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THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHREYER HONORS COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

THE LGBTQ+ EXPERIENCE IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DECENTRALIZATION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION HISTORY CURRICULUM

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SPRING 2021

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for baccalaureate degrees in Political Science, Secondary Social Studies Education, and Spanish
with honors in Secondary Social Studies Education

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ABSTRACT

History textbooks and curricula in the United States repeatedly center history in a manner that espouses a narrow understanding of the past. Specifically, this history centers the experiences of majority or historically dominant groups. This qualitative investigation examines the lived experiences of queer people concentrated around their educational sojourn in Pennsylvania's secondary schools and how these may be used to better inform a decentered history curriculum. To decenter a curriculum entails examining the emphasis placed on the narratives of specific groups and reconstructing a history that better integrates accounts of lesser prevalence in the currently addressed history. Using a semi-structured interview format, participants were asked to describe both about their experiences in and outside of the classroom and ways in which the history education they received could have been restructured to better nourish them academically. The results support previous findings that illuminate the deficiency of queer figures and issues in history curriculum across Pennsylvania, as well as teacher unfamiliarity with how to address these histories and serve LGBTQ+ identifying students. The narratives shared by participants informed curriculum recommendations and lesson plans included at the conclusion of this work.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project would be impossible without the willingness of those who participated to lend me their voices. I am forever awed by all that you have shared, survived, and achieved.

Chapter 1

Introduction

History curricula in Pennsylvania have an erasure problem. It is up to school districts to set a general curricular guideline for their schools to follow, given the academic standards provided by Pennsylvania's Department of Education; the rest falls on the backs of individual teachers and social studies departments within the building. Despite the considerable opportunities for variation in curricula across the state, schools seem to profess an eerily similar narrative. Specifically, there is a statewide curricular gap in addressing LGBTQ+ people, events, and pertinent issues in the history classroom.

This project operates on the assumption that identity is crucial to the way we navigate the world. Dr. Michael Warner, author of the 1991 book *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, had this to say about those who traverse their environment with a queer identity:

> Every person who comes to a queer self-understanding knows in one way or another that her stigmatization is intricated with gender, with the family, with notions of individual freedom, the state, public speech, consumption and desire, nature and culture, maturation, reproductive politics, racial and national fantasy, class identity, truth and trust, censorship, intimate life and social display, terror and violence, health care, and deep cultural norms about the bearing of the body. Being queer means fighting about these issues all the time, locally and piecemeal but always with consequences. (pp. 6)

In short, Warner asserts that virtually no part of a queer person's life is unperturbed by the acknowledgement and self-acceptance of a queer identity. The queer student is no exception to

this rule. By neglecting to include any representative allusion to LGBTQ+ history, we limit student potential to situate themselves in time and interpret and challenge the actions and thoughts of queer people of the past. We limit student potential to engage with past and present iterations of racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, sexism. We limit student potential to be seen in the classroom and share experiential knowledge. We limit student potential to exist in our schools when we treat history as an impartial narrative where whiteness and the patriarchy are the unwavering and unquestioned default.

For the sake of consistency and clarity, "queer" and "LGBTQ+" will be used interchangeably. On the occasion that certain studies cited include a research pool of only some queer identities, it will be explicitly denoted by the shortened acronym or identity descriptor. It is worth noting that although queer serves occasionally as a helpful unifying umbrella under which the community can gather, after its reclamation it has done harm to LGBTQ+ identifying individuals by undermining crucial differences. The experiences of queer people of color have long been erased, especially within the queer community itself and in the discipline of queer theory. A single-axis or single-oppression analysis ignores the compounding effects of multiple marginalized identities (Cohen, 1997; Crenshaw, 1989).

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) coined the term intersectionality to describe how multiple marginal identities are not additive, but multiplicative in nature. She likens this experience to a 4-way intersection: "Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them" (pp.149). This is easily extended towards queer people of marginalized races and classes. A Black transgender woman experiences oppression not necessarily only on account of her queer identity,

but as a compound reaction between her multiple marginalized identities: they exist inseparably from one another. For this reason, advocating for a queer-inclusive curriculum should not yield to a white-washed approach.

The visibility of and focus on white queer narratives presents a serious dilemma to the efficacy of queer activism. If we seek only to address issues facing a portion of LGBTQ+ individuals, then we are merely replicating the hierarchies that consistently silence voices of color. Queer activists that see homophobia and transphobia from the aforementioned single-axis approach stand only to hinder the progression of a representative and equitable version of queer politics (Cohen, 1997).

For many LGBTQ+ students, their reality involves varying degrees of erasure or vilification. GLSEN (2019) surveyed 23,001 LGBTQ+ students in secondary schools across the country and in United States territories. Only 18% of all Pennsylvanian respondents reported learning something positive about LGBTQ history, events, or people. When accurate portrayals of LGBTQ+ figures and events are not included in history, it implies that queer people never existed at this time or if they did, they should be vilified.

The victimization and violence that accompany a gag-rule on LGBTQ+ issues in the history classroom are tangible. A lack of inclusive curricula can have a far-reaching effect not just on queer students themselves, but on the school environment around them. There is evidence to suggest that creating an inclusive curriculum that includes positive LGBT representation is significantly correlated with lower in-school victimization (Kosciw, Palmer, Kull, & Greytak, 2012). However, the presence of such curricula is not the reality in the majority of Pennsylvania schools.

Higher levels of victimization accompany a frightening amount of adverse educational outcomes for LGBTQ students. Lower grade point averages, higher absenteeism and tardiness, and a disinterest in pursuing further educational opportunities compose only a few of these consequences. Individuals that experienced high levels of victimization on account of their sexual orientation or gender expression were over three times more likely to report missing a day or more of school, as compared to their peers who experienced lower levels. On average, this group of students had lower GPAs by three points and responded more than twice as frequently that they did not plan to pursue post-secondary education (Kosciw, Greytak, Zongrone, Clark, & Truong, 2019).

Numerous studies have drawn associations between identifying as LGBTQ+ or being perceived as such and high levels of victimization by their peers (Olsen, Kann, Vivolo-Kantor, Kinchen, & McManus, 2014; Berlan, Corliss, Field, Goodman, & Austin, 2010). Newcomb, and Mustanski (2014) found that LGBTQ+-based victimization was greater in certain groups. Transgender youth reported greater levels of victimization, as did queer Black youth. Kosciw et al. (2019) found that queer students with disabilities were more likely to be victimized and feel unsafe at school than their able-bodied peers. Awareness of disparities in victimization underneath the queer umbrella are crucial to dismantling a hostile school environment for all.

These impacted educational outcomes are often a manifestation of greater struggles with self-acceptance and mental health, often in conjunction with victimization at school. Sexual minority and trans students are more likely to have a history of suicidal ideation and attempts than their heterosexual and cisgender peers (Marshal et al., 2011; Robinson & Espelage, 2011). A larger number of stressful gay-related life events—coming out, sexuality-based victimization, or having one's sexuality discovered—is positively correlated with emotional distress; those who

faced frequent ridicule were more likely to suffer from anxiety and depression or related feelings (Rosario, Rotheram-Borus, & Reid, 1996). Struggles with mental health can have a substantial impact on student motivation, attendance, and well-being in school.

Education is oft heralded as an equalizing force. Schools, then, must be locales in which all students are nurtured and protected to foster curiosity, engagement, and achievement. The latter half of the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (2020) mission statement reads, "Further, the Department seeks to establish a culture that is committed to improving opportunities throughout the commonwealth by ensuring that technical support, resources, and optimal learning environments are available for all students, whether children or adults." The unfortunate reality stands that the majority of Pennsylvania schools do not have the infrastructure in place to follow through on these claims in the case of LGBTQ+ students.

Of the 815 Pennsylvanian respondents of GLSEN's National School Climate Survey, less than 20% of students reported attending a school with anti-bullying policies in place to protect students from sexuality and gender-based harassment. A minority of students (13%) reported that their schools had policies to support transgender and gender non-conforming students (Kosciw et al., 2019). Given the incidents of harassment for LGBTQ+ youth, this blind spot in schools' advocacy for their student body's protection and well-being is glaring.

If Pennsylvania schools strive to provide ample resources to bolster educational achievement and student fortitude within their walls, this is an impossibility without the knowing cooperation of the teaching and administrative staff. Swanson and Gettinger (2016) emphasize in their survey of public school teachers from four states—Pennsylvania included—that the divide between believing in the importance of supporting LGBT students and actually accomplishing this are wide. A majority (64.9%) of respondents indicated that the act of displaying visual

support for LGBT students was "mostly/very important" to them; however, less than a third of teachers showed this support "sometimes/always." "Lack of training/skills on how to support LGBT youth" and "Lack of knowledge regarding the needs and issues of LGBT students" were indicated as the greatest barriers to providing support to these students (pp. 340). It is the role of the administration to provide educators at their institutions with the knowledge necessary to serve as a resource to each of their students equally.

Largely, administrators seem to be aware of the hostility towards LGBTQ+ students that exists in their school environment. Of 1,580 K-12 principals in public schools interviewed nationally, only one-third of secondary school principals believed that a lesbian, gay, or bisexual student would "feel very safe" in their school. For transgender students, less than a quarter of principals responded in the affirmative. Given that many of the participating principals are aware that LGBTQ+ students would not thrive in their school, only 4% of principals reported that LGBT issues were mentioned in their district's training efforts (GLSEN, NASSP & Harris Interactive, 2008).

Complacency has stood in the way of progress. Ignoring the victimization of queer students and the subsequent lack of representation in the curriculum in the hopes that time will heal all is ineffective. Mudrey & Medina-Adams (2006) interviewed pre-service teachers and compared their attitudes to a similar study taken more than 15 years prior. They found that the openness in addressing homosexuality in the classroom was not positively affected by time. 58% of respondents indicated that educators *never* teach about homosexuality. Addressing this issue takes conscious and organized efforts by educators; it is not a change that will happen miraculously over time as a result of inaction.

Research has shown the suffering of LGBTQ+ students in Pennsylvania schools and the unwilling or passive approach to addressing curricular, educator, and environmental issues that perpetuate their pain. Given this, asking graduated students from Pennsylvania's secondary schools who have lived this reality firsthand and survived was my sincerest attempt to amplify voices that were too often silenced in the institutions meant to protect them. Their experiences and advice based on their histories will, in the following pages, inform the practice of educators and administrators, or—at the minimum—provide further evidence that the existing practices in many Pennsylvania secondary institutions are wholly insufficient in ensuring the wellbeing and academic fulfillment of thousands of LGBTQ+ schoolchildren.

Chapter 2

Reconceptualizing a History Curriculum

In *A People's History of the United States*, Howard Zinn (2005) emphasizes a history less focused on the victors and more on the struggle of conflicting motivations between different groups throughout the nation's history. Although many critics of Zinn will argue that he has bent his historical narrative too far in the favor of subjugated groups, one particular analogy employed in his book's introduction serves as a striking way to understand the construction of history and the writing of a history curriculum:

> My argument cannot be against selection, simplification, emphasis, which are inevitable for both cartographers and historians. But the mapmaker's distortion is a technical necessity for a common purpose shared by all people who need maps. The historian's distortion is more than technical, it is ideological; it is released into a world of contending interests, where any chosen emphasis supports (whether the historian means to or not) some kind of interest, whether economic or political or racial or national or sexual. (pp. 8)

Zinn's point is at the heart of this initiative. Indubitably, my chosen emphasis—a decentering of a white supremacist narrative—also carries ideological implications. In the case of LGBTQ+ history, it is never my intention to insert what is not there. What I do advocate for, however, is the integration of the history of LGBTQ+ oppression and achievements into the secondary social studies curriculum. Our work as educators does not stop there, however. If we are to teach historical thinking skills, we too need to mention how sexism and racism plays a large part in our history as well as its retelling. LGBTQ+ oppression does not exist in a vacuum, nor are queer people only marginalized by homophobia and transphobia.

Many students complain that history is rout memorization that has no impact on their daily lives whatsoever. In many ways, it is no surprise that students reach this conclusion given the way that history is often taught in our schools. Teachers too often fail to connect ideologies and histories of the past to current day events and consequences in the classroom. Ideologies like racism or homophobia are not universal truths but evolving systems of belief that evolve as time passes while containing traces of their past selves (Wineburg, 2001). Furthermore, students do not see themselves as active participants in the historical process. We miss opportunities to access the wealth of student knowledge on lived experiences with racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia, to the point that students have concluded that the voice which matters in the history classroom is that of the teacher and the teacher alone.

Applying critical race theory in the classroom emphasizes student thought and experience. The theory, especially when applied to educational disciplines, prioritizes voice and experience to best analyze and alter "the relationship among race, racism, and power" (Delgado, Stefancic & Harris, 2017, pp. 3). The conversation begins with racism and lays bare the oppressive framework under which all bodies identifiably different from the "norm" (as established by white men) are crushed systemically.

Student voice, based on personal experiences, is the principle of critical race theory in education. Pedagogy informed by critical race theory places individual narrative at the center. Creating a classroom in which all students are unafraid to participate and excited to learn begins with acknowledging their own voices and histories as a part of the conversation (García, 2015). This helps us, as educators, draw connections between events of the past and present that are deeply personal, or at the minimum visible, to students.

The history educator acknowledges that the majority of their pupils will not end up pursuing careers as historians or museum curators. What then is the point of historical education in secondary schools? An oft repeated cliché holds true in this case: social studies aims to create more informed citizens. Presenting students with exclusionary history does not inform them well. It utterly fails to equip them with the knowledge necessary to understand and combat current injustices; instead, it outfits them with blinders, as they are taught a white-centered history throughout primary and secondary school.

Critical race theory practitioner Christopher Knaus (2009) grapples with the same issue as he criticizes the privileging of some voices over others in curriculum and classroom: “And what sort of a democracy do we live in if we do not develop in all students the ability to participate in shaping (and not just being shaped by) society? Yet many students at this school live complex, violent, oppressive realities that are ignored by educators” (pp. 139). The narratives presented are limited, and this in turn silences student participation as they feel they have no stake in the classroom and outside of it.

In many aspects of a student’s life, they are taught to be passive or deemphasize the power of their own voice. The classroom is no different. Commonly, the teacher stands at the front of the room, speaking to the class until the bell rings as their pupils scribble down information. In this scenario, students are not able to take an active role in their own education; their voices are secondary to that of the teacher. The teacher need not be the only voice of authority in the classroom, because students are the experts of their own lives and have oftentimes faced oppression themselves on a daily basis. Curriculum that reinforces the accomplishments and history of straight white men while erasing or minimizing other historical narratives often creates a classroom environment in this image. Furthermore, the majority of

educators in this country are white women; enforcing a strict teacher-headed hierarchy in the classroom in some ways recreates the system that also silences minorities outside of the classroom (hooks).

History, as emphasized by the Pennsylvania state academic standards, is a retelling that should not be based in memorization (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2003). Memorizing the litigants in Brown v. Board of Education is vastly different from tracing the subsequent impacts into the future to analyze how schools are still very much segregated by race and income. One is helpful in the moment, but only applicable to that specific court case. The other is physically visible in a student's classroom, school body, neighborhood, and greater community. Furthermore, students then begin to interpret their world with a critical, historical eye that recognizes that the line between the history classroom and the experiences of a student's daily life is fainter than they may have previously supposed.

Black educator Shashray McCormack (2018) expresses the importance of student questioning and historical thinking:

> …the most important question to ask is why students are not taught to develop a critical consciousness so that they will never stop asking why people are missing from histories. They never stop questioning distortion and the role teachers can take in changing that status quo. (p. 1)

When history is repeatedly taught in a way that highlights whiteness and patriarchal hierarchy, every other narrative becomes deemphasized and othered. The power of critical race pedagogy lies in its ability to center curriculum and voice to integrate the realities of marginalized groups using an analysis of race as its foundation (Knaus, 2009).

There are significant obstacles to curriculum writing and implementation on both the part of the educator and student. The aim of critical race pedagogy is not to insert marginalized people into a curriculum constructed on whiteness. This does nothing to address the structural problems that permit the erasure of non-white, non-male, non-heteronormative narratives in history and the ignorance of persisting systemic ideologies of oppression and superiority (Vaught & Castagno, 2008). It is impossible to amend the wrongs done by dropping hints of other histories into an existing white, patriarchal narrative.

The histories of people of color, disabled people, women, and members of the LGBTQ+ community are often left as sidebars to a greater white male centered narrative. The contributions of these groups are only seen on the margins of history: optional, skippable, unimportant sidebars and additions that are not meant to detract from the greater white, patriarchal narrative. Stanford's Professor of Education Sam Wineburg echoes similar sentiments. He references the concept of "contributory history" as coined by Gerda Lerner (1975), which explains the tendency of textbook and curriculum writers to insert women, people of color, queer people, etc. only as asides or sidebars without interfering with the main text.

> Contributory history preserves the assumptions common to traditional textbooks… [it] leaves unchallenged the terms "progress," "great," and "important," and the reasons why some spheres of human experience matter more than others. Contributory history rests on the notion that there is a single history instead of multiple "histories," many of which go untold because their content is viewed as insignificant or unimportant. (Wineburg, 2001, pp. 130)

This approach to history has a detrimental impact on the way that students interpret information in the future. If or when they are presented with non-white histories later in their educational

careers, it is not uncommon to react in a disbelieving or challenging manner to the information presented. If their curriculum is centered on straight, white, abled, cisgender men and their contributions to history repeatedly, until high school for example, they are presented with some degree of cognitive dissonance. Students confront head on the fact that they were misled by the history curriculum in their previous classes; this can be met with anger, denial, or confusion amongst other emotions. This too emphasizes the necessity of constant student questioning of historical narratives, whose histories are told, and how are these stories presented in the classroom.

It is no surprise that after learning history in the same way for many years over, students react with disbelief or anger at the "political" move to include non-centered narratives in history classes. Familiar with the "objective" historical voice (read: white male) present in many textbooks and pedagogical strategies in history classrooms, deviation from this norm feels like a challenge to established facts in the minds of students, parents, and even educators. Creating a curriculum that emphasizes the voice, experience, and bias of the historian or curriculum writer in question is imperative. Only when students grasp that history has never been objective can they begin to fully question how and why information is presented in the classroom and beyond.

This approach, given the demonstrated absence of LGBTQ+ issues from schools nationwide, will no doubt be foreign to many parents, teachers, and administrators. In some instances, there may even be resistance to the presentation of history in a way that is unfamiliar to them; it's almost certain that their own primary and secondary textbooks suffered even more from the prevalence of exclusionary history than more updated school texts. Given this, it is unrealistic to assume that there will not be pushback against fundamental curriculum changes.

As previously discussed, the existing curriculum treats historical narratives centered primarily around the achievements of straight white men as neutral. In many cases, other narratives are relegated to the margins, if mentioned at all. The problem lies in justifying the legitimacy of these narratives to those that are unfamiliar experientially and/or academically. To those that may be resistant to such drastic curriculum alterations, an epistemological examination is in order.

Feminist standpoint epistemology argues that knowledge claims cannot be separated from the social context in which they exist. On account of this, efforts to declare existing history curricula that prioritize the narratives of dominant groups "neutral" or "non-political" is erasure of the practices through which this knowledge was created. Given that knowledge is something that has been constructed, Sandra Harding in *Feminist Epistemologies* has this to say:

> If the community of "qualified" researchers and critics systematically excludes, for example, all African-Americans and women of all races and if the larger culture is stratified by race and gender and lacks powerful critiques of this stratification, it is not plausible to imagine that racist and sexist interests and values would be identified within a community of scientists composed entirely of people who benefit—intentionally or not—from institutionalized racism and sexism. (1993, pp. 70)

An examination and recreation of Pennsylvania's existing curricula should begin with the aforementioned critique. Considering the previously suppressed narratives of minorities uncovers question threads that are invisible when viewing history from the lens of dominant groups in society (Camicia, 2020). These questions aid in the illumination of current-day processes and systems, which remain crucial if the aim of social studies education is to inform the nation's citizenry.

In the following pages, participant answers and suggestions regarding history curriculum in Pennsylvania secondary schools are discussed. As members of the LGBTQ+ community, they universally experienced firsthand the impact of curricular exclusion and the pervasiveness of a history centered on whiteness and the patriarchy. They also consider experiences outside of the history classroom and how addressing schoolwide LGBTQ+ issues can better life inside the classroom for queer students.

Chapter 3

Findings

Those interviewed are 18-24 years of age, members of the LGBTQ+ community and attended Pennsylvania schools for all or most of their secondary education. Four of seven participants attended school in the suburbs, two attended rural schools, and one described the location as skirting both a suburban and urban classification. The testimonies provided come from a range of queer-identifying individuals, from trans men, trans women, and non-binary people to those who identify as gay or bisexual. White participants constituted the majority of those interviewed—five participants—alongside one Black and one mixed race interviewee.

To this end, the semi-structured interview format seems the best conduit through which I can gather the lived—and most crucially, individual—experiences of LGBTQ+ people. I am not concerned with putting forth the appearance of a unified queer front; the suggestions for change and the personal experiences of each interviewee are unique to them. However, I am interested in both the commonalities and differences in each narrative. In what ways have LGBTQ+ youth been othered, intentionally or not, by the curriculum, administration, and school environment in Pennsylvania's secondary schools? An intersectional approach is critical in this analysis.

This interview format also allows for a humanization of multiple experiences under the queer umbrella. Statistics are crucial to show the extent and pervasiveness of LGBTQ+ victimization in the school environment and erasure and/or vilification in curriculum. At a certain point, however, it is imperative to listen to the individual and varied experiences of queer people of different sexualities, gender expressions, classes, and races. LGBTQ+ people deserve to be heard, accepted, and protected by the secondary educational institutions meant to serve all students.

Statistics convey the extent of the erasure problem; however, they seldom give comprehensive recommendations beyond further research suggestions based on their findings. This again proves the instrumentality of the interview format, especially one that occurs in reflection of participants' secondary educational experiences. With this hindsight, interviewees have a chance to compare their experiences in Pennsylvania's secondary education institutions to the world beyond, be this post-secondary education or the workforce. It is an illustration of the seminal events, relationships, and impressions that were formed during this period and have persisted in their minds. The interviews were conducted using an interview guide I formulated after identifying the themes and issues that are prevalent throughout the body of research on LGBTQ+ students in the United States. The rest of the questions, however, were informed by participants' responses to the probes. This process helps to avoid a constructed queer narrative produced by the same questions for each interviewee. Although the guide allows for some form of focus, the process is primarily driven by the unique responses of the participants.

An individual-based approach is instrumental in accessing a greater understanding of community level challenges that exist outside of an identity-based context. LGBT youth in rural areas are more likely to experience unwelcoming school climates than their peers in suburban or urban communities. Especially hostile environments are also more often found in areas with low adult educational attainment (Kosciw, Greytak, & Diaz, 2009). Demographic and geographical features, although not immediately associated with identity, are still informative points of interest; they can offer possible clues towards the openness of the curriculum and surrounding population.

Despite the enumerated positives associated with conducting semi-structured interviews, this method has flaws. Inherently, the interviewer's social position influences their perceptions

and experiences, which has everything to do with the questions that they will ask participants. Furthermore, it can impact the accessibility of information to that researcher (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Intersectionality theory is the informing body of literature that has driven this research; with this comes the understanding that my identity groups impede and improve my question formulation process in conflicting ways. I am a non-binary, bisexual researcher; this indubitably improves my ability to follow pertinent lines of inquiry surrounding LGBTQ+ subject matter. However, my personal experience with secondary education in Pennsylvania is interwoven with my whiteness and upper-middle class upbringing. On account of these privileges, the questions that were addressed and the lines of inquiry that I followed were fundamentally influenced although a great deal of thought was placed into identifying possible biases in my research and questioning.

The accessibility of information from diverse interview participants is also a possible flaw in the research process. My "insider-status," as a queer person interviewing queer people, may have encouraged greater cooperation in sharing information based on a feeling of shared experience (Beoku-Betts, 1994). Furthermore, it may have been easier for me to understand their narrative, in some cases, as certain themes were more familiar to me. However, shared identity status may not have been enough in interviews where the participant was of a significantly different cultural or experiential background (Riessman, 1987). Race and class privileges have a significant impact on the way people interpret and make meaning of their experiences. There is a fear that the narrative may be lost in translation between the interviewee's interpretation and retelling of their experiences and the interviewer's interpretation. This narrative disconnect may also have an impact on the follow-up questions asked. Close readings and analysis of the transcripts are imperative for diminishing this effect.

Thematic points of interest included othering, teacher's impact, classroom inclusion/exclusion, victimization, mental health, racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia. Interviews began with a given participant describing their identity, their school demographics, and the make-up of their peers, teachers, and administrators. Slowly, a broad picture of their experiences in Pennsylvania's secondary schools began to unfold as questions became more individualized and specific. Centrally, participants were asked about the importance of curricular and school-wide integration of LGBTQ+ interests and what impact this may have had on them as students, but also on their peers, teachers, and school environment.

Of the seven interviewees, none remembered any positive representation of LGBTQ+ figures or histories taught at any time during their time in Pennsylvania secondary schools in any subject. In almost all of their experiences, LGBTQ+ topics or individuals were never mentioned in any class—let alone history specifically—they took throughout their entire secondary schooling. Only one participant recalled discussing LGBTQ+ topics at all, which came in the form of a debate in his Advanced Placement English Language and Composition about bathroom bills in light of HB2 in 2016:

> …It—predictably—devolved into a debate of whether trans people are real and/or valid. The teacher's supposed intent was to hone our debate skills and to cover social issues since we also discussed things like race and sexism. I do think these conversations are important to have; however, in a largely white cishet environment, it comes off as more of an attack where LGBT and other minority students are forced to defend their own existence and identity rather than it being an education opportunity.

A student's identity—their very humanity—should not be a debate in the classroom, especially when little to no factual information is presented alongside the discussion. He confessed that

despite the emotional toll, as a trans person he felt obligated to participate in the debate because he was one of few classmates that were knowledgeable about trans issues. Although the teacher had good intentions in this instance, hosting a debate of this nature traumatizes those who must witness their peers discuss whether or not they believe that the trans people in the room deserve rights. Furthermore, the burden of correcting their classmates should not be on the shoulders of the queer students. Open and frank discussion is important to afford students the opportunity to place people, experiences, and events in a wider context and to draw their own conclusions; however, treating LGBTQ+ rights as a debate in the classroom is not only emotionally exhausting for those involved, but also it isn't particularly informative.

Teachers should be wary of treating minority students as "native informants" on topics regarding their identities (hooks, 1994). It is not a given student's responsibility to be the sole face and voice of their identity group(s). If a student feels compelled to share personal experiences or understandings with the classroom, that is a gift that is theirs alone to share. Expecting or pressuring a student to speak about their understandings in this way, even in a "well-intentioned" attempt to deepen class engagement with a topic, is a clear demonstration of entitlement. The personhood of minority students in the classroom should not be used as a tool to make a point whenever the teacher sees fit.

In discussion, teachers should also consider that students—in debate settings particularly—may be reluctant to take up specific stances as to minimize their social or physical safety (Beck, 2020). One's support for a particular issue position can encourage many assumptions from their peers, to the point where students may choose to remain silent altogether. This underscores the importance of establishing a trusting environment in the classroom that can facilitate contentious discussion.

Interviewees were then asked how they might incorporate LGBTQ+ issues and figures into the curriculum and what specifically should be included. One interviewee advised that educators should bring up LGBTQ+ issues whenever they are relevant and to uncensor the identities of queer individuals. She recognizes that including minority narratives should be present throughout the curriculum instead of including a glimpse outside of a white supremacist narrative for a single lesson and then returning to the old pattern: "Oh, well… today we're going to talk about the AIDS crisis and then tomorrow we're going to pretend that gay people no longer exist." Her statement illuminates the difference between tokenization and inclusion or integration in the history curriculum. These narratives should not be included merely to check off a box just to be discarded later. This sentiment was echoed in part by another interviewee who insisted that representation outside of discussing the death and oppression of minority groups is crucial:

> …seeing themselves reflected in their lessons teaches students their value and worth and potential for success. I said how I never learned about LGBT history but I also never learned about Black culture, history, and achievements outside of the civil rights movement, Jewish culture, history, and achievements outside of the Holocaust and WWII, Native American culture, history, and achievements outside of the colonization and settlement of North America, etc. It's harmful to teach only about the violence committed against those groups.

The importance of informing students about the subjugation and systemic inequalities that face minority groups cannot be understated. When it is the only mention of non-white, non-cisgender, disabled and/or non-heterosexual people in the history curriculum, however, it paints an

incomplete picture of the lived experiences and history of these minorities. It reduces oppressed groups to their oppression alone.

She then goes on to explain her conviction that the history classroom must step away from the lecture format—in regards to LGBTQ+ issues—and embrace an in-depth discussion in which students can "ask questions, develop ideas, and work with each other." She emphasized that this discussion setting was critical for students to be able to think critically about the past and connect those narratives to what is occurring in the present. The state academic history standards advocate for something nearly identical. They advocate for history pedagogy that does not seek to teach rout memorization; instead, it aims to encourage the development of critical historical thinking skills. It recognizes history as a narrative of the past that cannot be understood without a broader understanding of time and place.

When asked about the nature of his experiences with history curriculum, one cisgender Black man warned against excluding LGBTQ+ narratives from curricula:

> I think that there is a group of people being marginalized if you neglect to teach generations and generations about it. It really hurts their cause; it hurts their struggle, and it causes us to repeat the same issues without finding a solution.

He added that, in his experience, his history teachers consistently talked at length about Black history, which he feels is a larger part of his identity; in this instance, he felt he could relate to the history curriculum he was taught. Still, he mused about how his experience would have changed with the integration of queer narratives.

The teacher's role in providing a safe environment and representative curriculum for LGBTQ+ students is pivotal. One trans woman expressed how she *thought* that her teachers probably wouldn't react with directly discriminatory measures against her, but she was

completely unsure because of how negatively the people in her small, rural community viewed queer people. This specific instance underscores the fact that it is crucial for teachers to show visual and verbal support for queer students. Even if they are still uncomfortable with coming out to a teacher, it gives students the peace of mind that the teacher will respect and protect them if they decide to do so.

A sobering reality of the LGBTQ+ experience in Pennsylvania schools lies in the sheer fact that within the school building, school may be the least of their worries. I spoke with a trans woman about her experiences in a large public school district in Perkasie. She came out in fifth grade and throughout her years in secondary school up until her switch to cyber school, learning was secondary to surviving. She remembers getting on the bus every morning and checking into homeroom just to sneak out for fear of being verbally and physically harassed by her peers.

Protecting and nurturing LGBTQ+ students must happen in all aspects of the school environment. No matter how nourishing the curriculum, it is lost on students that are repeatedly failed by their teachers and administrators. Teachers witnessed the physical beatings she received in high school and failed to speak out; meanwhile, she was sent to the principal's office and removed from the premises for presenting in a feminine way—wearing makeup and painting her nails— on top of teacher refusal to use her preferred name and pronouns despite constant reminders. Her identity was challenged, erased, and beaten out of her. Still, she stands.

Her story is far from the exception. All of those interviewed reported hearing anti-queer slurs used commonly by their peers. Most of their schools did not have a Gay Straight Alliance (GSA) at all; it was either shut down or never existed in the first place. LGBTQ+ histories were never mentioned in any class save for a debate situation. Remedying these environments and traumatic situations takes concerted effort on behalf of administrators and educators. Improving

the curriculum, staff knowledge, and school environment has the potential to better the lives of all students in Pennsylvania schools, but especially so if these measures are taken simultaneously. Make sure that teachers are adequately informed on how to handle gender and sexuality-based discrimination and bullying when they witness it or hear about it. Ensure that protective language exists in school honor codes to protect these students. Equip teachers with knowledge on using preferred pronouns and creating inclusive classrooms that all can participate in freely. Include important LGBTQ+ histories and people in curriculum. Hang signs of solidarity and support on classroom windows and school walls. All of these efforts, as indicated by participants, makes a world of difference in making students feel comfortable and supported in the school environment.

Economically, these implementations are largely cost neutral for schools. GLSEN offers free solidarity wall-print outs on their website. Schools already set aside time and money for teacher development; adding LGBTQ+ issues to the training staff already undergoes would not incur significant costs. The social studies department in Pennsylvania's secondary schools can rely on each other for collaborative curriculum development. Furthermore, lesson sharing websites provide additional resources and creative stimulus for teachers. Some of these measures are gradual; others provide immediate visible support for queer students.

Difficulty does not spell impossibility, by any means. Although these honest conversations may be difficult for students and teachers alike, in the words of bell hooks: "If we fear mistakes, doing things wrongly, constantly evaluating ourselves, we will never make the academy a culturally diverse place where scholars and the curricula address every dimension of that difference (1994 pg. 33). This curriculum transition will take time and effort on behalf of

teachers. Furthermore, students will work to find their own voices in the history classroom after years of silencing in and outside of the classroom.

Chapter 4

Curriculum Implementation

Nationally, there are no set social studies standards to dictate which historical events and important figures should be covered in the classroom (Duncan, Zawistowski, Luibrand, 2020). In the Pennsylvania Department of Education's academic standards for history—which provides guidelines for four grade levels: grade 3, grade 6, grade 9, and grade 12— there is no mention of LGBTQ+ related topics or figures (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2003). The document itself states that this is a general guideline; thusly, the exclusion of these figures and events may not be malicious in nature. However, this innocent mistake informs the teachings of all Pennsylvania history educators and perpetuates a curriculum that others LGBTQ+ from the history presented in the classroom.

Individual teachers or social studies departments can make the decision to include LGBTQ+ narratives in their curriculum, but this is oft not considered in communities that would prefer to ignore the existence of queer people both in their own communities and beyond (Camicia, 2020). Obfuscating the mark of LGBTQ+ people on the historical landscape is not an acceptable alternative. It both misinforms students and subjects queer people in the school environment to additional, unnecessary obstacles. The justification behind excluding queer narratives is inadequate given the goals of Pennsylvania's social studies education.

In the curricular vacuum that exists around LGBTQ+ issues in Pennsylvania schools, I propose filling this space with the voices of queer people. From them there is a wealth of knowledge to inform decisions regarding not only the survival and betterment of experience for LGBTQ+ students but also the creation of a history curriculum that does not center an exclusionary, white supremacist narrative. By vocalizing their past trauma within school walls

through this research, they act preventatively to inform new curriculum, alter educator attitudes, and make perfectly audible what has so long been deafened.

Quantitative research efforts have exposed the lagging educational outcomes, high victimization rate, increased suicidality, and prevalence of substance abuse among other things, in LGBTQ+ youth countless times over. Given this information, it is imperative that curriculum and school environments change in response. This begins by allowing queer people to guide and inform this process themselves. There is no one uniform queer experience in education. Life as a trans person in a Pennsylvania school could look completely different for another trans person one county, school, classroom, or desk over. Articulation of lived experiences in concert, however, expose consistent problematic themes of the education many queer people receive. The voices of seven participants constitute this study. Although by no means a statistically representative sample, those interviewed made clear in numerous ways that they were failed by their school.

The intent of this research is multi-faceted. First and foremost, it provides a brief glimpse into the lives of children growing up queer in Pennsylvania schools through a personal conduit: their own voices. It aims to issue a call for action in our schools, as ignoring the issue is the current—yet ineffective—doctrine. Openness and diversity of curriculum will not happen without concentrated effort on the part of history teachers. Although the state standards provide a guideline, it is up to the individual teacher to implement this change. The Pennsylvania academic standards for history have not been updated since 2003. Revising these standards is an absolute necessity. As previously stated, no mention of LGBTQ+ figures or history appears on the document. Neglecting to include these passively promotes the sentiment that incorporating queer issues and people into the history classroom is optional or superfluous altogether. The result is an

oppressive cycle that not only misinforms students but erases some completely. Commonly, queer children must grapple with the fact that they are different from the heteronormative society around them. This internal realization of “otherness” is exasperated by educators’ unfamiliarity with or unwillingness to present queer narratives at school. Many may lack the resources to do their own research, as school libraries may not stock LGBTQ+ books for a host of reasons. This isolation is damaging emotionally, and it can foster a disinterest in learning altogether. If students spend thirteen years in school without a word about queer people or experiences, it creates numerous problems. How will heterosexual and cisgender students treat queer people if they are lacking knowledge? How will queer students see themselves and envision happiness and success if they have never learned that was possible? Engaging with this past expands and challenges our notions gathered during our relatively short existence on Earth (Wineburg, 2001).

Two possible lesson plans that could be incorporated into a secondary history classroom are included for reference (see Appendix). One of the lesson plans is specifically for Advanced Placement European History, as I used the CollegeBoard’s unit structure and themes in conjunction with Pennsylvania’s academic recommendations for history. The lesson explores European imperialism on the African continent. Specifically, it explains how the partitioning of Africa spelled not only economic change for the people who inhabited the continent, but carried political, social, and cultural shifts as well. Africans were forced to assimilate and adapt westernized ideas of family, gender, and sexuality. In addition to providing a more fleshed-out understanding of imperialism to students, students can trace the direct effects of westernization to the current day.

This lesson will center Yorùbáland as a case study to highlight both broad forces at play across Africa during the European partition and civilization-specific nuisance. Westernized

thought has long treated the categories of men and women as definitive, fixed, and hierarchical (Oyěwùmí, 1997). This is in-line with the post-Enlightenment tradition of hierarchical and dichotomous thought: women and men as distinct categories without overlap, the latter superior to the former (Arnfred, 2006). Even much of western feminist thought treated gender as a constructed category, sex as natural category, and applied these markers universally. Before British missionaries landed in Yorùbáland in the mid-19th century, gender specificity did not exist in both familial and nonfamilial social categories. Instead, Yorùbá society was primarily organized by seniority:

> What these Yorùbá categories tell us is that the body is not always in view and on view for categorization. The classic example is the female who played the roles of *ọba* (ruler), *omo* (offspring), *ọkọ, aya, ìyá* (mother), and *aláwo* (diviner-priest) all in one body. None of these kinship and nonkinship social categories are gender-specific. (Oyěwùmí, 1997, pp. 14)

This structure was radically altered in the wake of European invasion in the area. The British were willing to recognize the authority of male chiefs at local levels, but female chiefs were stripped of their title and power. Biology as a basis for exclusion from power positions was a foreign import from the West. The lesson explores other ways in which implanting "womanhood" in Yorùbáland impacted its citizenry. The Church had an early monopoly on education, where they aimed to "civilize" the Yorùbá. Girls were excluded from many educational and occupational opportunities; their participation was contingent on developing skills to become better Christian mothers and wives. As private land ownership was introduced by the British in place of the previous collective holdings, women were excluded from farming and thereby the accumulation of wealth that

followed the explosion in cocoa production (Oyěwùmí, 1997). Students will confront western gender dichotomies within the context of Yorùbáland and the partition for Africa itself.

It is imperative to note that although it is not helpful to apply Western labels of sexuality and gender to non-western and early historical contexts, presenting unique gender and sexuality presentations throughout time and space sharpens historical thinking skills. Students are asked to confront Western dichotomies about gender and sexuality and how that might misinform their understandings of different people in other cultures and time periods throughout history. As Massaquoi (2015) warns: “A queer theory that is not conscious of the privileging of Western definitions of same-sex sexual practices and experiences risks duplicating an imperial gaze in relation to non-Western sexual practices and identities” (pp. 769). An awareness and commitment to expanding our understanding of queer narratives is necessary as to avoid the same silencing practices that plague many history curricula in Pennsylvania. Examining the cultural assimilation imposed by European imperialists critically is just one opportunity to do this in the classroom.

The second lesson plan included is for a United States history class, which could also be tailored for the AP level; it addresses McCarthyism and the second Red Scare. In the aftermath of the second World War and the looming threat of the USSR, public anxieties were heightened. Senator Joseph McCarthy spearheaded a campaign to rid federal offices of communists and queer people that had ostensibly infiltrated the ranks of the United States government; additionally, these expulsions were imitated at state and local levels (Storrs, 2015). While communists were suspected to pose a political threat to United States democracy, queer people were accused of corrupting the moral fabric of the nation. Over 5,000 suspected homosexuals

working as civil servants at the federal level were fired between the years of 1947 and 1961 (Johnson, 2004).

Students will examine the circumstances driving the public's anxiety surrounding these two groups at this point in American history. Furthermore, they will consider how this anxiety was weaponized politically and question the role that the government should play in assuaging public fears. At the time, Republicans claimed that both Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman's respective administrations were "honeycombed with homosexuals." This fear persisted through the 1952 election between Republican candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower and Democratic candidate Adlai Stevenson. Ultimately, the Republicans' call to "clean house" of immorality and rumors about Stevenson's sexuality was by no means an insignificant contribution to Eisenhower's victory (University of Chicago, 2004). These lesson plans stand only as two examples of endless possible topics. It's miraculous to consider that for many participants, experiencing even one LGBTQ+ related lesson while they were in secondary school would have increased the number of queer topics they learned in school by 100 percent.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

As it currently stands, Pennsylvania's schools are not doing enough to not only protect but to nurture *all* of their students as Pennsylvania Department of Education's mission statement purports. At worst, the voices of LGBTQ+ students are silenced or ridiculed. At best, queer students are expected to speak on behalf of the entirety of queer experiences. It appears as though the otherness of these individuals is only convenient when educators can use them as a tool to advance the understanding of the class as a whole.

LGBTQ+ voice in the classroom remains crucial to the advancement of both a more holistic historical narrative and educational outcomes for queer students. Critical engagement with and questioning of the inclusion and exclusion of certain events and people from history curriculum—both state and nationwide—is imperative. If educators are not lifelong learners themselves and are unwilling to explore narratives outside of a white, patriarchal norm, how can students be expected to engage critically with history and current events after graduation? Historical thinking is not innate; it is a skill that is honed through practice, beginning within the classroom itself.

It should be a priority within educational institutions to place value in student voice and experience. Teacher guidance is no doubt important but building an academically enriching classroom begins with allowing students to develop a sense of value within themselves as they fit into the larger class environment. The burden of learning falls on the class as a whole, for individual voices are not enough to create or sustain an academically nourishing environment for

all students involved. Prioritizing the voices of a few, purposefully or otherwise, silences and thereby hampers the engagement of the many; additionally, it deprives the class in its entirety of broader perspectives.

Those interviewed throughout the course of this study were heavily impacted by silencing and invisibility in many cases and tokenization in a few. LGBTQ+ histories were not spoken of at length, if at all in a majority of cases. This left entire classrooms of students uneducated on important historical processes. LGBTQ+ students did not feel engaged in the curriculum; any information regarding these histories were sought out by participants individually, if they had access to these resources at all.

The passage of time will not miraculously encourage a broadening of historical topics covered in Pennsylvania history curricula. Only through the earnest efforts of the Department of Education, superintendents, administrators, and educators can we address the gap between LGBTQ+ students and their cisgender and heterosexual peers. Change begins with the reassessment of the current Pennsylvania Department of Education standards, the willingness on behalf of administration to adapt and enforce protective policies for sexual minority and transgender students, and the inclusion of varied lesson plans and classroom practices that center neglected narratives and groups. The process may be arduous, but ultimately, it brings Pennsylvania schools closer to equitable and inclusive education for all of its students

Appendix A

Lesson Plans

The following pages contain the two aforementioned lesson plans and lesson plan materials. This page is intentionally blank for formatting reasons.

♦ AP European History Lesson Plan ♦

Class Subject: Advanced Placement European History

Unit: 19th-Century Perspectives and Political Developments (1815-1914)

Topic: Consequences of Colonialism on the African Continent

Standards:

- PA 8.1.12.C
- PA 8.4.12.C
- PA 8.4.12.D

Enduring Understanding:

This lesson addresses the impact of colonization beyond purely economic interactions. Specifically, students will examine ways in which the gender-based dichotomy of Europe was transplanted into Yorùbáland through education, the Church, occupational shifts, property rights, and reformed governmental bodies. This case study provides an opportunity for students to contextualize the impact of colonial forces in Yorùbáland and address Western thought as it pertains to gender in society.

Specific Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to define patriarchy: a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property.
- SWBAT define imperialism: state practice of imposing power over another nation, be it by direct invasion or through more subtle invasions of political and economic life of the target nation.
- SWBAT compare and contrast the roles of gender Yorùbáland and Britain from a pre- and post-colonial standpoint
- SWBAT identify at least three impacts of British colonization in Yorùbáland (land ownership, Christianity, gender-based occupations, education, Native Authority System, etc.)

Essential Questions

1. **Framing Question**: In what ways did imperialism impact diverse facets of life in Yorùbáland?
(British imperialism impacted every facet of life in Yorùbáland from local governmental bodies to the institution of marriage. Missionaries worked both to convert and educate the Yorùbá in western thought; gender dichotomy was a given in both. Occupation changed as non-male people were increasingly expected to stay home and mind children where they previously worked as farmers. The introduction of cocoa production privileged newly western-educated men with wealth while excluding others.)

2. **Integrated Question**: How was Yorùbáland transformed from a largely genderless society into a mirror of Western patriarchy?
(Before colonization, the Yorùbá had no gendered language. All people were employed in the society and the selection of leaders was not gender-determined. The Church and the restructuring of the government in Yorùbáland stripped non-male chiefs from their positions while education and translated religious scripts reinforced patriarchal notions of male supremacy in female submission.)

Materials & Resources

PowerPoint, "Consequences of Imperialism in Africa: Yorùbáland Case Study" (15 slides)

- Graphic organizer, "Imperialism in Yorùbáland" (2 pages)
- Arnfred, S. (2006). Re-thinking Sexualities in Africa. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Oyěwùmí, O. (2016). The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Usman, A. A., & Falola, T. (2019). The Yoruba from Prehistory to the Present. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Activities & Procedures (Estimated Lesson Time: 60 minutes)

Springboard [Cooperative Learning] — Time: 5 min.
Discussion on the subjugation of women in Yorùbáland

- **Teacher**: Ask students to speak with their table groups and define imperialism or and give examples they have previously learned. Take contributions from each group.
- **Students**: Collaborate in groups to define Imperialism or aspects of the term (domination, siphoning of resources, economic or military force, scramble for Africa, etc.) and share findings with teacher.

Step 1 [Direct Instruction] — Time: 3 min.
Imperialism

- **Teacher**: Clarify and define Imperialism. List basic traits of this concept as it has presented itself throughout this period. Ask for any questions
- **Students**: Write definition of Imperialism on the distributed graphic organizer. Ask teacher any clarification questions.

Step 2 [Direct Instruction] — Time: 7 min.
Description of Yorùbáland

- **Teacher**: Describe the current day location of Yorùbáland. Present a picture of the society's practices, specifically regarding their power structure, handling of interpersonal conflict, and language.
- **Students**: Ask teacher any clarification questions. Write specific details about Yorùbáland in graphic organizer

Step 3 [Questioning] — Time: 7 min.
Patriarchy definition and experience

- **Teacher**: Define patriarchy and ask students to volunteer historical or experiential examples. Use these suggestions to introduce the group activity. Take time to forge connections between patriarchy and imperialism
- **Students**: Note the definition of patriarchy and volunteer examples of patriarchy through hand-raising.

Step 4 [Direct Instruction] — Time: 3 min.
Activity Set up

- **Teacher**: Ask students to work with their table group or form groups of students. Assign each group an element of British imperialism in Yorùbáland (land rights, government, religion, education, and employment) and ask them to complete the prompts.
- **Students**: Gather materials (pencil & handout)

Step 5 [Cooperative Learning/Reading] — Time: 15 min.
Group Activity

- **Teacher**: Monitor student progress by checking in occasionally with each group. Answer questions when needed and probe students' lines of thinking further.
- **Students**: Work together within the group to read the passage and respond to worksheet prompts.

Step 6 [Questioning] — Time: 15 min.
Sharing Results

- **Teacher**: Ask each group to present their findings to the class.
- **Students**: While other groups are presenting, jot down important details on the graphic organizer. Present own group's information to the class.

Closure [Writing] — Time: 5 min.
Link between gender and imperialism

- **Teacher**: Ask students to answer the following question in 2-4 sentences on an independent piece of paper: In what ways did imperialism enforce Western/European ideas of gender? Provide supporting details. Collect student papers to assess student understanding.
- **Students**: Address prompt in 2-4 sentences. Hand finished paper to instructor.

Name: ________________

Colonialism in Yorùbáland

Education

“In the first half-century of British colonization in Yorùbáland, Christianity and Western education were inseparable because they were the monopoly of Christian missionaries. The school was the church, and the church was the school. From the point of view of missionaries, the process of Christianizing and educating the African heathens was to be a process of Europeanization. The goal of the missionaries was to transform African societies, not preserve them (Oyěwùmí, 1997, pp. 128)

As suggested above, the oldest and most important educational institutions under British colonial rule were established by Christian missionaries. Even though many of these schools were inadequately funded and utterly understaffed, they achieved their goal: instilling and popularizing ideals of Western education amongst the Yorùbá people (Usman & Toyin, 2019). Western education became a necessary vehicle for advancement as in taught pupils to navigate the “modern” world which brought status and wealth along with it.

Initially, parents did not prefer to send their sons over their daughters to become educated. However, as Western education increasingly became associated with power and leadership roles for men, the importance of their education grew to overshadow that of other children. These inherited trends are still evidenced in Nigerian (present-day Yorùbáland) society today (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

Name: ________________

Colonialism in Yorùbáland

Employment

In traditional Yorùbá society, all adults were employed; the concept of “the Angel in the House,” the idea that women should occupy the home and be entirely submissive to their spouses, was imported along with other Westernized notions. In fact, the Yorùbá previously had little division or distinction between different genders or their roles in society. The goal of Christian missionaries from abroad aimed to produce mothers who would in turn found their own Christian families. In this way, women were largely removed from the non-domestic workforce altogether (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

Of many crops cultivated in colonial Yorùbáland, cocoa and coffee were some of the youngest, although coffee had previously been grown in select regions of Yorùbáland. Cocoa was the highest priced crop that farmers could grow (Usman & Falola, 2019). Before colonial rule, the act of farming was not gender-defined. However, women were excluded from farming and thus cashing in on the profits of cocoa production.

Not only did colonial processes in British controlled Yorùbáland impact the type of employment that women were allowed or expected to perform, but it also affected their compensation. According to a circular letter composed and distributed by the British colonial government, African women were to be paid at 75% of the rates of their female European counterparts. Both gender and race worked in conjunction to oppress the African woman; their employment opportunities were only one piece of the puzzle (Oyěwùmí, 2019).

Name: _______________

Colonialism in Yorùbáland

Government

British interest in Yorùbáland was straightforward: they aimed to increase trade and protect this process at any cost. Prior to 1914, Yorùbáland was governed by no official laws established by the British; instead, their rule of the colony was "paramilitary and highly authoritarian" (Usman & Falola, 2019, pp. 328). To some extent, the British recognized local chiefs. This recognition was highly contingent on the variable of the Western gender binary: "The very process by which females were categorized and reduced to "women" made them ineligible for leadership roles.

The basis for this exclusion was their biology, a process that was a new development in Yorùbá society" (Oyěwùmí, 1997, pp. 124). The nature of one's biology had no impact on their defined social position. Instead, social structures were organized on the principle of seniority, or age. Female chiefs were immediately deposed from positions of power; furthermore, the British-established Native Authorities which headed the Native Courts saw many challenges to the rights of women, as the Western conception of women and colonial law uprooted their former positions, which "created an impression that such rights were newly created" and not in fact, customary and traditional (Oyěwùmí, 1997, pp. 149).

Name: _______________

Colonialism in Yorùbáland

Land Rights

Yorùbáland, like many parts of Africa in the 19th century, viewed land in a very different manner as compared to their European counterparts. To Europeans, the purpose of land was to be bought, traded, and sold; chiefly and most importantly, land was to be owned. Conversely, the Yorùbá understanding of property is evidenced by the memoir of Anna Hinderer, a European missionary: “When Mr. Hinderer, on first settling at Ibadan, asked what price he must pay for some land..., the chief said laughing, 'Pay! Who pays for the ground? All the ground belongs to God; you cannot pay for it'” (Hinderer as cited in Oyěwùmí, 1997, pp. 142).

Unlike European nations at the time, gender did not impact one’s right to land ownership in pre-colonial Yorùbáland. The passage of land in the family was based on lineage and birth order in Yorùbá society. However, land sales were able to evolve quickly in many places due to the pervasiveness of Western education. The introduction and cultivation of cash crops also accelerated the process. Yorùbá men, as conceptualized by the Western gender dichotomy, with a Western education became more willing to support the exclusion of women from land ownership because they understood the profits they could garner within the British system. Prior to colonial rule, Yorùbá women were dominant in trade and equally active in farming; however, this was unraveled by the colonial system (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

Name: ________________

Colonialism in Yorùbáland

Religion

Religion played an extraordinarily important role in Westernizing the people of Yorùbáland. Christianity arrived for the first time in Yorùbáland decades before most of the territory was brought under the rule of the British. Since its arrival in the 1840s, Christian missionaries of a variety of denominations established churches and schools in the area. Unlike the patriarchal teachings of Christianity, Yorùbá religion "did not articulate gender as a category" and therefore did not determine who could hold positions of priesthood (Oyěwùmí, 1997, pp. 140). The arrival of Christianity would greatly alter this structure, even in regard to pre-colonial Yorùbá religious traditions. The language of these traditions began to reflect the patriarchal teachings of the Church. Olódùmarè, one of three pillars of the Yorùbá religion and considered the Supreme Being, was formerly genderless as was the Yorùbá language; however, with Western influence, the language surrounding descriptions of Olódùmarè became masculinized to translate to "our Father in heaven."

The focus of the Church regarding women stemmed from the desire to create good Christian mothers who would preside over her children and obey her husband unquestioningly. They were not offered any leadership positions within the Church. Under colonial rule, women were afforded more freedom in independent churches; many of these worship houses were established by women themselves. However, this slight freedom pales in comparison to the roles they played in pre-colonial Yorùbáland (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

I. Given what you have just read, what questions do you have about Yorùbá society or the impact of colonialism?

II. How was gender defined by colonialism to hurt non-male people? Be specific.

III. How could the obstacles presented above effect other elements of life in colonial Yorùbáland?

Works Cited

Oyěwùmí, O. (2016). *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Usman, A., & Falola, T. (2019). *The Yoruba from Prehistory to the Present*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

♦ United States History Lesson Plan ♦

Class Subject: United States History
Unit: Postwar America (1945-1965)
Topic: The Second Red Scare
Standards:
- PA 8.3.12 B
- PA 8.3.12 D

Enduring Understanding:
This lesson explores the motivations, implications, and consequences of the Second Red Scare in mid-20th century United States. Students will unpack the context that allowed the rise of McCarthyism and efforts to weed out both suspected communists and suspected "sexual deviants." Themes of public opinion, activism, and legality will be central to the discussion.

Specific Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to define McCarthyism: an outspoken campaign against alleged communists in the US government and other institutions carried out under Senator Joseph McCarthy.
- SWBAT define the lavender scare: a moral panic about homosexual people in the United States government and their mass dismissal from government service. It contributed to and paralleled the anti-communist campaign of Senator McCarthy.
- SWBAT contextualize factors that contributed to the wave of anti-communist and anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric and action.
- SWBAT compare and contrast elements of the first and second Red Scare in the United States.

Essential Questions

1. **Framing Question**: What role should the government occupy in responding to the fears and concerns of the American people?
(The rise of the lavender scare was in large part a pushback against the rising openness of queer people, particularly in Washington D.C. where numerous gay bars and cruising spots existed. McCarthy's constituents appeared to be far more concerned by the moral threat of queer people than of the assumed political threat of communists in government, as an investigation of his mail indicated. A senate subcommittee was created to investigate possible threats—primarily blackmail-based—presented by queer people in government; despite finding no evidence, queer people were still ruled a threat to all federal agencies and were subsequently removed. The idea that FDR and Truman's administrations respectively were "honeycombed with homosexuals" helped the Republican Eisenhower win the election in 1952. Is playing into public fear of communists and queer people as a political tool justified?
2. **Integrated Question**: In what ways did anti-communist and anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric reinforce each other?
(In many instances, the words "communist" and "homosexual" were nearly synonymous. Specifically, the supposed moral destitution of queer people was said to pollute the minds of Americans, particularly the young, so that they would more willingly support Communism

Materials & Resources
PowerPoint, "" (15 slides)
Graphic Organizer "McCarthyism & the Second Red Scare" (2 pages)

- Johnson, D. K. (2004). The Lavender Scare: Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Civil Service, 1945-1975. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
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Activities & Procedures (Estimated Lesson Time: 60 minutes)

Springboard [Writing] Time: 8 min.
Posing Essential Question

- **Teacher**: Ask students to respond to the following question independently in writing: what role should the government occupy in responding to the fears and concerns of the American people? After 4-5 minutes, ask for student volunteers to share with the class.
- **Students**: After recording their answer to the question, respond to teacher prompting with hand raising.

Step 1 [Direct Instruction] Time: 10 min.
What is the 2nd Red Scare?

- **Teacher**: Provide an overview of the 2nd Red Scare, including time period, important figures, and motivations behind the movement. Clarify and define McCarthyism. Provide a temporal context for the term
- **Students**: Ask teacher any clarification questions. Write specific details about the 2nd Red Scare.

Step 2 [Direct Instruction] Time: 10 min.
McCarthyism and the Lavender Scare

- **Teacher**: Define McCarthyism and the Lavender Scare. Describe the supposed link between homosexuals and Communists as agreed on by the public and the U.S. Senate
- **Students**: Note the definition of patriarchy and volunteer examples of patriarchy through hand-raising.

Step 3 [Questioning] Time: 15 min.
Analysis of Primary Source Documents

- **Teacher**: Present students with primary source document excerpts, including Senator McCarthy's speech to a Republican Women's Club in Wheeling, West Virginia and "Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government." Ask students a series of probing questions (see slides).
- **Students**: Respond to teacher probes with raised hands.

Step 4 [Cooperative Learning] Time: 12 min.
Activating Prior Knowledge

- **Teacher**: Ask students to talk with their table groups (or form groups) and to fill out the Venn-diagram on the first page of the graphic organizer based on the new information on the 2nd Red Scare and their prior knowledge of the 1st as discussed in previous classes.
- **Students**: Write a list of any information previously learned from classes or outside sources.

Closure [Writing] Time: 5 min.
Challenging Prior thought

- **Teacher**: Ask students to answer anew the question from the introduction of the lesson with the following additional question in 3-5 sentences on an independent piece of paper: Given what you now know about the 2nd Red Scare, has your opinion on this question changed? Why or why not?
- **Students**: Address prompt in 3-5 sentences. Hand finished paper to instructor.

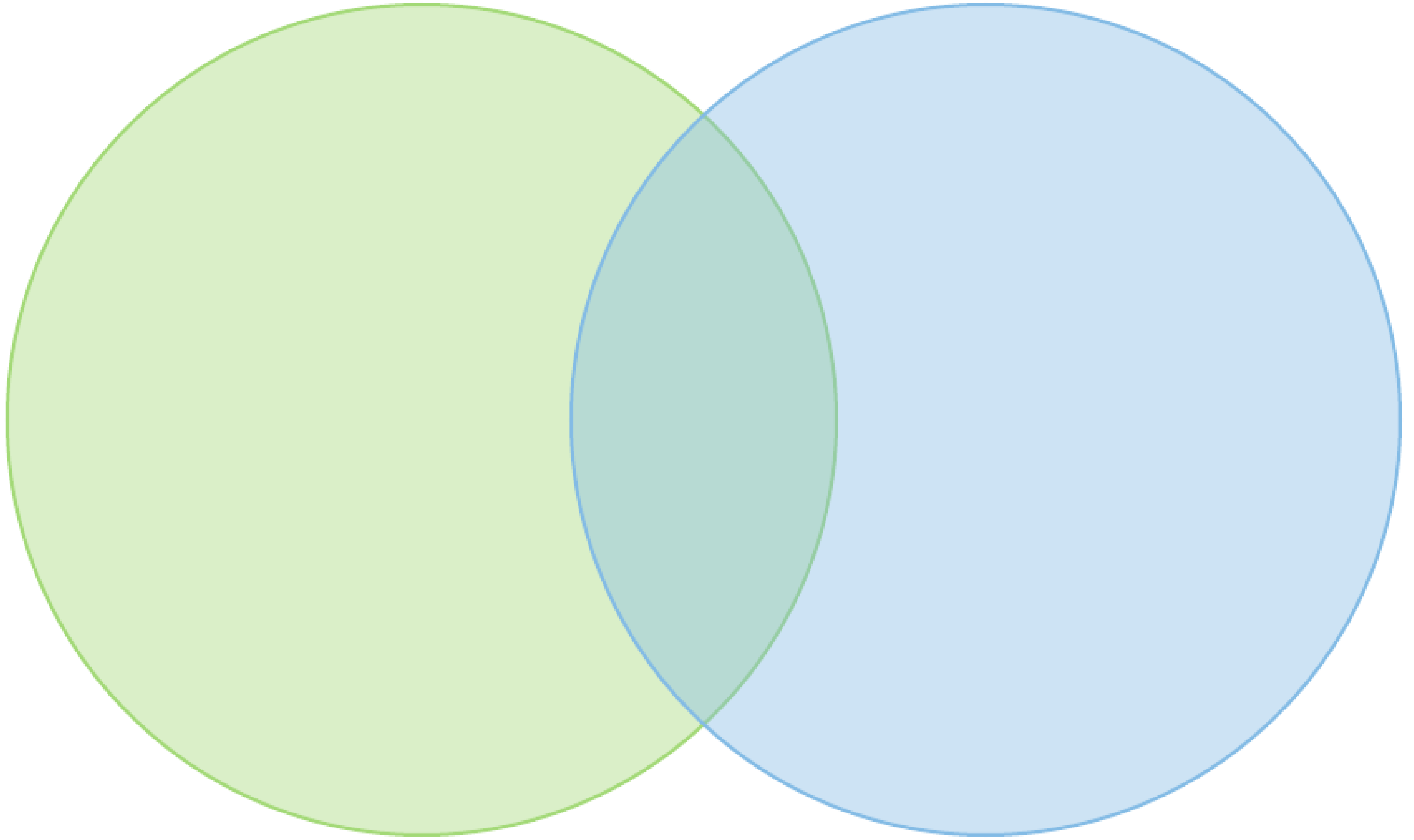
Name: ________________

McCarthyism & The Second Red Scare Organizer

People/Groups

Impact

McCarthyism & The Second Red Scare Organizer



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ACADEMIC VITA

EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University – Schreyer Honors College — **University Park, PA**
Majors in Secondary Social Studies Education, Political Science, & Spanish — *Aug. 2017 – Dec. 2020*
Minors: History

Central Bucks High School East — **Doylestown, PA**
Sep. 2014 –Jun. 2017
- Scholar's Diploma
- Summa Cum Laude

EXPERIENCE

Library Page – Schlow Centre Region Library — *Oct. 2020-*
- Provide general assistance to library patrons on the phone and in-person
- Manage and organize materials exiting and entering the premises

Campaign Intern – Tedra Cobb for Congress — *Sep.-Nov. 2020*
- Serve as a campus organizer to coordinate political engagement for Cobb
- Participate in daily phone banking shifts to reach voters in the district

Student Mentor Program -- The Pennsylvania State University — *Sep. 2020-*
- Tasked with advising an assigned freshman mentee in the College of Education
- Introducing relevant opportunities for enrichment and involvement

Student Teaching -- Thomas Jefferson High School — *Aug.-Dec. 2019*
- Accountable for daily lesson planning, classroom management, and grading
- Observance of professional development and conferences

Pre-Student Teaching -- Park Forest High School
Curriculum & Instruction Course at PSU — *Feb.-Mar. 2019*
- Experience at the middle school level: eighth grade civics and economics
- Responsible for daily lesson planning, material creation, and instruction

Philadelphia Urban Seminar -- Francis Hopkinson Elementary School
Curriculum & Instruction Course at PSU — *May-Jun. 2018*
- Cooperation and collaboration with faculty and other mentee teachers
- Experience with leading activities and classroom management in a science and mathematics classroom

Paterno Fellows Program — *Jan. 2018-*
- Honors Program including advanced academic coursework, thesis, internship, ethics study, and leadership/service commitment

Tutoring -- State College Area High School — *Nov. 2017-Apr. 2018; Oct. 2020-*
Volunteers In Public Schools (V.I.P.S)
- One-on-one tutoring with students in mathematics, reading, and writing

AWARDS

- Frederick Douglass and Susan B. Anthony Award -- University of Rochester 2017
- Girl Scout Gold Award -- Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania 2017
- Provost's Award -- The Pennsylvania State University 2017
- Schreyer Honors College Inductee -- The Pennsylvania State University 2018
- Outstanding Student Teaching Nominee -- The Pennsylvania State University 2019