Denison University

Denison Digital Commons

Denison Student Scholarship

2021

Generational Manifestations of "White Catharsis" Explored Through the Lens of White Savior Films

Lauren kessler
Denison University

Recommended Citation

Generational Manifestations of "White Catharsis"
Explored Through the Lens of White Savior Films

Lauren Kessler

Dr. Laura Russell

May 5th, 2021

Abstract

White savior films (WSF) are powerful in their depictions of racism as historically significant, leading audiences to find false comfort in images of extreme racism as being confined to the past instead of a compounding, contemporary issue. The purpose of my research is to explore the ways that generational manifestations of White catharsis are understood through the lens of White savior films. Moreover, I am interested in how families communicate about their responses to such films. I chose a qualitative method, specifically a case study format, in order to observe family dialogues regarding these films and the racial controversies they portray. I utilized a purposive sampling method in order to select families representative of the typical viewers of WSF. I chose three families who have demonstrated (through previous interactions) a willingness to remain candid and receptive to other perspectives throughout familial dialogue. My study consisted of participants' individual reflections and three family discussions. Findings demonstrate constructions of race defined through various social enactments—acts of justification and acts of understanding. While the generations themselves conceived these acts differently, they still seemed to adopt the same thought process with regard to attributing social context as a driver of acceptability and empathy as a possible method for understanding the other.

Introduction

Films are constitutive in that they replicate the current state of social affairs in society while also reproducing and perpetuating the very issues they reflect. Denzin writes, "in any historical moment, racial discourse is embedded in a range of texts, institutional sites, and rituals. This discourse draws on the preexisting racist beliefs and ideologies. This never-ending discourse produces the racial subject, over and over again."[1] Visual media is particularly purposeful because audiences find and create significance from pieces that are designed for this very purpose of meaning-making. Master narratives are seen in both the content of the films and in the meaning derived from them. White savior films (WSF) are especially powerful in their depictions of racism as historically significant, often leading audiences to find false comfort in images of extreme racism as being confined to the past instead of a compounding, contemporary issue. White saviorism has become an enduring, universally resonating phenomenon because contemporary intercultural and interracial relations are guided by a racialized ideology that separates the redeemers (Whites) from those in need of redemption (non-Whites).[2] They propagate White saviorism and manifest destiny in subtle, yet compelling ways, ultimately transcending traditional political affiliation in order to appeal to the subconscious pathos of guilt and paternalism.

Research has been conducted into such films, including their content, their critics, and discourse surrounding the films. However, little is known about White viewers'—who are arguably the intended audience for such films—responses, as well as the generational differences in the mitigation of "White guilt" through the separation of White viewers from their role in perpetuating racism. The purpose of my research is to explore the ways that generational manifestations of White catharsis are understood through the lens of White savior films. Moreover, I am interested in how families communicate about their responses to such films. This study unfolds first with a literature review that explores institutionalized racism, White saviorism, and the film at the focal point of my study, *Green Book.* Following the literature review, I explain the methods to which the study was conducted, specifically consisting of case study interviews with three separate families. I then discuss the qualitative findings to offer critical reflections and implications regarding how individuals make sense of racial relationships.

---

[1] Denzin, Norman K. "Symbolic Interactionism, Poststructuralism, and the Racial Subject." *Symbolic Interaction* 24, no. 2 (2001): 246. doi:10.1525/si.2001.24.2.243.
[2] Hughey, Matthew W. "The White Savior Film and Reviewers' Reception." *Symbolic Interaction* 33, no. 3 (2010): 2 475-96. doi:10.1525/si.2010.33.3.475

Literature Review

Institutionalized Racism

The United States has a particularly dark yet distinct history, as for the first 350 years of its existence, which is 90% of its history, either slavery or legal segregation took place. This means that only for the last 10% of America's entire history have we been free from these practices of state-sponsored racial oppression and inequality,[3] which have arguably been reproduced in the modern form of policing, brutality, and the mass incarceration of Black Americans. Racial oppression is structural in this way. Racism in the United States has never been a supplemental or additive trend emerging gradually throughout our nation's history, but instead a deeply embedded phenomenon entrenched in the social, legislative, and economic fabric(s) of the New Nation's founding. Beginning first with the genocide of Native Americans and violent theft of their lands, "and the extensive enslavement of Africans as laborers on those stolen lands, European colonists and their descendants created a new society by means of active predation, exploitation, and oppression."[4] The United States and racism are inextricably tied. To suggest otherwise is to blindly reject every other "material, social, and ideological" institution that is wholly indivisible from the inequality of which it is comprised and by which it is fortified. The following discussion on institutionalized racism's definition, historical origins, and contemporary manifestations will provide necessary context for further analysis on progressive whiteness and its ties to white saviorism.

Definition

Racism itself is defined as the "predication of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of *subordinating* a racial group and maintaining control over that group."[5] There are three levels of racism: individual, institutional, and cultural. Individual racism is closely aligned with racial prejudice, suggesting a belief in the superiority of one race over another and in the behaviors that maintain those superior and inferior positions.[6] Institutional racism, a topic to which will be returned, has two meanings:

> (1) It is the institutional extension of individual racist beliefs, consisting primarily of using and manipulating duly constituted institutions so as to maintain a racist advantage over others. (2) It is the byproduct of certain institutional practices that operate to restrict—on a racial basis—the choices, rights, mobility, and access of groups of individuals. These unequal consequences need not be intended, but they are no less real for being simply de facto.[7]

---

[3] Feagin, Joe R. *Systemic Racism*. Routledge, 2006: 2

[4] Feagin. *Systemic Racism*. 2006: 2

[5] Carmichael, Stokely, and Charles V. Hamilton. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*. Vintage Books, 1992: 19

[6] Jones, James M. *Prejudice and Racism*. McGraw-Hill Companies, 1997: 14

[7] Jones, James. *Prejudice and Racism*. 1997: 14

Cultural racism, the third type, is defined as the "individual and institutional expression of the superiority of one's race's cultural heritage over that of another race."[8] Cultural racism contains elements from both individual and institutional racism, and situationally, both may exist simultaneously.

This study will be focusing on institutionalized racism as it manifests in everyday life. As previously stated, institutionalized racism includes the structures, policies, practices, and norms resulting in differential access to the goods, services, and opportunities of society by "race."[9] This concept suggests that racism is normalized, legalized, and reified on various levels, as well as inherited culturally in practice and custom. Intent can be evident, but is not necessary to constitute the concept in its fundamental form. Institutionalized racism is manifested by way of material conditions, such as access to quality education, housing, or medical facilities, or by way of access to power, such as differential access to historical or informational resources, voting rights, or representation in government.[10] It describes how institutional structures, processes, and systems consistently perpetuate racial inequality. These harmful inequalities are "suffused throughout the culture via institutional structures, ideological beliefs, and personal everyday actions of people in the culture, and these effects are passed on from generations to generations."[11] As a result, organizational systems continuously fail to provide appropriate services, facilities, and solutions to BIPOC who have been generationally marginalized.

Griffith et al. argue that institutional racism functions at three discrete levels: the individual, the intraorganizational, and the extraorganizational. The individual level is characterized by the function of racism through individual attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs. In the next level, the intraorganizational level, institutionalized racism operates through an organization's internal climate, policies, and procedures including relationships between and among staff members, which are rooted in formal and informal hierarchies and power relationships. In the extraorganizational level, institutional racism is the reason and means for which organizations influence communities, public policies, and institutions. Organizations are also impacted by larger institutions "and are shaped by the sociopolitical and economic contexts that frame an organization's policies, procedures, and functioning."[12] Racism is a complex phenomenon, but discussion pertaining to its historical beginnings may shed light on the ways in which racism became state-sponsored and eventually became ingrained in every institutional aspect of our society.

History

Beginning in the seventeenth century, Europeans (who would later become European-Americans) who controlled the economic and foundational development of the

---

[8] Jones, James. *Prejudice and Racism*. 1997: 14

[9] Jones, Camara Phyllis. "Confronting Institutionalized Racism." *Phylon (1960-)* 50, no. 1/2 (2002): 7. doi:10.2307/4149999.

[10] Jones, Camara. "Confronting Institutionalized. Racism." (*1960-*) (2002): 7

[11] Jones, James. *Prejudice and Racism*. 1997: 17

[12] Griffith, Derek M., Erica L. Childs, Eugenia Eng, and Vanessa Jeffries. "Racism in Organizations: The Case of a County Public Health Department." *Journal of Community Psychology* 35, no. 3 (2007): 3. 287-302. doi:10.1002/jcop.20149.

soon-to-be United States positioned the oppression of Africans as the economic and social basis upon which the country would function. The English mainland "colonies were part of the growing Atlantic colonial economic system that...was moving toward production of staples for the European market and reliance on the form of labor that best fit its needs: African chattel slavery."[13] During this time, social inequality based on birth was a European cultural touchstone, and the easily identifiable, readily comparable, darker pigmentation of Native Americans and African slaves served as the first, "othered," salient identities in the New World.[14] The early colonists' not only enslaved Africans as a result of their preconceived notions about Blackness and its ties with savagery, work ethic, inhumanity, but their actions also "revealed an early propensity to seek labor and use it by any means possible."[15] Their inability to find the long-term labor force needed to fulfill and sustain their economic ambitions, coupled with the 'existence' of many Africans at 'inexpensive prices' culminated in the Englishmen rationalizing their enslavement and exploitation of Africans for their labor whenever they could afford it.[16] As the number of enslaved Africans forced to live and work in America increased, so did the White colonists' negative feelings toward them. The very existence of slavery provided all classes with a sense of solidarity that resulted from—and acted in conjunction with—their collective sense of racial superiority. White colonists developed a common identity—one, of course, that depended on the exploitation and violent imprisonment of Africans. After a few generations, the result was "white society providing white elites the tool they needed 'to rationalize exploitation and abuse of power' for centuries to come, while leaving persons of African descent, slaves or not, caught in a labor system that must necessarily keep them at the bottom of America's economy and society."[17]

In the mid-18th century, "the Compromise of 1850 acted as a temporary truce on the issue of slavery, primarily addressing the status of newly acquired territory after the Mexican-American War."[18] Under the Compromise, slavery was outlawed in Washington D.C. The new Fugitive Slave Act allowed citizens in free states to assist in capturing escaped slaves, while Utah and New Mexico decided to allow their White residents to decide themselves whether to abolish or allow slavery.[19] This did not resolve the growing conflict regarding slavery's expansion, and the North and South became further polarized. In 1846, two slaves, Dred and Harriet Scott, filed petitions for their freedom in St. Louis. The case, *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, eventually became the first civil rights case decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. The case concluded with the decision that all African Americans, whether they were free or enslaved, "were unable to become American citizens and therefore lacked standing to sue in

---

[13] Wright, Donald R. *African Americans in the Colonial Era: From African Origins through the American Revolution*. Wiley Blackwell, 2017: 65

[14] Fredrickson, George M. *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton University Press, 2002: 5

[15] Chaplin, Joyce. "Race." In: Armitage, David, David Armitage, and Michael J. Braddick. *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009: 154

[16] Wright. *African Americans in the Colonial Era.* 2017: 113

[17] Wright. *African Americans in the Colonial Era.* 2017: 113

[18] "The Compromise of 1850 (article)." Khan Academy. https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/civil-war-era/sectional-tension-1850s/a/compromise-of-1850.

[19] "The Compromise of 1850 (article)." Khan Academy.

federal court, and that Congress had no authority to prohibit slavery in the territories."[20] In 1862, a year after becoming inaugurated sixteenth president of the United States and two years after the start of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, which declared freedom for the slaves living in the Confederacy. However, this Proclamation did not address the issue of slavery in territories that would later become states. The 13th Amendment addressed this in its ratification three years later, abolishing slavery in all U.S. states and territories and ending the argument regarding the legality of slavery.[21]

During the Reconstruction era, Union states grappled with the reintegration of Confederate states and determining the legal status of African Americans. "Efforts to extend the meaning of emancipation to include black civil and political equality awakened the demons of racism to a greater extent than the polemical defense of slavery had done." Rapid industrialization and economic growth meant White workers found themselves in direct competition with Black workers for employment or other economic opportunities, which furthered the racial divide and drove angry, white supremacist myths about Black people being primitive, unprogressive, and incapable of joining the modern world. The Civil Rights Act of 1875 affirmed the "equality of all men" and prohibited discrimination in public places. This Act, however, was ruled unconstitutional in 1875. The Court also ruled that the fourteenth amendment, which granted citizenship to all people and equal protection under the law to all citizens, did not apply to discrimination by privately owned businesses.[22] Thus began a period of extreme racial discrimination and prejudice characterized by legislation made purely to separate Black and White citizens in nearly every facet of life: the Jim Crow Laws.

> Not only were Jim Crow laws passed governing even the most trivial forms of social contact, but also black males were deprived of the suffrage rights that many of them had once possessed, and an epidemic of sadistic lynching parties and one-sided "race riots" swept the south… Between 1917 and 1939 a series of Supreme Court decisions chipped away at the edifice of segregation, curbing, for example, legal enforcement of residential segregation and the denial to blacks of access to state-financed postgraduate education.[23]

The era of Jim Crow meant a resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan, an American white supremacist terrorist group whose membership exceeded 4 million people at the hieght of its popularity in the 20s.[24] Burning crosses, lynchings, and other measures of extreme violence were used to intimidate and target Black communities, as well as Jews, homosexuals, Muslims, atheists, and leftists.

The segregation principles of the time were extended to more public places in an effort to prevent contact between Black and whites. "It was codified on local and state levels and most

[20] "William S. Hein & Co., Inc." William S Hein Co Inc. https://www.wshein.com/catalog/100

[21] National Geographic Society. "The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution." National Geographic Society. March 13, 2020. https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/13th-amendment-united-states-constitution/.

[22] Muldoon, Kathleen M. 2014. *Jim Crow Era*. African American History. North Mankato, Minnesota: Core Library. http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=nlebk&AN=795844&site=ehost-live.

[23] Fredrickson. *Racism: A Short History*. 2002.

[24] "A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: 1870s - 1950s." Guides. https://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/c.php?g=592919&p=4172697.

famously with the 'separate but equal' decision of the U.S. Supreme Court in *Plessy* v. *Ferguson* (1896). In 1954 the Supreme Court reversed *Plessy* in *Brown* v. *Board of Education of Topeka*. It declared segregation in public schools unconstitutional, and, by extension, that ruling was applied to other public facilities."[25] It is said that the origin of the civil rights era, a period of mass protest against racial segregation and discrimination centered in the South, began when Rosa Parks, an African-American woman, was arrested for refusing to move to the back of the bus, as laws regarding segregated public transportation forced Black Americans to sit in their 'designated section' in the back. As a result of Parks' arrest, in December of 1955, the Montgomery bus boycott, led by Martin Luther King, Jr., began. This 13-month mass protest ended with a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that segregation on public buses was unconstitutional. As the Montgomery boycott gained international attention, "the bus boycott demonstrated the potential for nonviolent mass protest to successfully challenge racial segregation and served as an example for other southern campaigns that followed."[26] Martin Luther King, Jr.'s message of nonviolence was often at odds with another prominent civil rights leader of the time, Malcolm X. Malcolm X was a leader in the Nation of Islam whose ideas of racial pride and self-defense helped propel the emergence of the black nationalist movement forward.

> In 1960, spontaneous sit-ins by students began at lunch counters throughout the South, and in 1961, "Freedom Riders" boarded inter-state buses to test and break down segregated accommodations. These protests were peaceful, but they were met with violent, and often, brutal force -- televised images that helped win support from sympathetic whites in the North. In 1963, television viewers saw hundred of thousands of African-Americans and whites march on Washington, DC to end racial discrimination. It was there that Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.[27]

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act was passed, which ended segregation in public areas and banned employment discrimination based on race, religion, sex, or national origin. Soon after, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was passed to revert America's legacy of discrimination against African Americans' ability to vote. In 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. As a result of his murder, riots were sparked across the countries, which also propelled Congress to finally pass the Fair Housing Act in King's honor, which made it unlawful for sellers and landlords to refuse to rent, sell, or provide housing based on any factor besides one's finances.[28] After this victory, many of King's supporters carried on nonviolent protests, but the movement seemed to be shifting away from nonviolence and interracial cooperation, as these small victories could not triumph systemic and embedded discrimination and economic inequality that prevented real racial equity and progress.[29]

> In many respects, the civil rights movement was successful in its radical application of targeted campaigns and strategies of non-violent action that slowly fractured the previously

[25] Urofsky, M. I. "Jim Crow law." Encyclopedia Britannica, February 12, 2021. https://www.britannica.com/event/Jim-Crow-law.
[26] "Montgomery Bus Boycott." The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute. May 30, 2019. https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/montgomery-bus-boycott.
[27] "Thematic Window: The Civil Rights Movement." PBS. https://www.pbs.org/johngardner/chapters/4b.html.
[28] "Timeline of the American Civil Rights Movement." Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/list/timeline-of-the-american-civil-rights-movement.
[29] "Timeline of the Civil Rights Movement." Encyclopædia Britannica.

impenetrable forces of Southern segregation and discrimination. Black leaders like Martin Luther King, Jr. created enduring legacies and paved the way for grass-roots activists to push Congress into finally making meaningful, legislative changes. However, this movement did not end racial discrimination. In the economic sphere, for example, analysis of access to jobs and housing illuminated stark racial inequalities, especially in northern cities.[30] "Histories of slavery, Jim Crow, apartheid, or colonization have left many members of previously stigimatized and legally disadvantaged groups in an economically and psychologically vulnerable situation, which may make it difficult for them to compete with those whose families and forebears have not had to undergo such shattering experiences."[31]

Contemporary Manifestations

The demise of the civil rights movement of the 1960's did not mean the end of racism, but instead marked a period of transition for race relations in the United States. During the movement, "there was a concentrated effort among Black freedom fighters to show white Americans the kinds of racial terrorism the average Black American lived under."[32] The introduction of the television also brought white Americans the ability to directly see how nonviolent, Black youth were violently punished by police as they protested for equality and justice under the law.[33] Positive changes were occurring: research demonstrated that white Americans were less likely to support biologically racist ideas or that whites should always have access to better jobs than African Americans.[34]

> But these changed values and attitudes among whites never fully translated into support for government policies that would bring racial equality to fruition for Blacks. White Americans remained uncommitted to integrating public schools, which has been shown to drastically reduce the so-called racial achievement gap.[35] Whites never gave more than a modicum of support for affirmative action policies[36] aimed to level the playing field for jobs and higher education.[37]

---

[30] "The American Civil Rights Movement." OpenLearn. https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/the-american-civil-rights-movement/content-section-11

[31] Fredrickson. *Racism: A Short History*. 2002.

[32] Smith, Watts Candis. "After the Civil Rights Era, White Americans Failed to Support Systemic Change to End Racism. Will They Now?" The Conversation. March 24, 2021. https://theconversation.com/after-the-civil-rights-era-white-americans-failed-to-support-systemic-change-to-end-racism-will-they-now-141954

[33] Bodroghkozy, Aniko. "How the Images of John Lewis Being Beaten during 'Bloody Sunday' Went Viral." The Conversation. November 20, 2020. https://theconversation.com/how-the-images-of-john-lewis-being-beaten-during-bloody-sunday-went-viral-143080 .

[34] Schuman, Howard, Steeh, Charlotte, Lawrence, D. Bobo, Krysan, Maria. *Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations*. Harvard University Press, 1998.

[35] Frankenberg, E., Ee, J., Ayscue, J., & Orfield, G. (2019). Harming Our Common Future: America's Segregated Schools 65 Years aFter *Brown*. *www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu*, May 10, 2019(research). Retrieved from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/23j1b9nv

[36] DeSante, Christopher D., and Candis Watts Smith. *Racial Stasis: The Millennial Generation and the Stagnation of Racial Attitudes in American Politics*. University of Chicago Press, 2020.

[37] Smith, Watts Candis. "After the Civil Rights Era." The Conversation. 2021.

This phenomenon is called the principle-policy gap, and it measures a discrepancy between a "subject's macro-view of race expressed in broad terms and her position on a distinct policy that has clear racial implications...Whites often demonstrate racial tolerance and an acceptance of equality in the abstract but animosity towards specific policy positions perceived to benefit minorities."[38] After directly witnessing such extreme violence toward African Americans during the civil rights movement, Americans' general attitudes towards African Americans may have shifted positively, but even Whites who were 'proven' to be less likely to be biologically racist did not, as a collective unit, radically change racial inequality. Racism had already embedded itself into the nation and was manifested as more than solely beliefs or attitudes predicated on individual racial prejudice, but as structures, policies, practices, and norms, functioning by way of those structures are absent, those that promote inequity, and those that erode it.[39] Confronting structural racism requires an understanding of the institutions that are historically bound to the same deeply-embedded, enduring inequity, and remain interrelated, but are contemporarily manifested in different facets of American society.

Redlining and Housing Segregation

In 1933, the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) expanded home ownership as part of the nation's effort to financially recover from the Great Depression. The HOLC created maps of U.S. cities to "guide determinations of mortgage-worthiness."[40] The HOLC drew red lines around Black communities in order to indicate those areas as "hazardous investment areas whose residents would not receive HOLC loans,"[41] hence the term, 'redlining.' The government's efforts to expand home ownership were primarily designed to provide new homes for white, middle-class families, while African Americans and other people of color were excluded from these new suburban communities and forced into urban housing projects.[42] The Federal Housing Administration justified this discrimination in claiming that if African Americans bought homes in or near these suburbs, the property values of the (White) homes they were ensuring would decline, and their loans would be at risk. In reality, when African Americans did attempt to buy homes in white neighborhoods, "property values rose because African-Americans were more willing to pay more for properties than whites were, simply because their housing supply was so restricted and they had so many fewer choices."[43] White flight also played a large role in the creation and maintenance of segregated cities. 'White flight' refers to whites' racial motivations against, and departure from, integrated neighborhoods as a key mechanism

---

[38] Taylor, Andrew J., and Toby L. Parcel. "Proximity and the Principle-policy Gap in White Racial Attitudes: Insight from Views of Student Assignment Policies in Wake County, North Carolina." Social Science Research 78 (2019): 95-103. doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.12.0

[39] Jones, Camara. "Confronting Institutionalized. Racism." (*1960*-) (2002).

[40] Bailey, Zinzi D., Justin M. Feldman, and Mary T. Bassett. "How Structural Racism Works — Racist Policies as a Root Cause of U.S. Racial Health Inequities." *New England Journal of Medicine* 384, no. 8 (2021): 768-73. doi:10.1056/nejmms2025396.

[41] Bailey, Feldman, and Bassett. "How Structural Racism Works" *New England Journal of Medicine*. (2021).

[42] Gross, Terry. "A 'Forgotten History' Of How The U.S. Government Segregated America." NPR. May 03, 2017. https://www.npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-government-segregated-america.

[43] Gross. "A 'Forgotten History.'" NPR. 2017.

responsible for segregated cities starting in the 1950s and 1960s.[44] Although the discriminatory effects of redlining have been historically acknowledged, the long-term consequences of the now illegal practice continue to persist, affecting the health and civil rights of millions of African Americans.[45]

50 years following the banning of racial discrimination in housing, the effects of redlining remain: "Nationally, nearly two-thirds of neighborhoods deemed "hazardous" are inhabited by mostly minority residents...On the flip side, 91 percent of areas classified as "best" in the 1930s remain middle-to-upper-income today, and 85 percent of them are still predominantly white."[46] Research demonstrates that cities with a history of redlining generally remain more racially segregated and economically disadvantaged.

The enduring legacy of redlining is especially dramatic in the 10 cities with the most neighborhoods graded "hazardous." Today, they remain "hypersegregated." Eight of those cities were in the South, including Macon, Georgia, the most redlined city in America. In Macon, 65% of neighborhoods were deemed "hazardous" and unworthy of credit. Today, 1 in 4 residents of Macon County are still below the poverty line, and that rate is 2.5 times higher among black residents.[47]

Cities with histories of redlining also "have lower median household income, lower home values, older housing stock, and rents which are lower in absolute terms (but often higher as a percentage of income)."[48]

Another study also found that formerly redlined cities today are—on average—5 degrees hotter in the summer than areas that were once "greenlined," with some cities setting temperature differences as large as 12 degrees.[49] Redlined neighborhoods "consistently have far fewer trees and parks that help cool the air. They also have more paved surfaces, such as asphalt lots or nearby highways, that absorb and radiate heat."[50] With heat being the United States' most deadliest weather disaster, killing as many as 12,000 people a year,[51] global

---

[44] Kye, Samuel H. "The Persistence of White Flight in Middle-class Suburbia." *Social Science Research* 72 (2018): 38-52. doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.02.005.

[45] Elina. "How Redlining Affects Health, Civil Rights, and More." Activism, Meet Impact | Novel Hand. March 11, 2021. https://novelhand.com/redlining-effects/.

[46] Jan, Tracy. "Analysis | Redlining Was Banned 50 Years Ago. It's Still Hurting Minorities Today." The Washington Post. April 27, 2019. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/03/28/redlining-was-banned-50-years-ago-its-still-hurting-minorities-today/.

[47] Meisenhelter, Jesse. "How 1930s Discrimination Shaped Inequality in Today's Cities " NCRC." NCRC. February 05, 2021. https://ncrc.org/how-1930s-discrimination-shaped-inequality-in-todays-cities/

[48] Perry, Andre M., and David Harshbarger. "America's Formerly Redlined Neighborhoods Have Changed, and so Must Solutions to Rectify Them." Brookings. October 14, 2019. https://www.brookings.edu/research/americas-formerly-redlines-areas-changed-so-must-solutions/

[49] Hoffman, Jeremy S., Vivek Shandas, and Nicholas Pendleton. "The Effects of Historical Housing Policies on Resident Exposure to Intra-Urban Heat: A Study of 108 US Urban Areas." MDPI. January 13, 2020. https://www.mdpi.com/2225-1154/8/1/12/htm.

[50] Plumer, Brad, Nadja Popovich, and Brian Palmer. "How Decades of Racist Housing Policy Left Neighborhoods Sweltering." The New York Times. August 24, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/24/climate/racism-redlining-cities-global-warming.html.

[51] Hoffman, Jeremy S., Vivek Shandas, and Nicholas Pendleton. "The Effects of Historical Housing Policies on Resident Exposure to Intra-Urban Heat: A Study of 108 US Urban Areas." MDPI. January 13, 2020. https://www.mdpi.com/2225-1154/8/1/12/htm.

warming's intense heat waves means that hotter summers are an even more dangerous threat, especially to communities that already face financial and health-based hardships. In addition, cancer, tuberculosis, maternal depression, preterm birth, and other mental health issues occur at higher rates among residents of previously redlined areas, possibly as a result of residents' exposure to environmental toxins and the sustained physical impact of psychosocial stressors. [52] This correlation is the result of studies that prove that "better HOLC neighborhood grades are associated with lower levels of airborne carcinogens and higher levels of tree-canopy coverage (which mitigates air pollutants and heat). Predominantly White neighborhoods generally have lower air-pollution levels, while higher exposures contribute to asthma and low-birth-weight outcomes in Black communities."[53]

As communities that have been previously redlined are more likely to consist of marginalized residents, these communities have the most difficulty when it comes to voting access. In general, "Black voters are more likely to have poor signage at polling places, untrained or poorly trained poll workers, faulty or insufficient voting equipment, and lack of voter assistance. A 2020 Brennan Center study found that Black voters wait 45 minutes longer than white voters on average, and that Black voters also found it three times more difficult to locate polling places on Election Day, partially due to frequently moving polling sites."[54] As previously stated, historically redlined communities are still segregated and are more likely to experience low homeownership rates, home values, and credit scores.[55] These factors dictate the quality of resources given to voting precincts, which—as a result of racially segregated neighborhoods created by redlining—are easy to identify and target for voter suppression tactics.[56] "In Georgia for example, neighborhoods are often funded by property taxes. If a neighborhood has inherently less property value, the total taxes amassed from that neighborhood will be lower, and that neighborhood will receive less funding. In terms of voting precincts, this often means less voting stations and longer lines for low income voters."[57] In more populated, urban areas, residents cannot afford to take time off from work or refrain from taking care of their families in order to wait in long lines to vote. This may not only result in residents' inability to vote, but may also change the outcome of a local or national election.

Redlining, although now illegal, remains a distinctive factor in the disenfranchisement of Black people across the United States. It prevented millions of families from gaining financial equity via homeownership and forced them into segregated communities with economic, environmental, legislative, and health-related effects lasting generations. "These unjust practices form part of a long history of discrimination, which has contributed to the disparities

---

[52] Bailey, Feldman, and Bassett. "How Structural Racism Works" *New England Journal of Medicine*. (2021).

[53] Bailey, Feldman, and Bassett. "How Structural Racism Works" *New England Journal of Medicine*. (2021).

[54] Yandura, Kelsey. "Redlining Was Banned Over 50 Years Ago. It Still Makes Voting Difficult for Black Americans Today." Supermajority. October 06, 2020. https://supermajority.com/2020/10/redlining-was-banned-over-50-years-ago-it-still-makes-voting-difficult-for-black-americans-today/.

[55] Badger, Emily. "How Redlining's Racist Effects Lasted for Decades." The New York Times. August 24, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/24/upshot/how-redlinings-racist-effects-lasted-for-decades.html.

[56] Yandura. "Redlining Was Banned." Supermajority. 2020.

[57] Elina. "How Redlining Affects Health." Novel Hand. 2021.

in homeownership and wealth still observed between the Black and white populations of the country today."[58]

Mass Incarceration and the "War on Drugs"

Since the 1980s, American law enforcement has pursued aggressive strategies to prevent the consumption and distribution of illegal drugs. These policies are racialized at their core, as they target Black and Latinx communities specifically,[59] even though "for the last twenty years . . . whites have engaged in drug offenses at rates higher than blacks."[60] In June 1971, President Nixon declared a so-called 'war on drugs.' The term referred to his dramatic increase of the size and presence of federal drug control agencies and measures such as mandatory sentencing and no-knock warrants.[61] Nixon aide, John Ehrlichman, later admitted:

> The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people...We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did.[62]

In 1981, The Military Cooperation with Law Enforcement Act was legalized, which "enabled police to carry out domestic military operations and access military weaponry, equipment, training, and intelligence, [while the] U.S. military and the Pentagon provided military equipment to police departments across the country to fight the so-called drug war in America's streets,"[63] including the use of SWAT teams, which became increasingly popular in order to enforce at-home drug warrants. These consisted of police loudly breaking into people's houses in the middle of the night, accompanied by throwing grenades, screaming, and pointing guns at anyone inside.[64]

> Between 1982 and 2007, the number of arrests for drug possession tripled, from approximately 500,000 to 1.5 million, and drug arrests now constitute the largest category of arrests in the US. Racial/ethnic disparities in drug-related arrests have also intensified: while in 1976 Blacks constituted 22% of drug-related arrests and Whites

---

[58] Perry and Harshbarger. "America's Redlined Neighborhoods Have Changed." Brookings. 2019.

[59] Beckett, Katherine, Kris Nyrop, and Lori Pfingst. "Race, Drugs, And Policing: Understanding Disparities In Drug Delivery Arrests*." *Criminology* 44, no. 1 (2006): 105-37. doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.2006.00044.x.

[60] Fellner, Jamie. Race, Drugs, and Law Enforcement in the United States, vol 20 Stanford Law & Policy Review 257 (2009).

[61] "A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: 1870s - 1950s." Guides. https://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/c.php?g=592919&p=4172697

[62] "Top Adviser to Richard Nixon Admitted That 'War on Drugs' Was Policy Tool to Go After Anti-War Protesters and 'Black People'." Drug Policy Alliance. https://drugpolicy.org/press-release/2016/03/top-adviser-richard-nixon-admitted-war-drugs-was-policy-tool-go-after-anti.

[63] Balko, Radley, Rise of the Warrior Cop: *The Militarization of America's Police Forces*. Public Affairs, 2021.

[64] Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New Press, 2020.

constituted 77% of these arrests, by 1992 Blacks accounted for 40% of all drug-related arrests and Whites accounted for 59% of them; throughout these years Blacks comprised about 12% of the total population while Whites were about 82%. Notably, arrests for all other offenses (excluding assaults, which increased slightly) declined during these years, and racial/ethnic disparities in arrests for these other offenses remained static or declined.[65]

The War on Drugs has encouraged strategies of policing that have resulted in increased police violence in Black communities,[66] excacerbated by increased "racial profiling, psychological intimidation, harassment of citizens, pretextual stops for trivial infractions, and selective enforcement of the law."[67] These harmful practices have also worsened mass incarceration, contributing to the United States' continued position as holding the largest prison population (per capita) in the world.[68] "In total, approximately 57 percent of people incarcerated in state prisons, and 77 percent of people incarcerated in federal prisons for drug offenses are Black or Latino, compared to 30 percent of the U.S. population."[69]

Punishment distributed by the criminal justice system is only the genesis of lifelong, disproportionate ramifications for drug law violations that also contribute to institutionalized racism's lasting effects. Policies denying child custody, voting rights, employment, business loans, licensing, student aid, public housing and other public assistance to people with criminal convictions, as well as criminal records resulting in deportation of legal residents or denial of entry for noncitizens trying to visit the U.S., often mean a lifelong ban on many aspects of social, economic, and political life., regardless of their time in jail.[70] The War on Drugs operated in a similar way to the eras of slavery and Jim Crow, wherein legalized discrimination destabilized Black communities and led to a systematic disenfranchisement of Black Americans.[71] At a time when the implementation of civil rights and welfare policies meant greater and improved opportunities for African Americans, drug and crime policies worsened their quality of life.[72] The War on Drugs has essentially "become a replacement system for segregation [by] separating out, subjugating, imprisoning and destroying substantial portions of a population based on skin color,"[73] perpetuating White supremacy and disproportionately affecting Black Americans.

The definition, history, and contemporary manifestations of institutionalized racism provide necessary background for seeing the ways in which structural racism has impacted society, past and present, at every fundamental level. Understanding the ways in which White supremacy and racialized discrimination has infiltrated America's institutions and citizens in

---

[65] Cooper, Hannah Lf. "War on Drugs Policing and Police Brutality." *Substance Use & Misuse* 50, no. 8-9 (2015): 1188-194. doi:10.3109/10826084.2015.1007669.

[66] Cooper. "War on Drugs." *Substance Use & Misuse* (2015)

[67] Meads, Mallory. "The War Against Ourselves: Heien v. North Carolina, the War on Drugs, and Police Militarization" 70 U. Miami L. Rev. 615 (2016)

[68] National Research Council. "The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences." Washington, DC: National Academies Press. (2014) https://www.nap.edu/catalog/18613/the-growth-of-incarceration-in-the-united-states-exploring-causes

[69] "The Drug War, Mass Incarceration and Race." New York City: Drug Policy Alliance, June 2015.

[70] "The Drug War" Drug Policy Alliance, 2015.

[71] Fellner. Race, Drugs, and Law Enforcement. Stanford Law Review (2009).

[72] Tonry, Michael. *Race and the War on Drugs*, 1994 U. CHI. LEGAL F. 25, 27 (1994).

[73] Tonry. *Race and the War on Drugs*, 1994.

both explicit and implicit ways illustrates how institutionalized racism's widespread, embedded nature will affect my study and my participants regardless of if they directly acknowledge this or not. The next section, White Savior Films, is an extension of this, as structural racism plays a large role in the creation of contemporary intercultural and interracial relations which are guided by a racialized ideology that separates the redeemers (Whites) from those in need of redemption (non-Whites).[74]

White Savior Films

The White savior is seen as "the redeemer of the weak, the great leader who saves blacks from slavery or oppression, rescues people of color from poverty and disease, or leads Indians in battle for their dignity and survival."[75] Films are often driven by tropes, or recurring cinematic motifs, in order to emphasize a certain message. The white savior trope, which is also linked to constructions of the "noble savage" and "manifest destiny," signals a relationship in which the Euro-American main character rescues the "other" from a dire situation or set of circumstances. What is particularly striking about these films is that they are presented as a straightforward and impartial, portraying either intercultural relationships or colorblind narratives about overcoming insurmountable odds, often accompanied by a "based on a true story" label which validates such implicitly racialized ideologies.[76] The white savior trope has an extended history which is necessary to unpack in order to better comprehend its contemporary manifestations.

A predecessor to the white savior trope was the emergence of the oxymoron, the "noble savage," emerging in the Eurocentric imagination of the eighteenth century. The "savage" was nonwhite, primitive, and unencumbered by modern life or materialism. Most importantly, the noble savage was entirely fictitious—it was a romanticized, racialized literary device, reflecting the inversion of the popular and uneasy belief that burgeoning industrialization meant society was losing touch with humanity's true moral instincts.[77] The White colonizer came to represent the opposition to this character as well as becoming a method by which racial difference and social power was interpreted. "Manifest destiny" came to symbolize the enduring virtue of the colonizer as well as becoming

> a synthesis between racial and religious paternalism. Coined in 1845...the notion of manifest destiny carried with it the implicit assumption that white Americanness was exceptionally virtuous and was divinely inspired to spread that virtue to others, even if against their will. This ideology was practiced, most notably, in white attitudes toward black slaves and in the westward expansion that would "save" Native Americans from themselves.[78]

---

[74] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010):

[75] Vera, Hernan, and Andrew Gordon. *Screen Saviors: Hollywood Fictions of Whiteness*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

[76] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010):

[77] Carhart, Michael.. "Noble Savage." In *Europe, 1450 to 1789*: *Encyclopedia of the Early Modern World*, edited by Jonathan Dewald, 293-296. Vol. 4. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2004. *Gale eBooks* (accessed April 14, 2021). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX3404900800/GVRL?u=ohlnk256&sid=GVRL&xid=e403685f.

[78] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010):

Whites were socially constructed as heroic saviors, a framing based on an "1800s Protestant ethic that carried purchase relative to nonwhite pathologies and problems in need of white control."[79]

The notion of a white savior was further defined by Rudyard Kipling's 1899 poem, "The White Man's Burden. Some understood the "burden" to be the moral responsibility of white men to rule over darker-skinned people, and thus they praised the poem in its symbolic representation of the civilized-savage dichotomy.[80] Others interpreted the poem as a satirical critique of cultural imperialism. Regardless of the interpretation, the phrase came to symbolize "a world populated by dysfunctional people of color thought unredeemable without righteous white paternalism."[81]

The White savior was a very real and consequential theme during the formation of the United States. Researchers in a myriad of fields have pointed to the problematic nature of such a concept as well as the lasting consequences of those who have seen themselves as suited to the term. Although many see the harm in the historical colonization of darker-skinned people in need of "saving," others fail to see contemporary film as extended sites for the same harmful, racialized rhetoric. Instead, forms of entertainment like television and movies are seen as temporary (or even permanent) solutions or distractions from more pressing matters like racial relations.

In the 1960s, films reflected signs of social change through visual depictions of race-based literature like Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* (1961) and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird (1962)*, one of the first white savior films. In the 1970s, blaxploitation films, "featured Black actors in a transparent effort to appeal to Black urban audiences"[82] while also reflecting social discontent over racial inequality. As a result of this on-screen diversity, the next decade brought the first group of white savior films such as *Mississippi Burning* (1988), *Glory* (1989), and the Indiana Jones trilogy (1981, 1984, 1989). The rise of HBO and Showtime via cable TV, the creation of the VHS tape, and the spread of movie theaters with multiple screens placed movies with racial narratives in the mainstream, which continued in the 1990s.[83] Despite increased diversity of on-screen actors, Black characters were still stuck playing Black stereotypes, and overt white savior films like *Dances with Wolves* (1990) and *Dangerous Minds* (1995) quickly became popular.[84] This trend continued in the early 2000s, with Sandra Bullock winning the Oscar for *The Blind Side* in 2009.

Hughey (2010) contemplates that in recent years, these movies re-emerged in popular culture as a result of the continued effects of racial segregation, years after *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) resulted in lasting inequality for nonwhites. This inequality is manifested in the racialized effects of gentrification, health disparities, unemployment, and the wage gap, even though many believe the United States has reached a post-racial state in which racism is either

---

[79] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010):
[80] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010):
[81] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010):
[82] Sims, Yvonne. "Blaxploitation Movies." Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/art/blaxploitation-movie
[83] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010):
[84] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010):

dead or the result of a few singular 'bad apples.'[85] White Americans especially "seem weary of even discussing the continued legacy of racial inequality and seem to suffer from a kind of racial fatigue. Given the cultural abyss between our dominant postracial discourse and the very real material results of racial inequality, cinema is an important site for publicly accessible and entertaining narratives that reconcile these competing stories.[86]

Furthermore, as 86% of suburban whites live in communities where the Black population is less than 1%, and whites are more likely to be segregated than any other group, popular films that feature racial relations offer the public, but especially whites, a view of lived, racialized experiences they will rarely have in real life.[87] Hughey (2010) notes most importantly that in the absence of actual lived experience, films (especially those beginning with 'based on a true story') are understood to be accurate reflections of reality, meaning that stereotypes displayed in white savior films may be comprehended as truth to some viewers. George Lipsitz, a historian, states that films about past race relations "probably frame memory for the greatest number of people."[88] Understandings of race relations and one's role within them are tied greatly to reproductions of history and race within mass media.

During times of conflict, particularly when racial tensions are high, film producers face the challenge of either presenting "collective" sentiments through media or providing a purposeful, utopian escape, often through portraying color-blind relationships. In a climate when whites believe they are unfairly victimized, are losing their dominance, and are seemingly fatigued by discussions pertaining to race, White savior films provide a powerful escape in the form of messianic White characters assisting nonwhite characters in need.[89] WSFs "repair the myth of white supremacy and paternalism in an unsettled and racially charged time…[They] perpetuate, in subtle and friendly terms, the archaic paradigm of manifest destiny, the white man's burden, and the great white hope."[90]

Green Book

One of these WSF is *Green Book.* This study will center on the film *Green Book* (2019), which won the Oscar for Best Picture at the 91st Academy Awards, as well as honors for Mahershala Ali as Best Supporting Actor and Nick Vallelonga, Brian Currie and Peter Farrelly for Best Original Screenplay. The movie depicts the "real" origins and story of the developing friendship between a Black classical pianist, Dr. Donald Shirley, and his Italian-American driver, Tony "Lip" Vallelonga, as they travel throughout the 1960s segregated South on Donald's concert tour. The movie received rave reviews and plenty of awards, but was also riddled with controversies regarding its authenticity and role as a White savior film.

---

[85] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010):
[86] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010): 15
[87] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010): 15
[88] Lipsitz, George. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Temple University Press, 1998. 219
[89] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010): 15
[90] Hughey. "The White Savior Film." (2010): 15

The real-life Donald Shirley was born in 1927 in Florida and as a result of his technique and wide repertoire, quickly became a classical piano prodigy.[91] He went on to perform regularly at Carnegie Hall and with the Chicago Symphony and the New York Philharmonic. At a time when Black classical musicians, especially popular, successful ones, were rare due to their audience's racism, he became as famous as his talent could have allowed him to be. In 1930, Tony Vallelonga was born to working-class Italian parents in the Bronx. He worked various jobs as an adult, such as a bouncer, maitre d', and later, a chauffeur; he was hired in 1962 to drive Shirley through the Jim Crow South on a concert tour.[92] The "odd couple" spent one and a half years together on the road, although it is reduced to only 8 months in the movie.

> In the 1980s, Vallelonga's son, Nick, approached his father and Shirley about making a movie about their friendship. For reasons that are now contested, Shirley rebuffed these requests at the time. According to an interview with Nick Vallelonga in TIME, Shirley gave his blessing—but told him to wait until he died. Don Shirley's nephew Edwin Shirley later told TIME in an email: 'It was maybe thirty-five years ago when he approached Uncle Donald the first time. He refused to give his permission then. What happened after that, I don't know.'[93]

Tony and Shirley died within five months of each other in 2013. Afterwards, Nick approached screenwriter Brian Currie and director Peter Farrelly to begin the project, and a couple years later, Mahershala Ali and Viggo Mortensen signed on to play Shirley and Vallelonga.

Despite its many awards, critics were less enthusiastic about the film. *The Root* claimed *Green Book* was a white savior film, plain and simple: it "spoon-feeds racism to white people."[94] The New York Times said that it has "very little that can't be described as crude, obvious and borderline offensive."[95] Indiewire labeled Shirley's character a "Magical Negro," a "character [that] exists solely to help a white man overcome his problems."[96] Furthermore, in an interview with the family of Donald Shirley, they said that the director and creative team behind *Green Book* had completely left them out of the filmmaking process, and that the movie was riddled with lies.

> The family took offense at the film's depiction of Shirley's being isolated from both the black community—citing his involvement in the Selma march—and his own family. 'There wasn't a month where I didn't have a phone call conversation with Donald,' Maurice Shirley said in the interview. But their most glaring accusation tore into the movie's central tenet: that Donald Shirley and Tony Vallelonga were even friends.

---

[91] Chow, Andrew R. "What to Know About the Controversy Behind Green Book." Time. March 01, 2019. https://time.com/5527806/green-book-movie-controversy/.

[92] Chow. "What to Know About...Green Book." Time. 2019.

[93] Chow. "What to Know About...Green Book." Time. 2019.

[94] "Green Book Has Great Acting, a Misleading Title and Palatable Racism for White People." The Grapevine. November 20, 2018.
https://thegrapevine.theroot.com/green-book-has-great-acting-a-misleading-title-and-pa-1830572839

[95] Scott, A. O. "'Green Book' Review: A Road Trip Through a Land of Racial Clichés." The New York Times. November 15, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/15/movies/green-book-review.html.

[96] Obenson, Tambay. "'Green Book': The Feel-Good Oscar Contender Has a 'Magical Negro' Problem - Opinion." *IndieWire*, IndieWire, 7 Dec. 2018,
www.indiewire.com/2018/11/green-book-mahershala-ali-magical-negro-1202022226/.

The actual extent of their relationship, as well as the context surrounding the family not being contacted prior to filming, remains unclear.

Regardless of the true nature of these contextual aspects, *Green Book* is a successful White savior film in that it depicts racism as historically significant, leading audiences to find false comfort in images of extreme racism as being confined to the past instead of a compounding, contemporary issue. It propagates White saviorism and manifest destiny, transcending traditional political affiliation in order to appeal to the subconscious pathos of guilt and paternalism. The ranging reviews of *Green Book* evidence how this film, as with other White savior films, is diversely interpreted by viewers. Such differences warrant further investigation to understand what individuals rely on to make sense of these films and how the meanings they construct derive from and implicate the realities in which they act. Furthermore, considering research that supports the idea that "each succeeding generation of Americans tends to be more progressive than those that came before,"[97] I believe there is a probable, generational difference in how White viewers reconcile racial issues and extract meaning from these films. *Green Book* provides a contemporary, racially charged site that—with further study and analysis—can reveal how systemic racism transpires off-screen in highly nuanced and tangible ways.

---

[97] Levin, Dan. "Young Voters Keep Moving to the Left on Social Issues, Republicans Included." The New York Times. January 23, 2019. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/23/us/gop-liberal-america-millennials.html.

Methodology

The purpose of my research is to explore the ways that generational manifestations of White catharsis, which I define as the mitigation of "White guilt" through the separation of White viewers from their role in perpetuating racism, are understood through the lens of White savior films (WSF). I want to understand how viewers, specifically white viewers, respond to WSF. Moreover, I am interested in how families communicate about their responses to such films (especially in lieu of the generational differences that exist between parents and their children). This understanding is valuable because analyzing the meanings that are conceived from these cultural devices across generations can help reveal and ultimately dissolve paradigms derived from institutionalized racism.

I chose a qualitative method, specifically a case study format, in order to observe family dialogues regarding these films and the racial controversies they portray. I utilized a purposive sampling method in order to select families representative of the typical viewers of WSF. For this particular project, I am addressing White viewers because they are one of the key audiences intended for this type of film. Hughey writes that "in a climate in which many whites believe they are victimized, feel fatigued by complaints of racial inequality, and hold a latent desire to see evidence of a post-racial era of reconciliation, films that demonstrate a messianic white character certainly resonate."[98] Examining and critiquing the White response to a WSF within a family setting requires not only White participants, but participants with a pre-existing familial dynamic of discussion. For this reason, I chose three families who have demonstrated (through previous interactions) a willingness to remain candid and receptive to other perspectives throughout familial dialogue. Besides race and conversational dynamic, the criteria for selecting these participants includes each family consisting of a minimum of one parent and one child (age 18+) who currently reside in the midwest of the U.S. After reaching out to these families via email, I received interest from each person that they were eager and willing to participate.

My study revolves around the viewing of a controversial WSF titled *Green Book.* I applied for funding so that I could provide participants with access to this movie, but there were no conditions under which they had to watch it. I included a total of fourteen participants in my study*: four participants in Family A (The Abbott Family), five participants in Family B (The Butler Family), and five participants in Family C (The Campbell Family). A consent form was sent to my participants in the form of a Google Survey. At the bottom of the form, there was a box with text stating that "checking" the box indicates their written consent to participating in my study. Throughout my study, I also reminded my participants that they can opt out at any time,

---

[98] Hughey, Matthew W. "The White Savior Film and Reviewers' Reception." *Symbolic Interaction* 33, no. 3 (2010): 475-96. doi:10.1525/si.2010.33.3.475

*All families and their individual members were given pseudonyms

and continued to remind them of their rights as a participant. However, every participant's written consent via Google Survey was necessary before proceeding to the individual reflection survey (via Qualtrics) and group discussion (via Zoom) portions of my study.

After receiving this consent, each participant received funds and information as to where they can find the film, and was given a date by which to watch it. By this point, the participants also received a link to a Qualtrics survey via email. After watching the film, the participants wrote their individual responses to these questions in the Qualtrics Survey. I accessed these responses over the secure network 'Eduroam' through my password-protected computer. The individual questions can be seen in Figure 1a of Appendix A.

For the next step of my procedure, I scheduled a synchronous Zoom meeting for each family and myself. I planned to meet with all members of Family A, B, and C (respectively) in order to facilitate discussion amongst each family as a whole. These focus group interviews were semi-structured with a focus on familial discussion and reflection. The group interview questions can be seen in Figure 1b of Appendix A, and the pseudonyms of the participants are listed in Figure 1c of Appendix A.

The group interviews themselves were between 107 - 129 minutes with a sum total of 355 minutes and a total of 119 single-spaced, transcribed pages. All groups seemed to have vibrant conversations where they were eager to respond, and because I had previously known all the families, each interview dynamic was relaxed and comfortable with every member contributing freely to the discussion.

Data Analysis

I decided to use a grounded theory approach,[99] which is a constant comparative method of analysis, to guide my post-interview analysis. Through this method, I explored my data by way of a "rigorous comparative analysis that successively moves from studying concrete realities to rendering conceptual understandings from these data."[100] Grounded theory analysis is utilized through open coding and focused coding, which involves researchers in inductive, iterative, and interactive procedures for interpreting meaning.[101] I routinely interpreted meanings derived from the data throughout the process of conducting and transcribing these qualitative interviews. This process of interpretation and synthesis marked the open-coding phase where I examined the actions implicated by my participants' responses, allowing me to grasp emerging themes and observe patterns in how families attributed their narratives concerning race. Resulting from these initial readings, I observed generational differences regarding racism's

---

[99] Charmaz, Kathy. "Grounded Theory in Global Perspective." *Qualitative Inquiry* 20, no. 9 (2014): 1074-084. doi:10.1177/1077800414545235.

[100] Charmaz, Kathy, and Liska Belgrave. "Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis." *The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft* 2 (2012): 347

[101] Charmaz, Kathy. "Grounded Theory." *Qualitative Inquiry* 20, no. 9 (2014): 1074-084.

justification or contextualization when confined to a historical time period, new understandings of race based upon attempts at empathy, and that admittedly problematic cinematic representations of events centered on racial narratives offer necessary light amidst the darkness of such issues. Following these observations, I entered the focused-coding phase, wherein I posed questions to deepen my understanding and interpretation of the interrelatedness between and among the data. More specifically, I interrogated the data to discern what the participants implied by racism being historically situated and questioned how understandings of the problematic nature of WSF did not deter the viewers from the 'White catharsis' that impacted the pathos of their responses.

Analysis

Abbott Family

The Abbott Family consists of five people: Dan, age 57, who works at a consulting firm and is married to Sharon, also age 57, in the suburbs of Chicago. They have an older son, Jacob, age 24, who lives in New York City while working on his PhD. Dan and Sharon also have two twin daughters, Becca and Anna, who are both age 22. Becca goes to school in Ohio while Anna is nearly graduated from an undergraduate nursing program closer to home.

During the interview with this family, stories quickly emerged as a way to make the complexities of racism more easily comprehensible and relatable. In discussions about the film specifically, Sharon Abbott revealed that *Green Book* resonated with her because of the ways in which Tony's character reminded her of her own father, which engendered both positive and negative memories. Sharon identified her father as similar to Tony in shared bigotry, which she justified based on the era in which he and Tony lived. She contextualized this bigotry based on her father's place in the social hierarchy as a Jewish man. Her father's ways of communicating revealed social categorizations about labels and belonging:

> My dad knew everybody by, are you a 'daigo'? Are you a 'speck'? Are you a 'spook'? Are you a 'kraut'? Because that's how they were treated. My dad was first-generation, and so the persecution that they had growing up, kind of kept coming forward. 'Cause my dad was born in 1924 in this country and lived in Wisconsin where it was pretty racist and it was really against Jews. I don't think he called [African Americans] anything derogatory, but that's kind of how it was.

Sharon's description crafted an intimate anecdote of a man at the epicenter of intersecting identities. Her father's Jewish heritage meant that while he was being discriminated against for his religion, he was still White—and thus expected to assume the practice of labeling racial and ethnic groups with their respective names. This vocabulary, Sharon insisted, was not used by her father to be intentionally derogatory, but instead simply referred to minorities as what society labeled them at the time (although society, in this case, most likely alludes to the White majority). She continued to contextualize her father's place as a Jewish man during a time of racial tension by mentioning an explicit interaction between her father and the Black community. During her upbringing in the northern suburbs of Chicago, Sharon recalled her father leading a group of fellow Jewish protestors at a Nazi counter-rally. The situation was an overtly dangerous one, and her father had hired African American men from the Black community in her town to "protect" them from any possible violence. These men were hired solely because of their "intimidating" physical stature and presence, and this was the extent of any interaction between the two groups that Sharon remembered.

These stories served as insight into Sharon's father's character, as well as illuminating the state of racial relations that were constitutively established and maintained as a result of interactions like these. For Sharon, however, intent can be separated from action, as her father's use of racial slurs and stereotypical conception of muscular Black bodies were not motivated by extreme prejudice. She rationalizes Tony's racism by equating it to her father's, and in providing narrative context, conveys the ways in which the racial tensions of the time impacted her father's own racial understandings—not vice

versa. This story also exemplifies how identity can contain inherent multiplicity and paradox, which further complicates how racism is comprehended and exercised.

Sharon and Dan's respective fathers had similar racial vernacular, although Dan's family did not have a Jewish background that would've affected his social positionality. Dan noted that his father, when involved in any race-based discussion, would always talk about "the Black guy he tried to give a job to when he was first starting out… [or] the Black cook that he knew...to demonstrate that he was not racist. [That is,] until [he] started talking about politics, and then all the little subtle buzzwords came out." Dan's father believed that through proving the existence of his prior relationships with Black people, and even substantiating his generosity toward them, his identity as a "non-racist" was validated. Dan, like Sharon, referred to his father's use of racial slurs to denote him as (at least to some extent) racist. This contrasts his father's purposeful mention of the Black people in his life in order to paint himself in a more moral light. Dan, remembering his father's rhetorical habits, also recalled how during conversations of race, his dad would conjure stories from his 10 years spent in a detached person's camp, indicating he had seen the very worst of humanity, and thus knew, perhaps more than others, true racism and the extent of its harm. Dan's father always labeled himself as open-minded and nonjudgmental especially compared to his mother, who Dan classified as a "closet racist," exemplifying her generation's propensity to "sweep it under the rug or hide it." Dan's parents understood and exercised racism very differently, and he indicated that the film *Green Book* may have elicited an emotional response (at least for Dan's father), but it would not have generated any self-reflection or critical commentary for either of them.

The young adults of the Abbott Family, Jacob, Becca, and Anna, all agreed with their parents' evaluations of their grandparents' racial propensities. When asked how they expected their own parents, Dan and Sharon, to react to the film, their answers centered around the idea of historically specific, socially 'acceptable' racism. Anna Abbott, similar to her brother and sister, expected her parents to be more accepting of the racist behaviors occurring during the time period of the film, saying, "Every time we watch a piece like this...I have a tougher time excusing the behaviors just because 'that's just how it was.' If someone's racist or homophobic or something, I am just appalled, and the response I always hear is: 'that was the time.'" Her sister, Becca, qualified this statement, clarifying that while her parents would never support the prejudice displayed in the film, because Dan and Sharon grew up in an era where racism was "more normal and acceptable" than it is for Becca's generation, she expected to hear her parents' usual stance of "that's just how it was back then."

For the Abbott Family, there was a generational difference surrounding the idea that racism is better understood or even justified if contextualized within a historical time period of overt racism, like the 1960's Civil Rights Era. Dan and Sharon did not disagree with nor seem surprised by their children's frustration at their famous repeated statement, "that's just the way it was back then." Sharon shrugged and declared earnestly, "There's nothing we can do to change it. That's when we were living. We were young and this is how the world was." Both parents seemed to expect this frustration.

Dan was quick to share his own expectations of his kids' perspective, saying that he had originally expected to hear more judgement and less forgiveness of Tony's racism within the "grayness" of the times. This "grayness" in this case refers to the paradox of Tony's character in *Green Book*— he is a lovable character who reflects the racism of the early 1960's with his actions but does not necessarily portray the characteristics of an extreme bigot that one may associate with a typical racist. Dan

explained that he expected his children to have less empathy for Tony, an expectation contextualized by him remembering what he himself was like in his early 20's:

> I was a lot more judgmental when I was younger than I am today. And part of getting older and wiser is maybe seeing and understanding the grayness of the world versus the black and whiteness of the world...But with that said, they're much more sensitive to all the different types of discrimination and microaggressions and such, where[as] maybe I'm not picking them up as fast.

Dan's observation that his children are more likely to acknowledge and discuss instances of racism aligns with the general societal notion that each generation is more progressive than the last. He associates the "grayness of the world," which can be truly and holistically comprehended with age, with an understanding of racism as historically contextualized (i.e., "that's just the way it was back then"). Dan also equates an increase in empathy to this process.

The Abbott Family were all equally fascinated (underscored by feelings of heartbreak for the tragedies that occurred) and astonished by the true events that took place during the film *Green Book*. Dan shook his head, saying, "There's always some new dark twist to the way that Blacks were treated in the South…[Us] naive, middle [class], whatever we are, white privilege, whatever you want to call us, [we] never would have considered the concept [of] just the title…!" Sharon echoed this sentiment, relating it to another historical event about which she commonly reads: "How many stories of the Holocaust can there be? And it's amazing, every time I pick up a book, it's another layer that I didn't know about." Historical events must be retold in a variety of formats in order to spread awareness for educational purposes so ultimately these atrocities do not repeat themselves. However, when are these tragedies being exploited for entertainment or empathetic fantasy? Regarding White empathy in reading about the horrors of slavery, Hartman states,

> The effort to counteract the commonplace callousness to black suffering requires that the white body be positioned in the place of the black body in order to make this suffering visible and intelligible. Yet if this violence can become palpable and indignation can be fully aroused only through the masochistic fantasy, then it becomes clear that empathy is double-edged, for in making the other's suffering one's own, this suffering is occluded by the other's obliteration."

Although one may have good intentions and wholeheartedly oppose slavery, empathizing with the horrors about which one is reading may simply objectify the vulnerable, accentuate the fungibility of the so-called "Black body," and place the oppressor in this tragedy as an imaginative exercise. One may still have only the best intentions and still be captivated by the horrors of the past. Jacob called upon this idea in relation to the South's brutal history with respect to racial relations, which is magnified through film, television and print. He called it a "Northern sensibility, maybe a progressive sensibility that says, 'I want to see 'disaster porn-levels' of brutality about the South'" perhaps as a result of a sense of geographic superiority. In other words, there exists the notion that the Southern United States, as a result of its racist past, maintains this racism to this day, much more than Northern states. "In fact, many of the racial injustices we associate with the South," like schooling and housing segregation, "are actually

worse in the North."[102] However, Hollywood maintains a focus on illuminating the stories of the Civil Rights Era of the 1960's, arguably, for White audiences to enjoy rather than learn.

Butler Family

The Butler family is made up of the following members: Randy (59), a project manager, who is married to Kate (57), who works as an office manager. They have three kids, two of which participated in the interview: Brett (27) works as a high school English teacher, while his younger sister Jessie (24), is a retail store manager. When asked how the film invited them to reflect on their own understandings of race, the Butler family had similar, yet varied responses. Randy discussed race in terms of the Northern and Southern divide as displayed in the movie, and thought about this geographical separation in terms of real-world implicit vs. explicit racism:

> Randy: *"To say that [racism is] only in the South I think is inaccurate… [But] it's just so much more, 'out there' in the South. In the North, it's there, but it's not as overt. I went to a bar with a group of [White] friends in September and, and, weirdly, we got onto the topic of racism and one of the guys...was saying that racism is dead. [That] it's not a 'thing' anymore. The one guy who said that happens to have two brothers who are police officers. To say that that racism is dead, I mean, no way. It's just so apparent that it's still there."*
>
> Jessie: *"I would just alter [that] a little bit. Instead of saying racism in the South is like, just so much more 'out there,' I think it is just as much 'out there' in the North. We all have our little bubbles of places where it doesn't feel like it exists…[the movie made it seem] like it was saying cops are bad in the South, but in the North they're friends with you. And it's like, this isn't a problem of North and South. It's a problem of systemic racism…[it's] intertwined in the system."*

This dialogue reveals assumptions held by Randy, at least partly stemming from *Green Book*'s portrayal of racism as contained within one discrete, geographical unit, that racism is concentrated in the South, or that it manifests in more extreme ways than the North. In reality, racism is a widespread, embedded phenomenon occurring all across the United States— as previously stated, "In fact, many of the racial injustices we associate with the South," like schooling and housing segregation, "are actually worse in the North."[103] Randy also mentioned that the man who believed that racism is nonexistent—which is a racist statement in itself—has familial ties to the police, reinforcing a widely-held belief of the connection between racism and the police. Jessie underscores the fact that White people are less likely to "see" racism occurring around them, since it does not directly involve them, and thus are more likely to believe that their community or area is free from it. She corrects her father, Randy, acknowledging that racism is not a Northern or Southern phenomenon, but instead a widespread, institutionalized one.

The film does paint racism as a more formidable force in the South, but it also fails to recognize structural racism in accounting for this dynamic, portraying inequality instead as existing solely in legislative, conversational, or interpersonal spaces. In speaking about the *Green Book* specifically,

---

[102] Sugrue, Thomas J. "It's Not Dixie's Fault." The Washington Post. July 17, 2015. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/its-not-dixies-fault/2015/07/17/7bf77a2e-2bd6-11e5-bd33-395c05608 059_story.html.
[103] Sugrue. "It's Not Dixie's Fault." 2015.

Randy's son Brett acknowledged the critics who said that *Green Book* did not cover systemic racism, and instead only focused on racism between individuals or groups of people. However, Brett argued that systemic racism "isn't what that story is about. This is a story about...identity, and then a secondary theme is about tolerance and racism. Is [racism] simplified [in the movie]? For sure, but it does make for more concrete storytelling that…[casts] the broadest net possible [for] people to engage with it." Brett has an undergraduate degree in filmmaking, and thus his take on this piece of criticism is framed by successful movie-making techniques and styles. Brett insisted the film's theoretical focus was grounded in the dynamic between Tony Lipp and Don "Doc" Shirley, and specifically, the ways in which Don discovers "who he is" and "his place in society" through his steadfast friendship with Tony. Brett went on to explain that Tony is a person who completely accepts who he is and understands his social role, even though his lifestyle and state of mind were never questioned prior to meeting Don. Both characters underwent some amount of transformation and—following their collective journey—came to a better and more holistic conclusion about the other's identity, their own identity, and their role in society.

Critics argue that the "role in society" piece in *Green Book* is not only severely underdeveloped, but contributes to a damaging "White savior narrative" that

> trick[s] white [viewers] into thinking they themselves aren't racist, and that systemic racism was somehow solved in the '60s while simultaneously fetishizing the suffering of people of color and making it seem more cinematic than real. It's destructive to black and brown people on several sides, because it enables white people to think their work here is done...By concentrating so much on Tony and his character development, *Green Book* feels like a missed opportunity to focus on Dr. Don Shirley, a virtuoso and musical prodigy, and his struggles as a gay black man trying to pursue a career in classical music while dealing with a racist establishment.

Brett disagreed, as he believed the identity portion was the primary focus of the film, with racism holding a secondary focus. In response to critics, one of the movie's screenwriters, Nick Vallelonga (who also happens to be Tony Lipp's son), stated, "I wasn't out to cure racism; I'm just saying this is what happened to these two men and it shows the baby steps toward people coming together. I wanted people to see that and feel good about it." This aligned with Brett's perception of the movie's purpose, as he stated that he hoped that someone with a similar set of racialized perspectives to Tony would watch the film and realize the error of maintaining such a racist mindset. In reality, it is unlikely that one film could change one racist person's mind, and even if this was accomplished, the fetishization of suffering, the omission of systemic racism, and the separation of White viewers from their role in perpetuating racism on an institutional level outweigh any benefits that may hypothetically arise from reversing one racist person's views. Jessie disagrees with Brett's perception, stating incredulously that racist Tony Lipp never spends time with Black people until one 8-week period, and then his views change forever. Jessie stated that her oldest brother, Ricky, (who did not participate in this discussion), however, "has been working with minorities and other lower-educated White people for years and I haven't seen progress in [his] viewpoints. Maybe it's because they're not having those conversations at work, but I don't think being surrounded by Black [people] always does make a difference." Ricky is a bit of a black sheep in the Butler Family, and is described by them as "good-hearted," but having a tendency to be influenced by Republican rhetoric and being "titillated" by casual racism. Jessie uses him as an example of how simply interacting with minorities does not revert one's racist tendencies nor make them more open-minded. For Ricky, in fact, it may even do the opposite.

Kate, Brett's mother, found the film to be especially significant within and as a result of the context of Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 Presidential Election. She explained that the racist events that took place in *Green Book* can and still do happen today partly because of the 'permission' that Trump's victory gave to pre-existing racist Americans: "I was so naive; I did not realize how many people were like that. But [if] there's anything these last, four to five years have shown is that if somebody White can give you permission and empower you to use your Whiteness to be in charge of [others], or be in power overall…" then those racist White people will seemingly emerge. Kate agreed that racism has always existed in the United States, and it continues to, but during Donald Trump's time as President, racism was validated and perpetuated at the highest legislative level, proving that the racist events of the 1960's certainly have not ceased.

This discussion caused Randy to reflect further on his role as a first-generation American. His European parents always said, "all you have to do is work hard and study hard and do a good job and you're going to succeed," which eventually, he did. Most of the operators at his company's factory, he explained, are hardworking, high school-educated African Americans. Randy observed,

> "What I've learned is …I studied hard and I did well and all that… [and you] may think that's all that [these Black workers] need to do but…if they don't have the right teacher, the right schools, [or] even if they do and they get educated, finding someone to hire them, it's still not so easy. So...yeah I've made it, first generation, no problem. But a Black person has been here for generations. They don't have it as easy, and there's real opportunities that a White person has that a Black person doesn't."

Here, Randy both asserts and objects to the claim that his own experience as a first-generation American equates to that of African Americans, as they are both marginalized. However, as he rightly acknowledges, their difference in racial aesthetics makes a world of difference regarding their access to quality teachers, education, employment, etc. He seemed to appreciate his own education and employment not only in terms of how hard he had worked to gain these opportunities, but also in being a White man where he can more easily achieve and have his work validated.

Discussions about the film also generated memories about derogatory language that was overheard by Randy and Kate when they were growing up. Kate heard racist language from her family and at school, but would "never think to call [Black people] names." She believed that in those moments of autonomy, where one makes a purposeful decision to not repeat derogatory rhetoric, saying, "that's where change occurs." Currently, when Kate's mom is asked about her silence, she consistently justifies it with the same answer: "well, that's how things were." In response, Jessie wondered aloud, "But did you look at that and know [it] was wrong and go along with it? Or did you [want to] change [instead]? And I think you[, Mom,] did that. You saw what your family called people or how they were, and [it] just never appealed to you to feel those things." Kate believes in fighting against racism on an individual level, which seemingly relies on self-enlightened people to actively acknowledge and disavow instances of racism or inequality that appear in their own lives, like Kate's rejection of the derogatory rhetoric with which her family surrounded her. Her own mother, in justifying this, has a similar statement to other families that were interviewed, claiming that during the time period in which Kate grew up, racism was more extreme and more common, thus making this rhetoric warranted by its context. Jessie is part of a younger, more progressive generation more likely to acknowledge and oppose racism, causing her to identify more with her mom's refusal to use racist language.

Jessie and Brett both believed they would have the same understanding of the film as their parents would as a result of their collective values of tolerance and acceptance. Furthermore, Jessie expressed that after graduating college, she felt the value of educating oneself was shared by all her family members. Especially in this past year of "racial reckoning," although she admitted they still have much more work and reading to do, the Butler Family has been more active in learning and talking about race and privilege than ever before. "I know even a couple of years ago, we wouldn't have recognized or taken as seriously, even the subtle racism or comments that are throughout the film. But just in the past year, that's just really shifted and we've learned that we have to be more active." Jessie takes pride in the steps she and her family have taken to learn more about racial relations and become more critical of the subject, especially in the year since the murder of George Floyd. She recognizes that she still has progress to make, but that these conversations still help, in some small way.

Campbell Family

The Campbell Family consists of Paul (who works in insurance) and Lisa Campbell, who are 63 and 61 respectively. They have three children: two older twin sons, Anthony and Joe (age 28), who are musicians living in California. Their youngest child, Kira (age 22), is a student in Arizona.

When asked if the racist events that occurred in the movie *Green Book* would still occur today, the Campbell Family all recounted a prominent experience where they directly witnessed overt racism toward a Black man:

Kira: We were driving back from Denver and we stopped at a gas station in Nebraska. And we went in and [there were] just a million signs on the door talking about gun rights… and there's this big, scary guy that's running the shop. And there was a Black man who came in and he was I think he was asking for where the milk was or something. The guy was just completely ignoring him. The guy wouldn't talk to him, [wouldn't] give him the time of day, and the man ended up leaving because he wasn't getting any help.

Lisa: He was angry, the Black man, because he wasn't getting the help that he needed. All he wanted to do was buy some milk. And, we were scared, you know? I felt [I was] between a rock and a hard place because I was afraid if we would have stuck up for the Black man then we would have been in just as much trouble as he was [in] with this White guy. And then we all got to the car and we all felt terrible because of what we had just witnessed and what we had partaken in. But we didn't really know—

Joe: I'm not sure there was anything we could've done.

The Campbell Family had an emotional reaction to this story, a reaction that was fueled mostly by guilt. Following this narrative, Kira created a visual representation of the White, stereotypical, uber-conservative man with a large stature, long beard, and intimidating demeanor who refused to acknowledge the Black man. The Campbells seemed to create a racial diametric between the Black man and the store owner while placing themselves in the camp of innocent bystanders. They recognized that they, as White people with power, should've intervened, yet they were afraid of a negative, threatening response from the shop owner. Racism, here, is constructed in terms of who 'deserves' to be seen, and discrimination in this context serves as a method of exclusion and purposeful dehumanization (i.e., one does not even deserve to be acknowledged, let alone their question answered). The background given

on the store owner's appearance and demeanor not only provides motive for the man's racism based on the stereotypical conservative aesthetic (and therefore, their principles), but it also affirms the Campbell Family's hesitation to directly involve themselves in the situation based on the consequences that may have been directed toward them. Seeing as the Campbell Family were the only ones in the store besides the Black customer and the White store owner, this story was particularly distinctive for them since they were directly confronted with an unavoidable, overtly racist situation.

Each member of the Campbell Family enjoyed the narrative portrayed in the movie *Green Book.* Joe and Anthony both noticed the "unlikely friends" trope within the film and discussed how the two main characters, Tony Lipp and Dr. ("Doc") Shirley are successfully characterized as diametrically opposed by way of class, race, family, etc. Joe believed that in many movies, it is usually the prestigious, 'well-off' character who helps the other (usually with a lower-class upbringing) develop as a person, and it was 'refreshing' to see that this usual scenario was flipped. Joe stated, "it was cool when…[Tony] was like, 'I know more about your own people than you [do]. I'm 'Blacker' than you are. I know what your people eat. I know what music they listen to.' I really liked that because I wasn't expecting it." As mentioned by other families, the "buddy" movie trope is distinctly used in *Green Book* to portray dual protagonists that become unlikely friends, usually with oppositional personalities and habits. The contrasting perspectives of these characters ultimately provide exactly what the other desperately needs. Usually, this trope utilizes habits or world views (e.g., "Mr. Neat/Tidy/Law-Abiding/By-The-Book forced to work/live with Mr. Messy/Slob/Zany/Risk-Taker/Plays-By-His-Own-Rules"[104]), but within White Savior Films (WSF), this personality dichotomy is altered in favor of a racial one. Here, a difference in skin color—contextualized within a time period of heightened racial tension—serves as the main contributing factor in the "unlikely couple" narrative. Not only was this altered trope used in *Green Book*, but it was also reversed: the character of color, Dr. Shirley, was the 'privileged, upper-class' one being helped by his White, 'lower-class' counterpart.

Anthony appreciated this reversal just as much as his brother Joe, explaining that the movie's portrayal of the unlikely pair of friends demonstrated how much Tony and Doc learned from and about each other, and as a result, about themselves as well: "It was heartwarming, and [you] look past all the frustrating, institutionalized bullshit because you see these two guys just bonding on the road together." Here, Anthony acknowledges that there are structural forces pertaining to race at play. However, the film places the two protagonists' developing friendship at the center, neglecting to render or allude to the institutionalized racism that created the conditions for (and was ultimately furthered by) this relationship, as well as the unjust world that surrounded it. Anthony appreciates this central focus, as well as the exclusion of the acknowledgement of structural racism, perhaps because it is pleasing and easier as a viewer to focus only on a developing friendship rather than the all-encompassing complexities of institutionalized racism.

Perhaps partly as a result of this focus, the lessons that this movie gave to the Campbells were not centered around structural inequalities, but instead about what one can learn from watching a developing friendship of two oppositional individuals. Anthony learned that it is important to "step out of your comfort zone, try something new, do something that you didn't think you were capable of [doing], and you'd be surprised at what you might be able to...learn about yourself in the process."

---

[104] "Odd Couple." TV Tropes. https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/OddCouple.

Besides the obvious message that racism is 'bad,' the film brought all the Campbells to the same moral endpoint wherein friendship, tolerance, and friendship were emphasized as life lessons. Lisa expected her children to come to the same conclusion as her as a result of their open relationship and the values of tolerance and acceptance that she and Paul try to instill in their kids. Paul agreed with Lisa that they thought they'd have a similar understanding of the film to their children because of the values they themselves hold and have passed on as parents. However, he did see one difference in how his kids experienced the film: "I was probably less shocked [by] the movie than the kids were because again, I grew up in the sixties and I've seen this 'stuff' first hand. I'm not saying I approved of it, but I saw it. You get a little hardened to things like that when you see it so frequently." Paul, having grown up in the time period that the movie takes place, was seemingly familiar with the racism displayed in the film. He clarifies that just because he did not have an extreme reaction to the atrocities rendered in the film does not mean approves of them, and the same goes for racism that occurs in 'real life.' Paul also assumes that racism occurs less frequently or more implicitly than it did in the 1960's, resulting in an expectation that his kids would be more shocked than their father who had grown up hearing racist rhetoric.

Unprompted, however, Paul felt the need to admit he is admittedly, prejudiced:

"If I was driving and I was lost in an unusual neighborhood, and on one side of the street [there was] a white man, and on the other side of the street [there was] a Black man, and … [they were] dressed in a similar fashion….I would ask the White guy for directions. So that's prejudice."

Paul justified this by saying he would feel less "threatened" by asking a White person than a Black person. He began to tell stories about growing up on the South Side of Chicago, going to school in the Woodlawn 'Ghetto,' and being frequently threatened with fights by Black men. His wife Lisa agreed, but clarified saying, "If there was a white guy in khakis and a button-up shirt on one side of the street and some guy with pants hanging down in a hoodie, I would definitely go to the white guy." She went on to say that she would ask whoever looked more like her, meaning, whoever dressed more like her (i.e., khakis and a button-up shirt).

Paul and Lisa have slightly different interpretations of this scenario. Paul's hinges upon prejudice, saying that if the only difference between the two people was their race, his own racism would prevent him from asking the Black man for directions. Lisa's version relies on stereotypes about racial aesthetics, specifically clothing, wherein sweatshirts or baggy jeans can be associated with certain "thug-like" characteristics. Paul justifies his version by giving information about where he grew up, even though he does claim that the example itself displays his prejudice. He specifies that he not only grew up in a very diverse environment, but that Black men were the ones who threatened him with violence in his childhood. As a result of this association perhaps, he has prejudice toward them in this scenario, and would pick the White person to give him directions. Lisa does not claim that she is prejudiced, and instead changes the scenario: instead of clothing as a control variable, each person is wearing clothing stereotypically worn by members of their race, making it difficult to differentiate whether Lisa may have picked the person based on their clothing or their race.

Discussion

Findings from the participants' individual reflections as well as the three family interviews demonstrate constructions of race defined through various social enactments. Specifically, these enactments were manifested through thematic elements of acts of justification and acts of understanding. While the generations themselves conceived these acts differently, they still seemed to adopt the same thought process with regard to attributing social context as a driver of acceptability and empathy as a possible method for understanding the other.

Acts of Justification

In multiple interviews, family stories emerged in response to questions concerning race, specifically in conversations regarding the film *Green Book* and its possible varied interpretations by generation. For the Abbott Family, Sharon and Dan in particular, persecution that their own parents received based on their religious and cultural heritage prompted a cyclical effect—like-minded discriminatory language that was once used to refer to Sharon and Dan's parents was then used by their parents themselves to refer to people of color around them. This 'othering' by use of language is significant as language shapes ideas about race and catalyzes action based upon the expression of these ideas. This engenders inquiry into the cyclical nature of ethnic and racial trauma and the ways in which discrimination of an 'out-group' by an 'in-group' can become generational when a former 'out-group' member is now a part of an 'in-group.'

Dan and Sharon's justification of their parents' racism stemmed from this cyclical 'othering' as well as from contextualization that confined racism to the social, political, and cultural discrimination 'of the time.' This act of justification was paralleled in the Butler interview, specifically regarding Kate's mother's silence in the face of derogatory language spoken by the men in her family. Just as for Dan and Sharon, Kate's mother justified her family's use of racist rhetoric, claiming it to be warranted by historically-specific, socially acceptable language and societal ideologies that permitted racism. These acts of justification seem to imply that individuals are removed from having agency in how they regard others of difference, and instead construct individuals as a byproduct of their social context. This social context then becomes a scapegoat for racism rather than questioning individual action. Through acts of justification, participants place blame on their historically specific surroundings. Participants attempt to evade individual accountability for racist behaviors by ascribing to a generalized conception of history, one in which the universal and quotidian nature of racism allowed for White people to take part in socially acceptable (and expected) discrimination.

By way of this process, the structural nature of racism as an enduring phenomenon that still prevails today remains unacknowledged and the White perpetrators of this phenomenon exonerated. After repeated exposure to racism, "rather than stay present to feel the pain of brutalized bodies and psyches, and then act from that knowledge, most white people deny, justify, and then reproduce the very violence that was the source of their own dis-ease, often leading to a range of affects… [known as] white racism."[105] Given general social norms that prohibit explicit discrimination, White people usually do not desire to be seen or labeled as racists. Denials, disclaimers, or other forms intended to avoid a negative impression with the listener are often used.[106] Rather than directly denying an accusation of racial bias, one may have to justify, or give reason for, their negative judgement. If I had challenged my participants' perspectives, what then would they have attributed to the reasoning behind their actions? Do individuals have the capacity to think in ways that allow for them to see entities other than historical context as a cause for actions that perpetuate racism? Perhaps future studies could look into other modes of justification that either surpass or attribute entirely different reasons other than historical context for racialized behaviors and the reasons why these justifications emerge.

Acts of Understanding

White participants comprehended conversations pertaining to race through various acts of understanding. The Campbell Family utilized narrative to construct meaning resulting from inquiries about racism's presence in contemporary society, such as the anecdote pertaining to the Black man at the gas station. This story was chosen as 'proof' of racism's modern existence not only because of its stereotypical representation of a White, racist perpetrator, a BIPOC victim, and 'innocent' bystanders (i.e., it was clear to the Campbells that this was a moment of racism), but because it involved the Campbells directly. Attempts to conceive modern examples of racism were not grounded in the structural or institutional, but rather the narrative, as these stories offered undisputed evidence that such discriminatory practices still took place.

Randy Butler used a similar tactic to comprehend questions about race by reflecting on his role as a first-generation American. He suggests a sense of similarity between his own experience and the Black operators at his company's factory, implying that these similarities stem from a shared marginalization and work ethic. Simultaneously, Randy acknowledges that the circumstances between first-generation European Americans and African Americans differ greatly, and that his Whiteness does, in fact, legitimize the upward trajectory of his past education, employment, and economic opportunities. Randy's attempt to conceive racism

[105] Watson, Veronica, Howard-Wagner, Deirdre, and Spanierman, Lisa. 2015. *Unveiling Whiteness in the Twenty-First Century : Global Manifestations, Transdisciplinary Interventions*. Lanham: Lexington Books. https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=1357113&site=ehost-live.: 249
[106] Van Dijk, Teun A. "Denying racism: Elite discourse and racism." *Discourse and Society* 3, no. 1 (1992): 87-118.

reflects a faulty attempt at empathy. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings and thoughts of other people.[107] "While empathy could be seen as a type of sympathy, empathy usually signifies a stronger element of identification or 'perspective-taking' – imaginatively experiencing the feelings, thoughts and situation of another."[108] However, empathy is "double-edged," as Saidiya Hartman writes, "for in making the other's suffering one's own, this suffering is occluded by the other's obliteration."[109] In occupying the body and subjectivity of another— in this case, a person of color— there is a possibility that the "privileged sympathizer will ignore differences in his or her zeal to connect emotionally with the sufferer. Erasing the subjective experience of people of color, the white empathizer falsely claims someone else's particular pain as his own."[110] This portrays the difficulties that lie with empathy as an act of racial understanding, as the practice seeks to expand the awareness and sensitivity of the White person, rather than to communicate with or aid the person of color who is the so-called fungible 'object' of the White person's empathy.[111]

The importance of this observation lies in recognizing that if White people only conceive the circumstances of Black people through "supposed" empathy, then Black Americans' true emotional pain will routinely be misunderstood by many, such as White Americans who cannot fathom nor identity with an existence built upon centuries of systemic oppression and violent exploitation. These ideas bring forth empathy as traditionally perceived as a generative practice in circumstances when racial relationships are at play. Here, empathy may be a roadblock to genuine understanding, and one may even question if empathy is a sound, ethical response in such relationships when individuals do not have the capacity to fully fathom another's suffering. Future researchers might inquire individuals to define empathy and how they see it as a possible way to relate with others as well as a potential inhibitor of connection.

---

[107] Vignemont, Frederique De, and Tania Singer. "The Empathic Brain: How, When and Why?" *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 10, no. 10 (2006): 435-41. doi:10.1016/j.tics.2006.08.008.

[108] Davis, Kimberly Chabot. "Oprah's Book Club and the Politics of Cross-racial Empathy." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 7, no. 4 (2004): 403. doi:10.1177/1367877904047861.

[109] Hartman, Saidiya V. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-century America*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

[110] Davis, Kimberly Chabot. "Oprah's Book Club." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* (2004): 405

[111] Pozo, Teddy. "Game Studies." Game Studies - Queer Games After Empathy: Feminism and Haptic Game Design Aesthetics from Consent to Cuteness to the Radically Soft. http://gamestudies.org/1803/articles/

Conclusion

I began this study with a goal of exploring the ways that generational manifestations of White catharsis, which I define as the mitigation of "White guilt" through the separation of White viewers from their role in perpetuating racism, are understood through the lens of White savior films (WSF). In order to better conceive understandings of race as mitigated through WSF, I chose to undergo interviews with three White families, which revealed significant generational differences in how these families interpreted, justified, and discussed topics related to race. During these discussions, I discovered White catharsis to be communicated rather implicitly through acts of justification and acts of understanding, both of which allowed for a dismissal of racial accountability or guilt by way of other methods. While the generations themselves conceived these acts differently, they still seemed to adopt the same thought process with regard to attributing social context as a driver of acceptability and empathy as a possible method for understanding the other. Now more than ever it is essential to delve into racially charged subjects with an unabashed, critical lens in order to reveal the dominant ideologies that permeate our social world. Film scholar Daniel Bernardi writes that cinema is "a fact of our lives, saturating our leisure time, our conversation, and our perceptions of each other and of self. Because of this, race in cinema is neither fictional nor illusion. It is real because it is meaningful and consequential; because it impacts real people's lives."[112] When the closing credits finally appear, the subtleties of systemic racism will continue to transpire off-screen in highly nuanced, yet tangible ways. It is only through exploring the meaning that is manifested from these cultural devices that these paradigms can be exposed and ultimately dissolved.

---

[112] Bernardi, Daniel. *The Persistence of Whiteness: Race and Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*. Routledge, 2008: xvi

Appendix A

Figure 1a

<u>Individual Reflection Questions</u>

1. Based on your experience of watching the film *Green Book*, what would you say was the overarching purpose for its production?
2. What scene(s) or message(s) in this movie left a lasting impression on you? Why?
3. Were there any parts of the movie that you disagreed with or wish were written differently? Please explain.
4. Upon watching this film, how do you imagine your parent(s) (or child(ren)— please choose accordingly) responded and felt? In what ways might their views be similar and/or different to your own experiences?

Figure 1b

<u>Group Interview Questions</u>

1. Do you consider yourselves movie watchers? How often do you watch movies?
2. What did you know about Green Book before watching it? Was it anything like how you expected it to be? (If they mention controversy: We'll get a chance to talk about that later…)
3. What, if any, new understandings did you gain from watching this movie?
4. Upon watching this movie, how does it invite you to reflect on yourself/your own identity and racial understandings?
5. This movie takes place in the 1960's. Even so, to what extent have you seen change?
   a. Would this still happen today?
6. To parents: How do you imagine your own parents would respond to this film? Would their reaction be similar or different to your own?
7. To parents: Did you have ideas in mind about how your children would respond to these movies? Where did these ideas come from?
   a. To adult-children: Did you have ideas in mind about how your parents would respond to these movies? Where did these ideas come from?
8. This movie won many awards, and received a lot of criticism as well. What are your thoughts on what might be controversial/what are your thoughts on the controversy?
9. Are there any other ideas that came to mind about the movie and anything else we have discussed that you would like to share?

Figure 1c

<u>Pseudonyms</u>

Family A - **Abbott Family**
- Member 1a- Age 57, Male, <u>**Dan**</u>
- Member 2a- Age 57, Female, <u>**Sharon**</u>
- Member 3a- Age 24, Male, <u>**Jacob**</u>
- Member 4a- Age 21, Female, <u>**Becca**</u>
- Member 5a- Age 21, Female, <u>**Anna**</u>

Family B - **Butler Family**
- Member 1b- Age 59, Male, <u>**Randy**</u>
- Member 2b- Age 57, Female, <u>**Kate**</u>
- Member 3b- Age 27, Male, <u>**Brett**</u>
- Member 4b- Age 24, Female, <u>**Jessie**</u>

Family C - **Campbell Family**
- Member 1c- Age 63, Female, <u>**Paul**</u>
- Member 2c- Age 61, Male, <u>**Lisa**</u>
- Member 3c- Age 28, Male, <u>**Anthony**</u>
- Member 4c- Age 28, Male, <u>**Joe**</u>
- Member 5c- Age 22, Female, <u>**Kira**</u>

Bibliography

Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New

   Press, 2020.

"The American Civil Rights Movement." OpenLearn.

   https://www.open.edu/openlearn/history-the-arts/the-american-civil-rights-movement/c

   ontent-section-11.

Armitage, David, David Armitage, and Michael J. Braddick. *The British Atlantic World,

   1500-1800*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Balko, Radley. *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces*. Public

   Affairs, 2021.

Badger, Emily. "How Redlining's Racist Effects Lasted for Decades." The New York Times. August

   24, 2017.

   https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/24/upshot/how-redlinings-racist-effects-lasted-for-de

   cades.html.

Bailey, Feldman, and Bassett. "How Structural Racism Works" *New England Journal of Medicine*.

   (2021).

Bailey, Zinzi D., Justin M. Feldman, and Mary T. Bassett. "How Structural Racism Works — Racist

   Policies as a Root Cause of U.S. Racial Health Inequities." *New England Journal of

   Medicine* 384, no. 8 (2021): 768-73. doi:10.1056/nejmms2025396.

Beckett, Katherine, Kris Nyrop, and Lori Pfingst. "Race, Drugs, And Policing: Understanding

   Disparities In Drug Delivery Arrests*." *Criminology* 44, no. 1 (2006): 105-37.

   doi:10.1111/j.1745-9125.2006.00044.x.

Bernardi, Daniel. *The Persistence of Whiteness: Race and Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*.

　　Routledge, 2008: xvi

"Blaxploitation Movies." Encyclopædia Britannica.

　　https://www.britannica.com/art/blaxploitation-movie.

Bodroghkozy, Aniko. "How the Images of John Lewis Being Beaten during 'Bloody Sunday' Went

　　Viral." The Conversation. November 20, 2020.

　　https://theconversation.com/how-the-images-of-john-lewis-being-beaten-during-bloody-

　　sunday-went-viral-143080.

Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. *Racism without Racists*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2017.

"A Brief History of Civil Rights in the United States: 1870s - 1950s." Guides.

　　https://guides.ll.georgetown.edu/c.php?g=592919&p=4172697.

"A Brief History of the Drug War." Drug Policy Alliance.

　　https://drugpolicy.org/issues/brief-history-drug-war.

Carhart, Michael.. "Noble Savage." In *Europe, 1450 to 1789*: *Encyclopedia of the Early Modern*

　　World, edited by Jonathan Dewald, 293-296. Vol. 4. New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons,

　　2004. *Gale eBooks* (accessed April 14, 2021).

　　https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/CX3404900800/GVRL?u=ohlnk256&sid=GVRL&xid=e4036

　　85f.

Carmichael, Stokely, and Charles V. Hamilton. *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*.

　　Vintage Books, 1992.

Chaplin, Joyce. "Race." In: Armitage, David, David Armitage, and Michael J. Braddick. *The British*

　　Atlantic World, 1500-1800. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009: 154

Charmaz, Kathy. "Grounded Theory in Global Perspective." *Qualitative Inquiry* 20, no. 9 (2014):

1074-084. doi:10.1177/1077800414545235.

Charmaz, Kathy, and Liska Belgrave. "Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis."

The SAGE handbook of interview research: The complexity of the craft 2 (2012): 347

Chow, Andrew R. "What to Know About the Controversy Behind Green Book." Time. March 01,

2019. https://time.com/5527806/green-book-movie-controversy/.

"The Compromise of 1850 (article)." Khan Academy.

https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/us-history/civil-war-era/sectional-tension-185

0s/a/compromise-of-1850.

Cooper, Hannah Lf. "War on Drugs Policing and Police Brutality." *Substance Use & Misuse* 50, no.

8-9 (2015): 1188-194. doi:10.3109/10826084.2015.1007669.

Davis, Kimberly Chabot. "Oprah's Book Club and the Politics of Cross-racial Empathy."

International Journal of Cultural Studies 7, no. 4 (2004): 403.

doi:10.1177/1367877904047861.

Denzin, Norman K. "Symbolic Interactionism, Poststructuralism, and the Racial Subject."

Symbolic Interaction 24, no. 2 (2001): 246. doi:10.1525/si.2001.24.2.243.

DeSante, Christopher D., and Candis Watts Smith. *Racial Stasis: The Millennial Generation and*

the Stagnation of Racial Attitudes in American Politics. University of Chicago Press, 2020.

"The Drug War, Mass Incarceration and Race." New York City: Drug Policy Alliance, June 2015.

Elina. "How Redlining Affects Health, Civil Rights, and More." Activism, Meet Impact | Novel

Hand. March 11, 2021. https://novelhand.com/redlining-effects/.

Feagin, Joe R. *Systemic Racism*. Routledge, 2006.

Fellner, Jamie. Race, Drugs, and Law Enforcement in the United States, vol 20 Stanford Law &

Policy Review 257 (2009).

Frankenberg, E., Ee, J., Ayscue, J., & Orfield, G. (2019). Harming Our Common Future: America's

Segregated Schools 65 Years aFter *Brown*. *www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu*, May 10,

2019(research). Retrieved from https://escholarship.org/uc/item/23j1b9nv

Fredrickson, George M. *Racism: A Short History*. Princeton University Press, 2002.

"Green Book Has Great Acting, a Misleading Title and Palatable Racism for White People." The

Grapevine. November 20, 2018.

https://thegrapevine.theroot.com/green-book-has-great-acting-a-misleading-title-and-pa-

1830572839.

Griffith, Derek M., Erica L. Childs, Eugenia Eng, and Vanessa Jeffries. "Racism in Organizations:

The Case of a County Public Health Department." *Journal of Community Psychology* 35,

no. 3 (2007): 287-302. doi:10.1002/jcop.20149.

Gross, Terry. "A 'Forgotten History' Of How The U.S. Government Segregated America." NPR.

May 03, 2017.

https://www.npr.org/2017/05/03/526655831/a-forgotten-history-of-how-the-u-s-govern

ment-segregated-america.

Hartman, Saidiya V. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-making in Nineteenth-century

America*. Oxford University Press, 2010.

Hoffman, Jeremy S., Vivek Shandas, and Nicholas Pendleton. "The Effects of Historical Housing

Policies on Resident Exposure to Intra-Urban Heat: A Study of 108 US Urban Areas."

MDPI. January 13, 2020. https://www.mdpi.com/2225-1154/8/1/12/htm.

Hughey, Matthew W. "The White Savior Film and Reviewers' Reception." *Symbolic Interaction*

    33, no. 3 (2010): 475-96. doi:10.1525/si.2010.33.3.475.

Jan, Tracy. "Analysis | Redlining Was Banned 50 Years Ago. It's Still Hurting Minorities Today."

    The Washington Post. April 27, 2019.

    https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2018/03/28/redlining-was-banned-50

    -years-ago-its-still-hurting-minorities-today/.

"Jim Crow Law." Encyclopædia Britannica. February 12, 2021.

    https://www.britannica.com/event/Jim-Crow-law.

Jones, Camara Phyllis. "Confronting Institutionalized Racism." *Phylon (1960-)* 50, no. 1/2 (2002):

    7. doi:10.2307/4149999.

Jones, Jacqueline. *A Dreadful Deceit: The Myth of Race from the Colonial Era to Obama's*

    America. Basic Books, 2015.

Jones, James M. *Prejudice and Racism*. McGraw-Hill Companies, 1997.

Kye, Samuel H. "The Persistence of White Flight in Middle-class Suburbia." *Social Science*

    Research 72 (2018): 38-52. doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.02.005.

Levin, Dan. "Young Voters Keep Moving to the Left on Social Issues, Republicans Included." The

    New York Times. January 23, 2019.

    https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/23/us/gop-liberal-america-millennials.html.

Lipsitz, George. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity*

    Politics. Temple University Press, 2018.

Meads, Mallory. "The War Against Ourselves: Heien v. North Carolina, the War on Drugs, and

    Police Militarization" 70 U. Miami L. Rev. 615 (2016)

Meisenhelter, Jesse. "How 1930s Discrimination Shaped Inequality in Today's Cities " NCRC."

NCRC. February 05, 2021.

https://ncrc.org/how-1930s-discrimination-shaped-inequality-in-todays-cities/.

"Montgomery Bus Boycott." The Martin Luther King, Jr., Research and Education Institute. May

30, 2019. https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/montgomery-bus-boycott.

Muldoon, Kathleen M. *The Jim Crow Era*. ABDO Publishing Company, 2015.

National Geographic Society. "The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution."

National Geographic Society. March 13, 2020.

https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/13th-amendment-united-states-consti

tution/.

National Research Council. "The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes

and Consequences." Washington, DC: National Academies Press. (2014)

https://www.nap.edu/catalog/18613/the-

growth-of-incarceration-in-the-united-states-exploring-causes

Obenson, Tambay. "'Green Book': The Feel-Good Oscar Contender Has a 'Magical Negro'

Problem - Opinion." IndieWire. December 07, 2018.

https://www.indiewire.com/2018/11/green-book-mahershala-ali-magical-negro-1202022

226/.

"Odd Couple." TV Tropes. https://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/OddCouple.

Perry, Andre M., and David Harshbarger. "America's Formerly Redlined Neighborhoods Have

Changed, and so Must Solutions to Rectify Them." Brookings. October 14, 2019.

https://www.brookings.edu/research/americas-formerly-redlines-areas-changed-so-must

-solutions/.

Plumer, Brad, Nadja Popovich, and Brian Palmer. "How Decades of Racist Housing Policy Left

Neighborhoods Sweltering." The New York Times. August 24, 2020.

https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/08/24/climate/racism-redlining-cities-global-

warming.html.

Pozo, Teddy. "Game Studies." Game Studies - Queer Games After Empathy: Feminism and

Haptic Game Design Aesthetics from Consent to Cuteness to the Radically Soft.

http://gamestudies.org/1803/articles/

"Redlining Was Banned Over 50 Years Ago. It Still Makes Voting Difficult for Black Americans

Today." Supermajority. October 06, 2020.

https://supermajority.com/2020/10/redlining-was-banned-over-50-years-ago-it-still-make

s-voting-difficult-for-black-americans-today/.

"Redlining Was Banned Over 50 Years Ago. It Still Makes Voting Difficult for Black Americans

Today." Supermajority. October 06, 2020.

https://supermajority.com/2020/10/redlining-was-banned-over-50-years-ago-it-still-make

s-voting-difficult-for-black-americans-today/.

Schuman, Howard. *Racial Attitudes in America: Trends and Interpretations*. Harvard University

Press, 1998.

Scott, A. O. "'Green Book' Review: A Road Trip Through a Land of Racial Clichés." The New York

Times. November 15, 2018.

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/15/movies/green-book-review.html.

Shindell, Drew, Yuqiang Zhang, Melissa Scott, Muye Ru, Krista Stark, and Kristie L. Ebi. "The

Effects of Heat Exposure on Human Mortality Throughout the United States." *GeoHealth* 4, no. 4 (2020). doi:10.1029/2019gh000234.

Sims, Yvonne. "Blaxploitation Movies." Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/art/blaxploitation-movie

Smith, Watts Candis. "After the Civil Rights Era, White Americans Failed to Support Systemic Change to End Racism. Will They Now?" The Conversation. March 24, 2021. https://theconversation.com/after-the-civil-rights-era-white-americans-failed-to-support-systemic-change-to-end-racism-will-they-now-141954

Sugrue, Thomas J. "It's Not Dixie's Fault." The Washington Post. July 17, 2015. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/its-not-dixies-fault/2015/07/17/7bf77a2e-2bd6-11e5-bd33-395c05608059_story.html.

Takaki, Ronald T. *Iron Cages: Race and Culture in 19th-century America*. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Taylor, Andrew J., and Toby L. Parcel. "Proximity and the Principle-policy Gap in White Racial Attitudes: Insight from Views of Student Assignment Policies in Wake County, North Carolina." *Social Science Research* 78 (2019): 95-103. doi:10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.12.014.

"Thematic Window: The Civil Rights Movement." PBS. https://www.pbs.org/johngardner/chapters/4b.html.

"Timeline of the American Civil Rights Movement." Encyclopædia Britannica. https://www.britannica.com/list/timeline-of-the-american-civil-rights-movement.

Tonry, Michael. *Race and the War on Drugs*, 1994 U. CHI. LEGAL F. 25, 27 (1994).

"Top Adviser to Richard Nixon Admitted That 'War on Drugs' Was Policy Tool to Go After

    Anti-War Protesters and 'Black People'." Drug Policy Alliance.

    https://drugpolicy.org/press-release/2016/03/top-adviser-richard-nixon-admitted-war-dr

    ugs-was-policy-tool-go-after-anti.

 Urofsky, M. I. "Jim Crow law." Encyclopedia Britannica, February 12, 2021.

    https://www.britannica.com/event/Jim-Crow-law.

Van Dijk, Teun A. "Denying racism: Elite discourse and racism." *Discourse and Society* 3, no. 1

    (1992): 87-118.

Vera, Hernan, and Andrew Gordon. *Screen Saviors: Hollywood Fictions of Whiteness*. Rowman &

    Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

Vignemont, Frederique De, and Tania Singer. "The Empathic Brain: How, When and Why?"

    Trends in Cognitive Sciences 10, no. 10 (2006): 435-41. doi:10.1016/j.tics.2006.08.008.

Watson, Veronica, Howard-Wagner, Deirdre, and Spanierman, Lisa. 2015. *Unveiling Whiteness in*

    the Twenty-First Century : Global Manifestations, Transdisciplinary Interventions. Lanham:

    Lexington Books.

    https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=1357113&site=e

    host-live.: 249

"William S. Hein & Co., Inc." William S Hein Co Inc. https://www.wshein.com/catalog/1006043/.

Wright, Donald R. *African Americans in the Colonial Era: From African Origins through the*

    American Revolution. Wiley Blackwell, 2017.

Yandura, Kelsey. "Redlining Was Banned Over 50 Years Ago. It Still Makes Voting Difficult for

    Black Americans Today." Supermajority. October 06, 2020.

https://supermajority.com/2020/10/redlining-was-banned-over-50-years-ago-it-still-makes-voting-difficult-for-black-americans-today/.