *covert* racism that maintained and advanced White economic and socio-political interests. While the framework that Bonilla-Silva (2006) lays out is designed to identify how racism operates at the beginning of the 21st century, the seeds of the four types of color-evasive racism—cultural racism, naturalization, minimization of racism, and abstract liberalism—were evident in liberal racial discourse a full century earlier.

Assumed Racial Comfort

While color-evasive racism operates to provide a veneer of socially-acceptable inclusivity, it also assists in the promotion of the second strategy of CWS—assumed racial comfort. Cheryl Matias's (2013, 2016a) work around white emotionality and Robin DiAngelo's (2016; DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2014) work on white fragility both explore how 'discomfort' on the part of whites can take primacy in inter-racial communication and serve to shut down the possibility of progress. Leonardo and Porter (2010) further demonstrated this concept within the context of higher education by exploring the concept of 'safe spaces' and their frequent framing as areas devoid of discomfort (and therefore adverse to any kind of direct reckoning with concepts like white privilege or structural oppression).

Epistemologies of Ignorance

One of the major ways that white comfort is sustained is through a lack of knowledge about the realities of historical and contemporary racism, or what CWS scholars refer to as 'epistemologies of ignorance.' The term, coined by Charles Mills (1997), suggests that whites cultivate structured racial ignorance in order to avoid reckoning with their culpability and complicity in racist structures and histories. As Cabrera et al. (2016) note, epistemologies of ignorance serve a two-fold purpose: "First, if ignorance is bliss, then racial ignorance allows White people to remain racially blissful (or at least not complicit in racial oppression). Second, it allows the contours of contemporary systemic racism to remain un-interrogated and therefore remain in place" (p. 21). Applebaum (2010) complicates this strategy even further by suggesting that epistemologies of ignorance function both as a matter of "not knowing" and (more perniciously) as "not knowing what one does not know and believing that one knows" (p. 39).

Taken together, these three theoretical concepts were used as a lens through which I shaped my research questions and my analytical approach of listening for both coded and silenced racial discourses. It is not enough, in a CWS framework, to notice the presence or absence of Whiteness in institutional practices and artifacts, but rather the researcher must move beyond these observations to make claims about what such presence/absence and rhetorical positioning does in terms of either reifying or contesting White supremacy.

Methods and Data Collection

Historiographic research requires deep engagement with multiple sources in order to

develop familiarity with both the context and specific responses to the research question (Humphrey, 2010). To collect this contextual data, I contacted the Special Collections Librarians at Penn State and arranged to visit the archives six times in the fall of 2017. During these visits I viewed restricted access materials from the target decade, including College of Education department meeting minutes, notes from the Dean's Office, copies of the University bulletin that detailed course offerings and degree requirements, and student yearbooks.

In addition to providing insights into the context of Penn State and surrounding State College communities in the 1950s-1960s, the Special Collections Library also served as a primary site for the curricular section of my empirical research. This aspect of data collection was particularly focused on reviewing the official campus bulletins and curricular guides published each year from 1954-1963. These bulletins provided comprehensive descriptions of the degree and concentration offerings of each college—including required coursework, recommended electives, and timelines for degree completion—as well as introductory remarks from the College Deans describing their department's understanding of its mission, values, and goals for the year. The bulletins also included a title and brief description of each course offered at the University during that academic year, organized by department and degree level.

Once I had familiarized myself with the curricular offerings and gaps both within the College of Education and in the departments housing the recommended electives (Sociology, Psychology, and Political Science), I then moved on to the second phase of my empirical study—a review of the dissertations approved by the College of Education between 1954 and 1963. As part of a digitization project, all dissertations from this period had been scanned and made available through ProQuest Dissertations & Theses, which rendered search and retrieval significantly less time consuming than originally anticipated.

I began my review of the dissertation data by downloading a database of titles and keyword information for all 453 dissertations which had been awarded by the College of Education during the target decade. This database was then narrowed based on indicators that a dissertation's focus might include Black student experiences, racial integration policies, or intercultural exchange. 32 dissertations were initially selected for inclusion based on title/keyword analysis, at which point I downloaded PDF copies of each of these manuscripts and examined their table of contents and introductory chapters to confirm their relevance to this study. Seven dissertations were excluded at this point when it became apparent that they were inappropriate for this focus (e.g. the use of 'segregation' in a dissertation's title referring to the separation of Special Education students from a mainstream classroom rather than explicitly race-based exclusion). The remaining 25 dissertations were read in their entirety, and then categorized based on the role that race and race relations did or did not play in their research questions and analytical frameworks.

Data Analysis

I then analyzed my findings by reading them through, against, and alongside the CWS theoretical lenses of racial color-evasiveness, epistemological ignorance, and assumed racial comfort. Using this type of critical approach necessarily involves the difficult process of focusing on silences and exclusions in order to locate obscured narratives functioning beneath the official institutional discourse (Baez, 2002; Iverson, 2007; Revilla & Asato, 2002; Roe, 1994).

During the curricular phase of the analysis I sought to read the texts both deductively in order to trace patterns of curricular offerings, and inductively through the CWS theoretical tenets of racial color-evasiveness and assumed racial comfort in order to identify and explore gaps and silences in the text (Pollock, 2004; Stein, 2004). These lenses allowed me to think more critically about what courses, perspectives, and agendas were *not* included in the

bulletins and to hypothesize about the reasons for their exclusion and the potential impact of such absence on the development and scholarship of students following such curricular guides.

During the dissertation analysis phase, in contrast, I paid particular attention to how the CWS tenets of epistemologies of ignorance and assumed racial comfort allowed me to explore whether and how authors positioned themselves in relation to race-conscious discourse. As I read through and against these dissertations, I had the words of the 1956 All-University Council ringing in my head—If official discourse stated that "there is no discrimination here," then where *did* students think discrimination happened? How might this refusal to acknowledge and engage the experiences of Black students on campus (epistemologies of ignorance) have influenced where and how race was discussed?

Findings

Given the context of this institutional climate and the larger state and national tensions surrounding the Civil Rights era, one might expect the curriculum and scholarly output of Penn State College of Education to reflect growing interest in addressing the issues of the time. This hypothesis stems from the fact that the commonwealth of Pennsylvania had the second highest population of Black residents in the North (behind only New York), and Penn State's College of Education was the largest producer of K-12 educators for the region (Education in Pennsylvania, 1958). The University was both proud and vocal about the integration of its athletic teams and Black student athletes frequently graced the covers of both the campus newspaper and the local community paper. This public celebration of integration, however, did not manifest in either the curricular offerings of the College of Education, or the dissertations approved by the department. Rather, analysis of the curriculum guides and degree requirements demonstrated a commitment to color-evasive framings throughout the time period. Analysis of the dissertations, on the other hand, resulted in two dominant themes: a geographical displacement of race and racism as topics only relevant in Southern states, and a marked disinclination to consider race and racial difference as a potential factor of analysis in Northern contexts.

Color-Evasive Curricula and the Absence of Racial Discourse

Penn State University curriculum guides were published annually throughout the 1954-1963 period in thick, hard-bound texts. These bulletins were organized by College and Department, and each section included introductory comments from the Dean of the College, lists of degree offerings, required coursework and recommended electives for each program, and a list of faculty members. The second half of the bulletin consisted of a list of offered courses by course number, title, and brief one to two sentence descriptions of course content.

The 1954 bulletin describes the College of Education as "a professional school established to conduct and co-ordinate teacher education programs with the University" (p. 101). Throughout the decade being studied, departments in the College included Art Education, Educational Services, Elementary Education, Music Education, Industrial Education, Psychology, and Secondary Education. Graduate programs also included emphases in educational and psychological counseling, educational administration, research and supervision, school psychology, rehabilitation counseling, educational research, language education, speech correction, and others. The bulletin also described a research and service mission to "co-operate with local communities" in conducting tasks such as "developing better relationships between communities and schools," "curriculum revision," "improving instruction," "establishing programs of testing and education for special education for special classes" and "introducing and validating psychological techniques of testing, selection, and other personnel procedures in industry" (p. 152). Given Penn State's mission as the commonwealth's

land grant institution, it seems intuitive that these programs and service missions would be intended to benefit all of the Commonwealth's citizens. Review of the curricular offerings both within the College and across its recommended elective options, however, did not reflect this broad mandate.

Only one course in the entire list of required coursework and recommended electives from 1954-1963 mentioned race or race-based topics in its title, and that course—Soc. 19 Race and Race Relations—was only a required class for students interested in completing a certificate in "Teaching Non-English Speaking Classes" (a certificate which was phased out in 1961, after which explicitly race-based topics were completely absent from required or recommended graduate coursework). A review of graduate courses in the fields of psychology, sociology and anthropology, political science, and history turned up only a handful of possible (non-explicitly recommended) elective options for graduate students interested in learning more about race-based issues. These potential electives were located almost exclusively in the Sociology department and included courses such as "Soc. 23—Population Problems," which had an explicit focus on quantifying race-based demographics and exploring theoretical topics surrounding eugenics and Malthusianism, and "Soc. 401—Human Evolution" which highlighted units in "primatology, human paleontology, and race formation" ("General Catalogue," 1965, p. 440).

Racial Avoidance and Geographic Displacement in the Dissertation Texts

Given the lack of attention paid to race and racialized discourse in the curriculum of the College, it is perhaps unsurprising to see similar patterns arising in content analysis of doctoral dissertations approved between 1954 and 1963. Of the 453 dissertations approved during the target decade, 24 were selected for full content analysis based on indications in their titles, abstracts and introductory chapters that suggested that they might reference, draw upon, or otherwise engage constructs of race and racialized education policies and practices. The dissertations were then coded through the CWS lenses of epistemologies of racism and assumed racial comfort to develop three categories of findings related to if and how race factored into the studies, and—if it did play a role—*where* race became relevant. These final categories are as follows: *Race as a Southern issue* (9); *Race as 'non-factor'* (13); and the *Race as central problem* (2).

Race as a Southern issue. Nine of the dissertations studied in depth were conducted predominantly by students in the Agricultural, Industrial, or Arts Education programs and focused on reviewing strategies for improving vocational/agricultural education at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and predominantly Black high schools in the South (the Carolinas, Alabama, Virginia, and Texas). Five of the authors mentioned being HBCU graduates themselves in their dissertation acknowledgements, and all nine made explicit calls for increased funding and attention to be paid to institutions geared toward Black education, particularly in the South. Interestingly, these were the only dissertations to center Black students' experiences and needs, yet all of these studies took place at a geographical distance from Penn State. Race was not a local issue even for these dissertations, but rather was framed as a phenomenon that needed to be addressed 'down South.'

Race as non-factor. The second category of dissertations demonstrates the degree to which race was not considered salient in the modes of analysis and problem-identification that occurred within the higher profile Education departments (including School Administration, Teacher Education, and Counseling clusters, as well as the general Education doctoral program which included a focus on postsecondary outcomes). The 13 dissertations in this category were initially selected because their titles and abstracts indicated that they would be exploring the relationship between a wide range of 'selected

characteristics' and student success as demonstrated in a number of different educational settings. In an interesting contrast to the previous category of dissertations, *all* of these studies took place in Pennsylvania, with many focusing on Penn State itself. The characteristics selected by the dissertation authors looking at 'local concerns' included the expected categories of gender, class, nationality, and ability status, but also included some surprising correlations likes "the relationship between the number of books owned by a child's parents and their success in middle school composition classes" (Whitten, 1961, p. 42) and "an analysis of the relationship between the overlap of journal subscriptions of a child's mother and elementary school teacher and the student's conduct report at school" (Bernardo, 1962, p. 11). One notable study (Snow, 1957) tested 14 different constructs—including, among others, body symmetry, weight, personality type, intelligence, and socio-economic background—against "social acceptance status" of college women. Missing from this analysis, however, was any consideration or mention of race. In fact, despite the wide range of characteristics and constructs studied in these texts, not a single dissertation in this set included mention of race or ethnicity (and only one engaged nationality (Williams, 1956), though it focused exclusively on first wave and second wave European immigrants). In other words, "selected factors" in the Northern studies never included the factor of race.

Race as central problem. Two of the studied dissertations centered race and racial categories, but they did so in very different ways and to vastly different political effect. Nick Kostiuk's 1963 dissertation, "Attitude changes of culturally deprived school children in a large metropolitan gray areas project," uses normatively coded language to discuss classrooms in urban Pittsburgh through deficit-minded lenses of achievement. The introduction and literature review for the study describe the student population in socio-economic terms, but it becomes apparent in the methods section that all of the students being studied (and therefore being pathologized as 'culturally deprived' in comparison to the White, middle-class standard) are Black. While CWS analysis would critique Kostiuk's work for ignoring/minimizing the systemic history of racism in the U.S. context, and for avoiding identification with his racially minoritized research participants, it is significant to note that this was the only study to explicitly engage the construct of race in a local (Pennsylvania) setting, or to ask questions about how teachers might better navigate racially and socio-economically diverse classrooms.

The second of the outlier studies offers a more progressive take on racially integrated education, albeit one that takes place a bit further from the Penn State Campus. Bernard Joseph Gilliam's 1957 dissertation, "The preparation, adequacy and performance in guidance of beginning teachers in Washington, D.C.," traces differential outcomes for formerly segregated teacher preparation programs in D.C. as they merged to create an integrated institution following the passage of *Brown v. Board*. When considering these dissertations at an aggregate level, it is particularly shocking to note that Gillam's work represents the *only* instance in the reviewed dissertations that *Brown v. Board* was mentioned, and the only investigation of an explicitly integrated campus. It is important to note, however, that this dissertation also explored race-based content located *outside* of the local context. Washington, D.C. is not Southern in the same way as Alabama or Mississippi, but it is still held at a significant geographic and social distance from the Penn State environment. This dissertation does not challenge the assertion that "discrimination does not happen here."

Black student concerns were clearly a topic of interest for the Agriculture and Industrial Education students studying HBCUs in the South, but it is troubling that race was not even on the radar for the students writing about K-12, counseling, and higher education institutions based in Northern states. This absence is also surprising because it actually shows a decrease in attention from the pre-

Brown 1940s, where keyword searches for "Negro," "African American," and "Black" education returned fifteen unique titles located within the traditional Education departments (not Agricultural, Industrial, or Art Education) focused on Northern research sites. In part, this absence may be exacerbated by the College of Education's drive to raise its national profile by engaging in targeted research agendas focused on education and technology, particularly in strategies for offering closed circuit television classroom practices. Approximately one quarter of the dissertations published between 1953 and 1960 appear to focus on television-moderated learning, and the Dean of the College, Marion Traube, regularly encouraged scholars and advanced students to focus their attention on that emerging field.

Implications

The findings from this study drive home concerns about the dangerous rhetoric of 'white innocence' that has allowed Northern institutions to bypass considerations of their own structural and systematic complicity in race-based exclusion and oppression. In particular, the silence in both the curriculum and the approved dissertations suggests that epistemologies of ignorance and willful avoidance of discomfort were structurally built in to the educational experiences of the predominantly white Education students. By teaching students to geographically displace concerns related to discrimination and racism away from their own local communities, departments become complicit in the normalization and justification of the form of *de facto* segregation prevalent in the North. The de-racialized and color-evasive artifacts of the College suggest that students were operating in an uninterrupted depiction of Northern white innocence that served to render challenges and disruptions—like those made by Dr. Davage and his students—unintelligible. It is of course possible that College of Education faculty were engaging topics of race and racism 'off the record.' After all, the Agricultural, Industrial, and Arts Education students writing dissertations on HBCU's and predominantly Black high schools were receiving training and dissertation committee support from *somewhere*, even if relevant coursework does not appear in the official campus bulletins. However, the official curriculum guides and vast preponderance of dissertations suggest that this work was not systematically sanctioned, and was supported only in certain, more vocationally-oriented departments.

Conclusion

The curriculum offering and dissertation output for Penn State's College of Education looks quite different today, and I do not mean to imply that historical patterns of centering innocence and epistemological ignorance are static conditions that cannot be interrogated and improved over time. What these findings do suggest however, is that educational researchers and practitioners—particularly those working in fields related to teacher preparation, student socialization, and curriculum reform—might benefit from engaging in a critical retrospective of their own institution's racialized history. This is particularly important for (white) scholars and practitioners who have been both educated and employed at Northern historically and predominantly White institutions, who may have not been prompted to think about their own campus' relationship to the history Civil Rights-era racial integration. A reconsideration of how power, privilege, and oppression have functioned—and continue to function—within decisions related to curriculum design and doctoral student socialization provide opportunities for institutional agents to challenge status quo policies and practices established with Whiteness and the white experience as the un-interrogated norm. Equity-minded leadership requires grappling with this history and the various ways that structures, policies, and practices served to exclude and oppress Black students (and other racially minoritized communities), in favor of supporting the racial comfort and innocence of white students. If we do not understand and contest that history,

particularly in our local and immediate contexts, we risk continuing to be controlled by it and repeating its mistakes anew.

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