BLACK SCHOOL, WHITE STATE

MAPPING THE STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORIGINS OF VIRGINIA STATE UNIVERSITY

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A Dissertation

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By

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ABSTRACT

Since their founding Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have and continue to face recurrent crises of legitimacy, episodes or periods in which the merits of their very existence are questioned or undermined. These challenges have been well documented and undertheorized. The broader scholarship in higher education on HBCUs has tended to focus on individuals, while few researchers have covered the larger systemic or structural issues. This study uses process tracing to situate the history of Virginia State University (VSU), a public HBCU in Virginia, within an explicitly political framework. It maps the role of the state and civil society in the origin and evolution of the institution, with particular attention to issues of legitimacy and power, and thus racism.

This study found that political contest concomitant with an evolving state were salient explanations for VSU's transformations and challenges over time. Further, I argue that the contest, the evolution of the state, and VSU's transformation over time were structured by race and by the placement of individuals into racialized categories. Although this study is focused on one higher education institution, it seeks to more broadly illuminate issues of power, the role of the state and the civil society in higher education, and the impact of the US system of higher education on racial and socioeconomic disparities, as well as individual and collective agency and resistance on the part of Black people.

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APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation, ("Black School, White State"), has been approved by the Graduate
Faculty of the School of Education and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Nancy L. Deutsch

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Josipa Roksa

_____Date

DEDICATION

       This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Sandra L. Peña, for making
everything that is hard about life easier with her unconditional love and support, while
also always being willing to tell me the Truth (yes, with a capital T) about my writing.

       It is also dedicated to the numerous Black people in Virginia who committed their
lives to education as a public good and brought forward the possibility of a more just
future through their work.

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This work has directly benefited from the intellectual engagement and support of my committee members, Dr. Brian Pusser, Dr. Derrick Alridge, Dr. Nancy Deutsch, and Dr. Josipa Roksa. In addition to chairing my dissertation committee, throughout my PhD program Dr. Pusser has been my advisor and my advocate. In those roles he has consistently paired both constructive feedback with confidence in my abilities and honest acknowledgement of my circumstances (as a mother and a professional with a full-time job, as a person who sometimes experiences crises) with kind prodding and sometimes alternative routes. This dissertation is undoubtedly better because of his feedback, as well as the generous gift of his time and authentic intellectual engagement. I am deeply grateful. It is hard to imagine that I would have been inspired to do this work in the first place without Dr. Alridge, who reintroduced me to W.E.B. Du Bois' work on Black education and inculcated in me a broader appreciation for the history and historiography of Black education. In addition to contributing early formative feedback on this dissertation, both Dr. Deutsch and Dr. Roksa provided me with admirable examples of what it means to be thoughtful and impactful educators. I am a better researcher because of Dr. Deutsch and a better writer because of Dr. Roksa.

Someone once told me, "You can have everything, just not all at once." Fortunately for me, I don't always listen very well, and this person was wrong. You can

have everything and you can have it all at once—so long as you have a lot a help along the way. And I have had so much help. I am indebted to my mother, Sandra L. Pena. I really don't know how other people do any of this without having someone like her in their lives. Not only did Sandy read and copy-edit this entire dissertation (multiple times, through multiple iterations), she also helped me create more time and space for this work through her own labor, caring for my children and my home, and otherwise relieving me of work I would have had to do myself (especially this past year, when everything felt as though it was about to come crashing down).

When my husband, Rick Harden, and I were first dating and I was working almost full time and trying to finish my undergraduate degree, our primary "together" activity consisted of my hanging out at his house doing homework. At the time, I promised him it would not "always be this way." Over twenty years and three degrees later, I might actually make good on that promise. Over the past two years in particular, as my obligations increased at work and I focused more and more on research and writing, Rick has taken on numerous responsibilities around our home that otherwise would have been shared, giving me the time and space to research and think and write.

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introducing me to the work of Stuart Hall—have made the process easier and the dissertation better.

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Finally, I am not sure if I ever would have started this journey without the love, advocacy, and support of Dr. Sharon L. Hostler. When I first started working for her in 2008 and I asked people what she was like, I was told by one colleague that she was like a fishing bobber, floating to the top and bringing the whole line—everyone—along with her. Indeed, this is true. Completing a PhD takes resources. Not only did she encourage me to enroll in the program at UVA, she also consistently advocated for me in numerous ways, no less than in the provision of the necessary concrete resources (like time and money) that make something like this even possible.

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ABREVIATIONS

AMA	American Missionary Association
AY	Academic Year
HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
HEW	Health, Education and Welfare, U.S. Department of
HWI	Historically White Institutions
BRFAL	Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands
LDF	Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
OCR	Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education
PBI	Predominantly Black Institutions
PWI	Predominantly White Institutions
MSI	Minority Serving Institutions
NCES	National Center for Education Statistics
SACSCOC	Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges
SCHEV	State Council of Higher Education for Virginia
VNCI	Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute
VNII	Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute

VSC   Virginia State College

VSU   Virginia State University

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

HBCUs are unique institutions within higher education. Numbering 99 in the fall of 2019, just over 1 percent of the array of over 6,000 accredited institutions of higher education in the United States (U.S. Department of Education, 2020), Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) constitute a small yet distinct sector within higher education.

As other scholars have noted when seeking to explain the significance of these institutions, HBCUs are distinct with regard to both their history as well as their impact in terms of student outcomes. They emerged out of the Civil War enabled by a mix of philanthropic, federal, and local support. As Du Bois wrote in 1930, "In the midst of the very blood and dust of battle, an educational system for the freedmen had been begun . . . with the "new Negro college . . . as the very foundation stone" (2001, p. 87). Local communities of people, recently emancipated from slavery, worked together to build Black schools across the south in partnership with philanthropic groups and the federal government via the Federal Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands (otherwise known as the Freedmen's Bureau) (Fuke, 1999; Tyack & Lowe, 1986). In the aftermath of reconstruction, as the Jim Crow south was built through violence as well as legislative and judicial action, the creation of both public and private Black schools across the region continued at a relatively steady pace, enabled by the will and agency of

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Black citizens and the fraught partnerships they were willing to forge (Butchart, 1980; Green, 2016; Morris, 2010).

HBCUs are literally defined as a category of institution by their history, a definition that was first enshrined in the Higher Education Act of 1965. Title III part B of this act established HBCU as "any historically Black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of Black Americans." This creation of HBCUs as a category by an act of the state is an echo of their origins and of the politics that surround them.

It is also true that HBCUs have had a positive impact on their students, the broader Black community in the United States, and the nation. The Association for the Study of Higher Education's 2010 Higher Education Report on HBCUs starts with an introduction that credits HBCUs with building a Black middle class, thereby changing the racial climate in the United States (Gasman, Lundy-Wagner, Ransom & Bowman III, 2010). Research has repeatedly shown that while many HBCUs graduate students at a rate significantly below the national average for college completion, they tend to have better- than-expected student outcomes, given the challenges they face and their often limited resources (Allen, 1992; Kim, 2002; Kim & Conrad, 2006; Sibulkin & Butler, 2011). During the first half of the 20th century, HBCUs were the primary means through which Black people could obtain a postsecondary education. Further, research done in the early 2000s indicates that 40% of Black people in the United States with PhDs and 85% of those with MDs earned their bachelor's degree from an HBCU (Minor, 2008, p. 8). Although there is no federal data on Black student enrollments prior to 1968, when the U.S. Office for Civil Rights started to collect enrollment information by race and

ethnicity, there is some evidence suggesting that two-thirds of the Black students in college in the early 1960s were enrolled in HBCUs (Davis, 1985, p. 27). To the degree that a college education provides access to the middle class and that many Historically White Institutions (HWIs) were not open to Black people, HBCUs have been filling the void and making substantial contributions to building a Black middle class. Although the data on national impacts is more anecdotal, one study found that when medical schools were ranked using metrics designed to evaluate performance related to educating physicians to care for the national population, three HBCUs came out on top (Mullan et al., 2010).

   HBCUs have made substantial contributions. They have also faced substantial challenges. For example, HBCUs' enrollment, retention, and graduation rates lag behind the national average (Henderson, 2007; Kim & Conrad, 2006; Perna, Lundy-Wagner, Drezner, Gasman, Yoon, & Bose, 2009; Richards & Awokoya, 2012; Sibulkin & Butler, 2011; Wilson, 2007). At least one study has shown that in some places HBCUs' six-year graduation rates are as much as 30% lower than the rates at similarly situated Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs) (Gasman, 2013, pp. 10-11). Further, the 11% enrollment growth HBCUs experienced between 1997 and 2017 is well below the overall average 27% enrollment growth for all degree-granting postsecondary institutions over the same period (U.S. Department of Education, 2018a; U.S. Department of Education, 2018b). This 11% average growth figure masks some stark realities. As can be seen in Table 1.1, HBCUs are generally small schools, with only two out of the 99 enrolling 10,000 or more students in the fall 2019.

Table 1.1

Institutions of Higher Education by Size Category and
HBCU Status

Size Category	No. of HBCUs	No. All Institutions
Under 1,000	31	3610
1,000 - 4,999	50	1480
5,000 - 9,999	16	478
10,000 - 19,999	2	340
20,000 and above	0	217
Not reported	0	46
Not applicable	0	133
Total	99	6304

Note: Source Data comes from the US Department

of Education, 2020

Any decline in enrollment can quickly have an adverse impact on these types of

institutions. Since the 1965 Higher Education Act named HBCUs as a category of

institution, over 23 have closed (Corson, 2018; Suggs, 2019). Of those institutions that

have managed to stay open, over 50 percent have experienced steadily declining or flat

enrollments and/or revenues over the past 20 years (Corson, 2018). Consider the

following from a 2018 *Atlanta Journal Constitution* article:

> Tiny Paine College in Augusta has lost 46 percent of its enrollment since 2010,
>
> and two-thirds of Paine's freshman class in 2015 didn't come back for sophomore
>
> year. Meanwhile, the oldest HBCU in America, Cheyney University of

Pennsylvania, lost 55 percent of its enrollment during that period. Its six-year

graduation rate in 2015? Seventeen percent. At South Carolina State University,

enrollment declined 30 percent and core revenue 27 percent. (Suggs & Stirgus,

2018)

Indeed, 2018 was a particularly tough year for HBCUs. Concordia College, a small

Lutheran HBCU in Alabama, shuttered; and Bennett College in North Carolina lost a

multi-year effort to retain accreditation through the Southern Association of Colleges and

Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) (Seltzer, 2018; Suggs, 2018). Bennett has

managed to remain open and was just approved for accreditation candidacy through the

Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS), a faith-based

accrediting body. Just getting to the candidacy stage of reaccreditation has taken two

years and the help of such high-profile benefactors as Beyoncé, Peloton, and Capital One

(McCain, 2020; Roberson, 2020; Whitford, 2020). For both schools, declining student

enrollments and lack of revenue were the driving issues in closing and loss of

accreditation respectively (Seltzer, 2018; Suggs, 2018). Unfortunately, Concordia and

Bennett are far from alone.

Equally worrisome for HBCUs are the ongoing debates as to their purpose and

over their very existence. Early evidence of these debates can be found in W.E.B. Du

Bois' *The Education of Black People* (2001). Written over the first half of the 20th

century, these ten speeches find Du Bois simultaneously defending higher education and

Black colleges specifically as "the founding stone of all education" and critiquing the

manner and degree to which some Black colleges reified Jim Crow (2001, p. 19). Jencks

and Riesman's 1967 article, "The American Negro College," critiquing Black schools for

being "academic disaster areas" and the ensuing debate is another concrete example.[1] The debate is ongoing. More recent articles include a piece in *Science* entitled, "Are HBCUs Still Necessary?" (Parks, 2003) and a *Wall Street Journal* opinion piece entitled "Black Colleges Need a New Mission" (Riley, 2010). As numerous scholars have documented, the ongoing contest over both purpose and legitimacy has been a persistent theme for Black schools (Anderson, 1988; Allen & Jewell, 2002; Brown, 1997; Brown, 1999; Gasman & Bowman, 2011; Gasman & Hilton, 2012; Richardson & Harris, 2004; Watkins, 2001).

1.1.2 Virginia State University.

Founded as a public institution of higher education for Black people in 1882, the entity that would become Virginia State University (VSU) has faced and continues to face challenges in line with those described above. Today, with just over 4,000 students in the fall of 2019 (an almost 20% decline from 2010), an admissions rate hovering in the mid-90s, low spending per student relative to other institutions, and a dependence on non-tuition sources for over 80% of its expenses, VSU is what the higher education scholars Taylor and Cantwell (2019) have described as "subsidy reliant" (SCHEV, 2020; U.S. Department of Education, 2019). Subsidy-reliant institutions often function as "opportunity engines," providing underserved students with a path towards "higher lifetime earnings and better outcomes" (Taylor & Cantwell, 2019, p. 17). At the same time, their very reliance on subsidies makes them uniquely vulnerable to changes in state funding (Taylor & Cantwell, 2019, p. 17). Further, like many HBCUs, VSU is virtually

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[1] For a detailed description of this debate, see Gasman, 2006. For a particularly poignant and pointed response to the article, see Clark, 1967.

an open access institution. As shown in Figure 1.1 below, in Academic Year (AY) 2019-2020, VSU admitted 95.3% of the individuals who applied. In AY 2014-2015, VSU admitted 100% of the individuals who applied. Not only does this leave little room to increase enrollments—because the pool of interested and qualified students is small—it also correlates with a student population that may need more support in order to obtain a degree. Students at VSU overwhelmingly come from families on the lower end of the income spectrum. As noted in Table 1.2, in AY 2018-2019, across all public four-year institutions in Virginia, 49% of students came from families making less than $50,000 per year, while fully 23% came from families making over $100,000. In contrast, 73% of VSU's students came from families making less than $50,000 per year, and only 6% came from families making over $100,000. The average six-year graduation rate for four-year institutions in Virginia has been in the high 60s or low 70s for over 10 years. In contrast, VSU's graduation rate has been hovering in the low 40s.

Figure 1.1

Acceptance Rates, Virginia State University and the Average for All 4-Year Public Institutions in

Virginia, Academic Year 2004-2005 through Academic Year 2019-2020
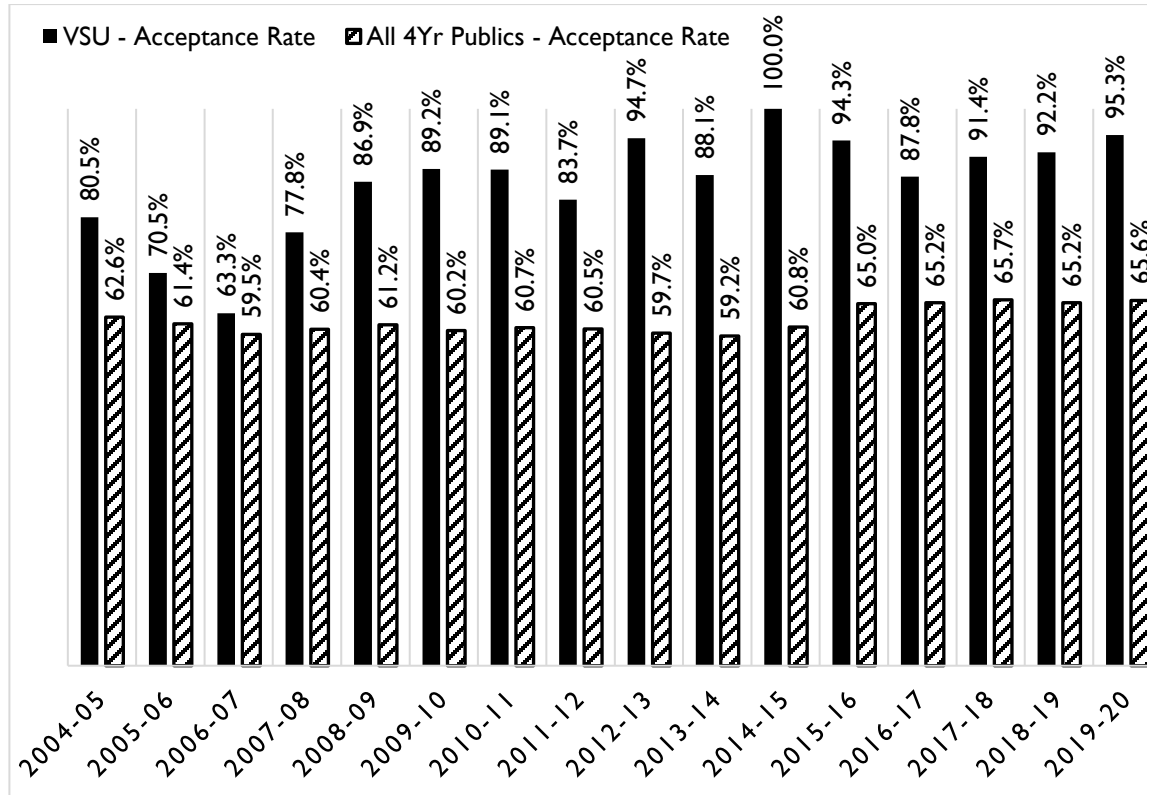
Note: Source data comes from SCHEV, 2020

Table 1.2

Student Family Income Distributions, AY 2018-2019

Students Family Income Range	Percentage within the specified Distribution	
	All Public 4-Yr Institutions	VSU
< $50,000	49%	73%
$50,001 to $100,000	29%	21%
> $100,000	23%	6%

Note: Source data comes from SCHEV, 2019

Although there are commonalities across the south with regards to Black educational opportunities in the post-bellum period through the present, there are also clear differences by state and locality. For example, in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War the schools that would one day become HBCUs proliferated, but none more so than in North Carolina. By 1870, North Carolinians had founded five such schools, compared to just one or two in other states (Lovett, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2017).[2] By 1900 there were 16 such institutions in North Carolina, eight of which were public; while Virginia had only three, despite having roughly similar populations (Lovett, 2011; U.S. Department of Education, 2017). In 2017, of the 48,876 degrees awarded by HBCUs, North Carolina's 10 HBCUs contributed the highest number, almost 15% of the total, with Texas HBCUs (*n* = 9) and Alabama HBCUs

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[2] The data contained in this paragraph comes from cross-checking the information found in Lovett's (2011) comprehensive history with information available via the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (2017). Institutions were counted regardless of their postsecondary status at their founding.

($n = 15$) coming in second at only 10% each (U.S. Department of Education, 2017).

Virginia's five HBCUs contributed far fewer, only 7% of the total degrees awarded (U.S.

Department of Education, 2017). As the birthplace of Massive Resistance, one of the

most well-known strategies used to prevent public school desegregation in the wake of

Brown v. Board of Education (1954), Black people in Virginia have long faced daunting

obstacles to obtaining an education. Virginia is not just any former Confederate state, but

was the seat of the confederacy, and the only former Confederate state that passed

directly from military rule under reconstruction to an elected Conservative Party majority

state government (Salmon & Campbell, 1994, p. 53).

Figure 1.2

Number of HBCUs Founded by State, and Type (public vs. private)
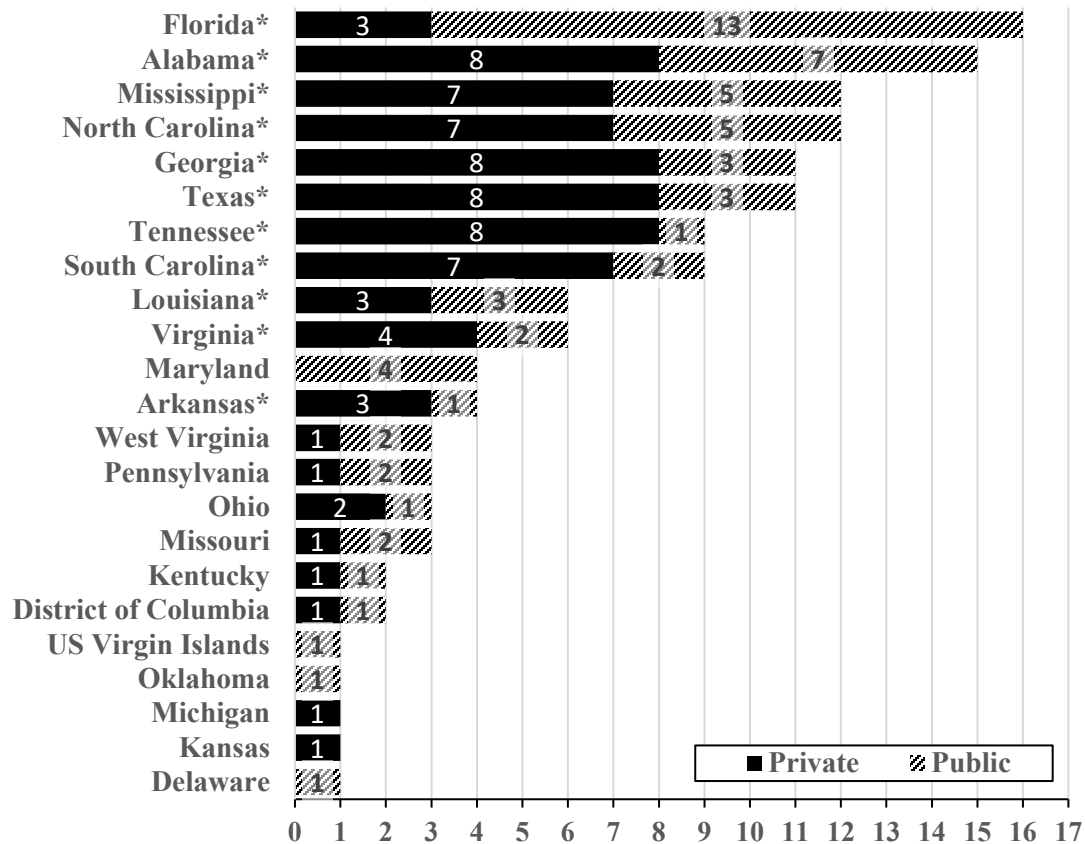
Note: The data contained in this figure comes from cross-checking the information found in Lovett's (2011) comprehensive history with information available via the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (2017). Institutions were counted regardless of their postsecondary status at their founding. Asterisks (*) denote a former confederate state.

Like many places in the south during the last half of the 19th century, Virginia was marked by multiple complex fronts of political and social antagonism and contest. From emancipation through the 1880s, Black people in Virginia made up roughly one-third of the electorate (Moore, 1975, p. 170). Despite what one historian has described as a "relentless machine" of "poll taxes, gerrymanders, and election frauds," Black Virginians

persistently engaged in visible contests to maintain and secure their political and civil rights (Moore, 1975, p. 168; see also Green, 2016, pp. 165-167). These efforts were not in vain. Both the continued presence of Black people in elected positions and the success of a third party known as the Readjusters are a testament to the organizing capacity of Virginia's Black community during the 1870s and 1880s (Dailey, 2000; Forsythe, 1997; Jackson, 1946; Kousser, 1974; Moore, 1975; Rabinowitz, 1974).

The political and social contests that marked Virginia during this period and perhaps more importantly the ability of Black people to exert power, albeit tenuously, is clearly part of what made the creation of Virginia State University a possibility. Chartered by the Virginia legislature in 1882 as the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (VNCI), the entity that would become Virginia State University, was in part the product of campaign promises and political wrangling in the legislature. VNCI was also one of just a few HBCUs across the nation that was explicitly founded as a postsecondary institution with a liberal arts college in addition to a normal school, an annual operating fund from the state, and an initial guarantee of Black leadership. This beginning is an exceptional story not replicated amongst HBCUs more broadly. Yet, almost 140 years later, Virginia State University is facing many of the same problems faced by other HBCUs.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As noted above, HBCUs have and continue to produce desirable outcomes for both Black Americans as well as society more broadly. There is a wealth of scholarship documenting these contributions. It is also well documented that the relative success of HBCUs and other under-resourced and politically marginalized postsecondary

institutions, including community colleges, commuter colleges, rural colleges, and minority serving institutions, is often accomplished despite enormous challenges.

Why are these challenges so persistent? Why, despite HBCUs contributions, does their very existence continue to be a matter of debate? Scholars of higher education have sought to understand these challenges by focusing on broad trends or correlating individual or institutional characteristics with specific outcomes (Baker, Arroyo, Braxton, & Gasman, 2020; Garcia & Guzman-Alvarez, 2019; Ishitani & Kamer, 2019; Keith, Stastny, & Brunt, 2016; Levin & Garcia, 2018; Park, Flores, & Ryan, 2018). For example, Baker, Arroyo, Braxton, & Gasman's 2020 study on student persistence at commuter HBCUs utilizes a theoretical model in which explanatory variables include individual student social, emotional, and economic characteristics as well as the institutional "integrity" and "commitment to student welfare" of individual HBCUs. While some scholars of the history and sociology of Black education have employed an explicitly political and/or state theoretical approach (Aiello, 2012; Anderson, 1988; Watkins, 2001; Wolters, 1975), and some scholars of higher education have focused on the role of the state in higher education (Ordorika, 2003; Pusser, 2004; Pusser 2006; Pusser, 2008; Rhoads & Torres, 2006; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Spring, 1998; Wirt & Kirst, 1997), no scholars working within the field of higher education have attempted to use explicitly political conceptual frames to inform our understanding of HBCUs. More broadly, with the exception of Levin (2017) who has looked at the influence of neoliberalism on the development of community colleges, no other scholars of higher education have used political theories of the state to understand

the challenges faced by other types of under-resourced and politically marginalized postsecondary institutions.

The use of state theory by scholars of higher education is both relatively recent and far from pervasive. To the degree that a model existed in the 1970s, it was relatively simplistic. Scholars explicitly writing about the state and higher education portrayed the state as a separate entity and relied on interest articulation models (Baldridge, 1971; Finn, 1978; Gladieux and Wolanin, 1976). During the 1980s a more theoretically robust scholarship began to emerge. Drawing on theories from economics, sociology, and political science, this scholarship explored the complexity of higher education in ways that previous scholars had not (Clark, 1986). In the 1990s, Sheila Slaughter and her collaborators' work on academic capitalism shifted the scholarship with a state theoretical model that blurred the boundaries between the state, the market, and academe (Slaughter, 1990; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). In Slaughter's scholarship institutions of higher education are not just an extension of the state, they are an extension of an increasingly neoliberal state that privileges production over social welfare. Since the early 2000s scholars such as Simon Marginson, Imanol Ordorika, and Brian Pusser have used state theoretical models to shift the frame again, emphasizing the varying relationship of higher education to the state and civil society, given its role in the production, control, and management of knowledge (Marginson, 2006; Marginson, 2007; Ordorika, 2003; Ordorika 2015; Pusser, 2004; Pusser, 2006; Pusser, 2008).

Like the scholarship on higher education more generally, the array of scholarship on HBCUs is relatively broad, with the majority of the literature focused on individuals (mostly students), while a select few scholars cover larger systemic or structural issues.

The scholarship on the factors that influence students' choices to attend an HBCU (Abiola, 2014; Freeman, 2005; Stroud, 2014; Tobolowsky et al., 2005; Van Camp, et al., 2010) and student experiences once at an HBCU are particularly robust (Nelson Laird et al., 2007; Rahman, 2014). While there is a fair amount of research related to the impact of policies and laws on HBCUs, this research lacks any discussion of power, legitimacy, or the broader political economy (Brown & Freeman, 2004; Brown et al., 2004).

Given the degree to which the state—manifest in federal and state-level institutions and judicial systems as well as laws and regulations—and politics more broadly have shaped higher education and ostensibly HBCUs, more research that uses theories of the state in relation to HBCUs is needed. By situating the history of Virginia State University within an explicitly political framework and mapping the role of the state and civil society in the origin and early evolution of the institution, this work will shed light on the ongoing crises of legitimacy that VSU and other HBCUs often face. From a theoretical perspective, the history of HBCUs in particular is relevant to issues of power, the role of the state and the civil society in higher education, the impact of the U.S. system of higher education on racial and socioeconomic disparities, as well as individual and collective agency and resistance on the part of Black people. Further, applying models of the state and civil society may shed light on higher education's current systems of inequality–how racism as a structural problem has impacted higher education and the place of HBCUs and other minority-serving institutions within higher education, and the challenges they so often face more specifically.

Virginia State University, like many other minority-serving institutions, has and continues to face a host of well documented challenges, such as low retention and

graduation rates and inadequate financial resources. As noted above, while the average six-year graduation rate for four-year institutions in Virginia has been in the high 60s or low 70s for over 10 years, VSU's has been hovering in the low 40s. While scholars of higher education have sought to understand these challenges for an array of under-resourced and politically marginalized postsecondary institutions, little of the current research uses a state theoretical approach. A case study–one that provides insight into the dynamics of power and contest under which the institution was founded and subsequent critical moments in its evolution–can provide additional context in order to better understand the current status of and challenges faced by VSU specifically and HBCUs more broadly.

1.3 Purpose and Research Questions

Although this study is focused on one higher education institution, an HBCU, it is designed to more broadly illuminate applicable questions of how power and legitimacy have been used to shape the political contest over the founding of a higher education institution. It also seeks to determine whether the outcomes of political contests over the role and purposes of a higher education institution at its founding are manifest in the organization and outcomes of the institution today. Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. In what ways and to what degree did contest associated with the state and civil society influence the creation and development of Virginia State University?

2. In what ways, if any, have there been critical moments where changes associated with the state and/or civil society may account for the challenges the institution has, and continues to face, today**?**

3. What were the sources of legitimacy for various participants in the contest over the founding of VSU?

4. Is there evidence of the state, formal associations of the civil society, or informal organizations involved in that contest, and how did each of those entities exercise power? What was the specific outcome of those contests, and how or to what degree are those contests/outcomes still visible today?

1.4 Significance

This study has theoretical and practical significance for scholars of higher education politics and policy, as well as the study of higher education and the state. This research adds to the relatively scant higher education scholarship that addresses the role of the state and civil society in higher education by using explicitly political conceptual frames to inform our understanding of HBCUs, a central topic in the scholarship of higher education.

Shifting one's vantage point to a state theoretical approach—one that attempts to understand the exercise of power and that positions educational institutions as inherently political and part of larger structural systems—has the potential to give scholars additional context for understanding the current state of contests occurring within and between HBCUs (as well as other types of postsecondary institutions), civil society, and the state. While many scholars have documented the contests that occurred in the creation and administration of HBCUs, only a few have traced the relationship of these contests to the broader political context. Although narrowly delineated, this research will help scholars of higher education better understand the ways and degree to which HBCUs have been both political and politicized institutions and how racism as a regime, as a

social structural system of inequality, has influenced HBCUs and in turn higher education more broadly. As such, this work will shed light on the ongoing issues of legitimacy that HBCUs face.

Ordorika and Lloyd have asserted that the "dynamics of educational reform" can be seen as "a consequence of competing demands for the reproduction and production of a particular ideology or skills on the one hand, and struggles for social transformation and equality on the other" (2015, p. 145). In the same vein, the creation of HBCUs as a new form of educational institution can be seen as a consequence of competing demands in a particular context. To the degree that HBCUs seem to have been created to both discipline and segregate Black citizens, as well as to uplift them, to maintain strict social, economic and political boundaries, and to ameliorate the sins of slavery, they are a product of political contest. Understanding the terms of that contest and any concomitant compromise(s) will help us understand the status and function of HBCUs today and provide an important case, one that provides a connection with empirical data, to substantiate or modify the more theoretical work that dominates the scholarship on the state and higher education.

1.5 Conceptual Frame

This is a critical case study. I use critical theory, specifically in relation to the state and civil society, to frame my inquiry into the role and longer-term impact of contest in the founding of an institution of higher education. This necessarily implies an interdisciplinary and emancipatory approach. While critical theorists tend to believe that there is a reality, one's current understanding of that reality is necessarily limited by a range of sociological, political, and historically contingent factors. A critical stance is

necessary in order to expose these factors and get closer to some understanding of the object of study. As the widely cited scholar of higher education Sheila Slaughter articulates, a critical frame is useful as "a point from which to initiate inquiry, not as a foregone conclusion" (1990, p. 23). The work of critical theorists is "emancipatory" to the degree that it is intended to change our understanding of an issue or topic in order to enact change from a legal, social, or political perspective.

More specifically, this research is grounded in a critical conceptual model developed by a school of postsecondary scholars including Sheila Slaughter, Imanol Ordorika, and Brian Pusser. Fundamental to this model are two basic ideas: first, that institutions of higher education are extensions of the state; and second, that states, including colleges and universities, are a product of historical contestation. Unlike these scholars, I also draw on the work of individuals outside the field of higher education, such as Stuart Hall and Edward Bonilla-Silva, in order to bring racism into my conceptual model. In the overview below, I explicate these ideas and the underlying complexity inherent in them more fully.

1.5.1 The State and Civil Society

Within the social and political sciences, the terms *the state* and *civil society* are used in various, multiplicative, and often opaque ways. This may in part be due to the complexity of society itself and the associated difficulty of parsing complex relationships amongst various—sometimes deeply embedded—social groups, institutions, and individuals. Although it is important to recognize this complexity, for the purposes of this research, I do use broad definitions of both the state and civil society while also acknowledging explicitly that the boundaries between the two may be blurry at best.

The State.

This does not mean that I view the state as an abstraction, though. I borrow from Brian Pusser and Simon Marginson, and define the state as the "political institutions, laws, rules and regulations, judicial systems, and formal systems of power, including law enforcement and military organizations, as well as a variety of other formal organizations that serve to shape collective activity and protect individual rights" (2012, pp.91-92). This definition necessitates some caveats. The state is not immutable. Political institutions, laws, rules, regulations, etc. all change over time, and differ from place to place. The state is contingent. This definition does not imply that the state protects the rights of all individuals equally, nor that there is only one way in which the state shapes collective activity. The modern state (and its constituent apparatuses, including institutions of higher education) can be "administrative and coercive" as well as "educative and informative" (Hall, 1986, p. 18). The state,

> exercises moral and educative leadership, it plans, urges, initiates, solicits, punishes. It is where the bloc of social forces which dominates over it not only justifies and maintains its domination, but wins by leadership and authority the active consent of those over whom it rules" (Hall, 1986, p. 19)

As such, the state is marked by both complexity and contest (Hall, 1986, p. 18).

The Civil Society

While the state may be conceived of as mostly composed of formal structures, civil society is much more amorphous, in function and form. Gramsci himself seems to have offered at least three differing conceptions of civil society, its function and its relationship with and to the state (Carnoy, 1984, pp. 72-73). In the simplest formulation,

Civil Society is a network of various associations and institutions which include churches, some schools, museums, cultural, social or political associations and organizations, and the family (Hall, 1986, p. 18; Schwarzmantel, 2014, p. 203). Civil society provides a sort of societal infrastructure, a network that is separate from and yet integral to and aligned with the state's more coercive efforts to maintain the hegemony of the dominant social bloc (Hall, 1986, p. 18; Schwarzmantel, 2014, p. 203). Civil society is also the sphere in which hegemony can best be contested (Gramsci & Buttigieg, 2002). As Hall explains, in Gramsci's "war of position," the "trenches and permanent fortifications" at the front of any battle are located within civil society (1986, p. 18). Civil society thus represents an arena in which power is manifest, in which politics play out, and yet in more diffuse and often less visible ways as compared to the state.

Expanding the Realm of Politics

Writing in the mid-1980s, Hall argued that society was in fact becoming more complex, and that attempting to define clear lines of demarcation between the state and civil society was neither possible nor desirable. For both him and Jeffrey Alexander, differentiation between the state and civil society is really about expanding the realm of politics for both analysis and action (Alexander 2006, 2007, & 2010; Hall, 1986). In adding "and the civil society" to any analysis, one is saying that politics and political struggle do not just occur in relationship to "the state" in any sort of clearly defined or delineated way. Rather, the effect of any focus on the state *and* civil society is to "multiply and proliferate the various fronts of politics" and to help differentiate between the various "kinds of social antagonisms" that inform and influence any political struggle

(Hall, 1986, p. 19). There is contest within the state, within civil society, and between the state and civil society.

1.5.2 Schools and Schooling

Schools, regardless of their location in relation to either the state or civil society, are not neutral, but rather are inherently political and politicized places in which relations of power operate to real effect. The location of any particular school or education system in relation to the state or civil society is in fact historically contingent, as are the manner and degree to which schools and schooling is politicized and operate to affirm any particular set of interests. As some education scholars have pointed out, in the United States, our education system contains within it competing and contradictory ideological purposes (Carnoy & Levin, 1985; Labaree, 1997). School are often designed with multiple purposes in mind, for example, both to prepare people for work and to prepare them to be good citizens within a democracy. At any one point in time, one purpose may gain primacy at the expense of the other, driven by various interests, social and/or political movements (Carnoy & Levin, 1984).

Institutions of Higher Education.

As Slaughter (1988, 1997), Ordorika (2003), and Pusser (2004, 2006, 2008, 2014) have variously demonstrated, colleges and universities are inextricably part of and bound to the state. Although one might argue that facets of the educational system, such as the professional associations to which many faculty members belong, are civil society organizations, higher education as a whole is a state project. Public universities in particular, and the various bureaucracies that regulate, provision and subsidize higher education as a whole, are created and evolve under the direction of public officials

operating at the discretion and under the authority of whatever coalition has gained the necessary support to govern (Moe, 2005: Pusser, 2008). In this way, colleges and universities—the work that they do, the impact that they have—gain legitimacy through the state, are enmeshed in the state, and are directly impacted by political processes. Although private colleges and universities originate in the civil society (as opposed to public ones, which originate in the state), these institutions are enmeshed in the state through regulatory controls and the provision of resources.

1.5.3 Historical Contingency

Revisionist history, history that seeks to reexamine and replace "comforting majoritarian interpretations of events with ones that square more accurately with minorities' experiences," has become an important theme and branch of work among critical race theorists (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012, p. 24) and historians alike (Levy, Postone, Sartori, & Sewell, 2017). Within the scholarship of higher education, Brian Pusser has made a similar case with regards to "the challenges in establishing a multidimensional perspective on power," given that current relations of power often constrain or circumscribe the realm of the possible (2015). Examining the longer history of particular issues can provide alternatives that may not otherwise be discernable (Pusser, 2015). Further, noting the inadequacy of various models of change, political theorists have increasingly come to recognize the importance of ideational processes and ideological repertoires to policy and practical change, particularly at the intersection of politics and race (Béland, 2009; Campbell, 2002; Lieberman, 2002;). In summary, understanding how and why the ideas and the stories people tell evolve and manifest over time can help us reframe and better understand the present.

Gramsci argued, as did Marx before him, that the field on which political and social contests occur is one that is historically contingent. Simply put, the circumstances and institutions existent at any point in time are the unique product of a previous point in time. As noted at the outset, this basic idea is central to both the work of Ordorika and that of Pusser. Ordorika argues that institutions of higher education and the current "decision-making structures and processes" that characterize them, the manner in which they are governed and resourced, are in fact the "historical products" of contest "between dominant and subaltern groups in education and the broader state" (2003, p. 23). This idea of historical contingency also means that the parameters of contest are always broadly defined within the context, and thus constraints and opportunities, of the current state and civil society structures and the ideology that undergirds them; in turn, new structures and new ideologies have a direct impact on the realm of the possible by shaping, constraining, or enabling future contests. This idea is discussed further below, in the section on power.

In this model, change can be abrupt, the result of shock or crisis, as well as incremental or cumulative, and it is in fact always ongoing. When ideological unity is achieved over "a number of different spheres of society at once" and is manifest in both the state and civil society and when there is a sufficient measure of popular consent and social authority to conform society to serve the interests of a particular albeit contested and heterogeneous group within society–this is what Gramsci meant by hegemony (Hall, 1986, p. 7). While hegemony is always imperfect and contested, it is an active and necessarily ongoing process (Ordorika, 2003, p. 30).

1.5.4 Race and Racism

Historical contingency also has another component that is particularly important for this research. While social class may have been the most salient area of social polarization for Marx and Gramsci, different societies at different historical moments will have different dominant and subaltern groups, and different areas of social polarization.

To this end, and specifically for the work described herein, it is important to recognize the U.S. context specifically, and the postcolonial world broadly, as a racialized social system (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, p. 37) and race as a primary area of social polarization. Racialized social systems are "societies in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races" (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, p. 37). Bonilla-Silva notes that such societies are only "structured partially by race because modern social systems" incorporate other forms of hierarchy and stratification, such as class and gender (2001, p. 37). Although the particular character of any given racialized social system is variable and changes over time (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, p. 37), social rewards and thus interests are always differentiated by race (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, p. 38). In fact, the dominant race, as a heterogeneous and potentially contested yet cohesive social bloc, uses the many resources that are available to them to structure and restructure society in ways that best serve their interests. Because races are socially constructed, i.e. not biological in nature, "both the meaning and the position assigned to races in the social structure are always contested" (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, p. 41).

1.5.5 Power

In terms of understanding such things as how social authority or polarization is constituted, contested, and reconstituted; much less the outcome of any given political or social contest, identifying both the bases and exercise of power is critical. For the purposes of this research and in alignment with the theory articulated above, I utilize Stephen Lukes's three-dimensional view of power (1974) as well as the work of Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz (1970, 1975) and Schattschneider (1960). At its root, Lukes's definition is relatively simple: "A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests." (1974, p. 30). This view of power encompasses both the active as well as the passive use of power—both the conscious, overt, and visible actions and behaviors as well as the instances in which oppression may have become systemic and is "mobilized, recreated, and reinforced in ways that are [not necessarily] consciously chosen" (Lukes, 1974, p. 25). This definition also allows for power to operate at the social and institutional level as well as the individual; and it can be exercised through both action and inaction and need not be intentional.

When ideologies manifest in art, law, culture, religion, politics, etc. and when they instantiate in structural ways that are oppressive or contrary to particular groups' interests, power is being exercised. When individuals act or refrain from acting and thereby shape or reinforce predominant norms that are oppressive, power is being exercised. And, as Lukes observes, without individual and collective opposition the bias of any given social system can still be sustained by the "socially structured and culturally patterned behavior of groups, and [the] practices of institutions" and that is still the operation of power (1974, p. 26).

This is consistent with the idea discussed above that the parameters of contest are always broadly defined within the context, which includes constraints and opportunities, of the current state and civil society structures and the ideology that undergirds those structures. It is also consistent with the work of Schattschneider, Bacharach and Baratz, and with that of Bonilla-Silva, also discussed above. Schattschneider argued that all institutions shape how members of those institutions react to different types of political issues through "mobilized bias" in the form of institutional goals, purposes, and norms. Thus, "some issues" or conflicts "are organized into politics, while others are organized out" (Schattschneider, 1960, p. 69). This "mobilization of bias" represents the exercise of power. As Bachrach and Baratz argue, power is exercised "by persons and groups who direct their energy to shaping or reinforcing predominant norms, precedents, myths, institutions, and procedures" in order to "prevent challenges to their values and interests" (1975, pp. 900-901). Similarly, Bonilla-Silva argues that the dominant race uses the many resources that are available to them to structure and restructure society in ways that best serve their interests (2001).

1.5.6 Colleges & Universities, Power & Contest

Colleges and universities, as institutions and as projects of the state, can and do function to reproduce relations of power and prestige, to the detriment or benefit of different social groups. As Pusser and Marginson point out, power can be understood through its role in the creation of structures, like colleges and universities, that "institutionalize processes of authority" and inequality (2013, p. 550). One can discern relations of power through the analyses of such things as 1) the norms, "rules, regulations, and legislation" that govern colleges and universities, whether at the

institutional, state, or federal level; 2) the interests served by particular configurations; and 3) the social movements and acts of resistance that erupt in and around these institutions (Pusser & Marginson, 2013, p .550).

Schools also can and do function as sites of contestation (and insurgence for and by the oppressed). In fact, as an arena of socialization, as an arena in which the development and perpetuation of ideas are central, and as an arena in which real resources and opportunities can be in play, schools are particularly important and attractive sites of and instruments in political contest. This role, as both sites of and instruments in political contest, is reflected in various ways through the work of a number of scholars, both theoretically and empirically (Carnoy & Levin, 1985; Du Bois, 2001; Freire, 1973; Freire, 1996; hooks, 1994; Ordorika, 2003; Pusser, 2004; Pusser & Marginson, 2013; Slaughter, 1988). In his evisceration of "the college bred negro," Du Bois exhorted the Black community to push back against educational institutions that were designed to create a social order in which they remained at the bottom. In order for the oppressed group to have a voice (and one might hope contribute to an emancipatory ideology), Du Bois and Freire wanted to replace traditional modes of education with an emancipatory pedagogy (Du Bois, 2001; Freire, 1973; Freire, 1996). Explicitly acknowledging Freire, bell hooks has also positioned education by and for Black people as a counter-hegemonic act of resistance against colonization (1994).

Within the scholarship of higher education, Sheila Slaughter has explicitly described higher education institutions as "both the subject and object of struggle … they are arenas of conflict in which various groups try to win ideological hegemony, yet at the same time they are resources for members of contending groups intent on political

mobilization in external arenas" (1988, p. 245). Further, as Pusser points out, political contests "over equity, resource allocation, opportunity, and social justice are played out in debates over policies and practices at colleges and universities, on occasion before they emerge in the wider political economy" (2014, p. 12). Part of the reason why this may occur is that universities reflect larger social and political tensions and inequities.

Universities also function to alternatively strengthen and undermine the "legitimacy of the state," at least in part through the provision of resources and opportunities (Ordorika & Pusser, 2007; Pusser, 2014, p. 14). In order to retain legitimacy—to be accepted and considered legitimate, to retain the authority to govern—states must distribute resources in ways that are perceived as fair, given the particular historically contingent ideological context of said state. As a part of the state, this goes for universities as well. Further, in a state that is a part of a racialized social system, resources will be distributed along racial lines.

Scholars of higher education, such as Imanol Ordorika, Brian Pusser, Simon Marginson, and Sheila Slaughter, using vastly different cases in different social and historical contexts, have employed political and social theory in the ways described above as a lens through which to better understand higher education (Ordorika, 2003; Pusser, 2004; Pusser & Marginson, 2012; Pusser & Marginson, 2013; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). This study will build on their work by seeking to better understand the operation of power and legitimacy in the political contest over the founding of an HBCU as a particular type of postsecondary institution and to determine whether the outcomes of said contest are manifest in the organization and outcomes of the institution today.

1.6 A Note on Usage

Writing this dissertation, I have continually been reminded of the inadequacy of language and the degree to which language both reflects and defines the way in which societies are structured, especially in relation to race. I have tried to be precise in describing the racial categorizations and structures that are relevant to this study. I have tried to choose my language carefully to reflect race as both a social construct and a social reality, while also not erasing the people about whom I am writing, in all their humanity, complexity and heterogeneity. I am not certain that I have always been entirely successful. I offer the following explanations of some of my choices to provide context, while also acknowledging that my language is no doubt imperfect.

Throughout this text I have avoided the use of "colored" or "Negro" except when quoting other people directly. I have chosen to use the term "Black," with an upper-case B, to describe people who would have been termed variously as "Negro," "Afro-American," or "colored" during much of the time period under study. This population would include, at a minimum, anyone who was visibly darker skinned, whether they or their ancestors had been born in chattel slavery or not. Given the inability to ask the individuals in question their own preference, and the variability and historical specificity of the various terms used, this seemed to me to be the best path forward. There are those who have argued variously against the capitalization of Black. For example, historian Kevin K. Gaines has declined to capitalize "black" so as not to "reify color as a basis for group identity" (1996, p. xxiii). However, in addition to the fact that many style guides now take Black with a capital B as a given (including the American Psychological Association), I have found the argument that Black specifies "an ethnic identity" without

relying on "hyphenated Americanness" and thus is "more accurate than *African American*, which suggests recent ties to the continent" to be compelling (Laws, 2020).

I have chosen not to capitalize white. In declining to capitalize white, I worry that my narrative may contribute further to the invisibility of race in relation to white people. As some scholars and journalists have argued, capitalizing white in addition to Black helps to make visible the ideology and structure of race (Painter, 2020; Zorn, 2020). In the end, I chose not to capitalize white primarily because of the association of capital-W whiteness with both white nationalism and white power ideologies.

Further, as much as possible I have avoided use of the terms "slave" and "freedman," both common in the historical literature. It was important to me to speak of both the *people* who perpetuated slavery by forcibly holding other *people* in bondage, and vice versa. As such, in cases where it seemed important to emphasize an individual or a group of individuals' status in relation to slavery, I have used the more awkward phrasing referenced in the preceding sentence.

As a matter of principle, I have also found it important to avoid using the passive voice, not only because it leads to awkward sentences, but also because it obscures the identity of the individuals and the groups of individuals doing the action.

Alternatively, I have chosen to use the term "racial uplift" in a number of places. In using this term, it is important to acknowledge that "racial uplift" did not, and has not, meant the same thing to all people. Broadly representative of a positive Black identity originally articulated by Black elites at the turn of the century, the term and the ideology behind it variously focused on material progress and an ethos of self-help and service to the Black masses, as well as class distinctions and patriarchal authority (Gaines, 1996).

Despite the ambiguity of the term, it has appeared to me to be the most appropriate

general term to refer to an overarching if changing and contested ideology.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter covers three distinct scholarly areas: 1) the scholarship on higher education and the state, 2) the higher education scholarship on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and 3) the scholarship on Black education. Given the focus of this research, the scholarship on higher education and the state is treated extensively. In contrast, section 2.3 is more narrowly focused. Specifically, this section is limited to the work of critical scholars who have focused on the intersection of power, Black education, and political unrest.

The use of state theory by scholars of higher education is both relatively recent and relatively small. As demonstrated below, it was not until the 1980s that a more theoretically robust scholarship began to emerge in this area. In the 1990s, Sheila Slaughter and her collaborators' work on academic capitalism presented a state theoretical model that blurred the boundaries between the state, the market, and academe and positioned higher education as an extension of an increasingly neoliberal state that privileges production over social welfare (Slaughter, 1990; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). The last part of this section covers the work of scholars such as Simon Marginson, Imanol Ordorika, and Brian Pusser. These scholars have been the most influential to this study in that this scholarship emphasizes the varying relationship of higher education to the state and civil society given its role in the

production, control, and management of knowledge (Ordorika, 2003, 2015; Pusser, 2004, 2006, 2008; Marginson, 2006, 2007).

Section two focuses on research about HBCUs within the higher education field. Not unlike the scholarship on higher education more generally, the research on HBCUs is relatively broad, with a predominant focus on students. While critical race theory and various sociological perspectives have been used to illuminate research in this area, there are no higher education scholars using state theoretical models to study HBCUs.

Given that this study is historical in nature and that historians of HBCUs and Black education more broadly have long recognized and attempted to shed light on the political nature of HBCUs, the final section in this chapter attempts to cover some of this rich scholarship.

2.1 Higher Education and the State

Although there is a history of philosophers, political scientists, and scholars of education recognizing and writing in relatively nuanced ways about education in relation to the state (Carnoy & Levin, 1985; Cuban & Shipps, 2000; Gramsci & Buttigieg, 2002; Labaree, 1997; Tyack & Lowe, 1986), similarly focused scholarly work within the narrower field of higher education has not been as robust. Historically, much of the scholarship on higher education that did include any consideration of the state generally lacked a theoretical model. Summarizing the products of this scholarship from the decade of the 1980s, Gary Rhoades observed a relatively simple—and largely assumed—conception of the state as an interventionist and entirely separate set of "governmental bodies" (1992, p. 98). To the degree that a model existed, scholars explicitly writing

about the state and higher education portrayed the state as a separate entity and relied on interest articulation models (Baldridge, 1971; Finn, 1978; Gladieux & Wolanin, 1976;).

As Rhoades (1992) was issuing the call for more complex theoretically grounded work on the state and higher education, several scholars had already started to produce and/or pursue such work (Barrow, 1990; Clark, 1986; Mitchel, 1987; Slaughter, 1988; Slaughter, 1990; Zusman, 1986). Although Burton Clark's *The Higher Education System: Academic Organization and Cross National Perspective* (1986) is indisputably the most well-known piece of scholarship from this era, during the same time period other scholars, such as Sheila Slaughter, contributed similarly well-researched, theoretically driven work with broader implications for how we think about higher education and the state (Slaughter, 1988; Slaughter, 1990). Clark's Weberian influenced tripartite model established a useful and well-used framework of the state, the market, and the academic oligarchy for understanding higher education systems and how they function. In Slaughter's application of Neo-Marxist theory in a case study of the Business Higher Education Forum, one can see the development of the ideas that would later coalesce into her highly influential theory of academic capitalism.

Over the past 20 years, a more steady stream of work from higher education scholars with an explicitly critical-theoretical perspective has further complicated (or perhaps clarified) our understanding of higher education and the state (Marginson, 2007; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002; Marginson & Van der Wende, 2007; Ordorika & Lloyd, 2015; Pusser 2006; Pusser, 2008; Pusser 2011; Pusser, 2015; Pusser et al., 2012; Sacristan & Ordorika, 2003). While this work is theoretically robust, it has also been dominated by a distinct minority of scholars and is therefore relatively narrow with

regard to the types of questions and topics addressed. These scholars similarly position

higher education as an extension of the state, *and* as such, argue that universities are

objects in as well as sites and instruments of political contest. Notably absent from this

literature is any discussion of race.

2.1.1 Foundational Literature

To Rhoades's point, much of the early literature on the state and higher education

conceive of the relationship between the two in relatively simple terms. For example,

consider two monographs from the 1970s that deal with policymaking at the federal

level: Gladieux and Wolanin's *Congress and the Colleges: The National Politics of

Higher Education* (1976) narrowly focused on the congressional activities surrounding

the passage of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972; and Finn Jr.'s *Scholars,

Dollars, and Bureaucrats* (1978) more broadly focused on federal spending and

regulatory activity. While there are vast differences between the two texts in terms of

scope and focus, both authors use interest articulation models and for both "the state"

exists as an entity largely apart from higher education. Organizing their analysis into

three parts—historical context, congressional activities, and longer term impact—

Gladieux and Wolanin present the policy-making process as incremental, impacted by the

status quo (in the form of culture and already established policy); emergent "social and

political crises"; and interest groups dominated by political and social elites (1976, p.257-

260). For Gladieux and Wolanin the state is composed primarily, if not entirely, of the

legislative, executive, and administrative branches. Undergirding this formal structure is

what they call a subgovernment—essentially a long-standing closely networked matrix of

"congressional committees, executive agencies, interest groups, and program clienteles" (Gladieux and Wolanin, 1976, p. 252).

In contrast, Finn's *Scholars, Dollars, and Bureaucrats* covers a broader array of topics and presents federal policymaking as "fragmented, spasmodic, and issue specific," albeit largely determined by constituent pressure (1978, pp. 141, 176). Finn implicitly acknowledges the federal bureaucracy as a central component of "the state" yet seems to place the locus of action and power at the feet of lawmakers who create said bureaucracy—and by extension, policy—"in order to help or appease groups" that seek change (1979, p. 141).

Similarly, neither Berdahl, Graham, and Piper's influential work on state governing structures, *Statewide Coordination of Higher Education* (1971), nor Millett's provocatively titled *Conflict in Higher Education: State Government Coordination versus Institutional Independence* (1984) go beyond a conception of the state as anything other than a provider and regulator of—and thus apart from—institutions of higher education. Berdahl, Graham, and Piper examine various efforts at statewide coordination with regard to planning, budgets, and program approval. In the end, their chief and most lasting contribution ends up being in the arena of a typology of governing structures. Although Millett structures his work around the inherent conflict between "state government interest in higher education" and "campus and governing board interest" (1984, p. xi.), *Conflict in Higher Education* ends up being largely taxonomic.

2.1.2 Acknowledging Complexity

In contrast to the work described above, during the mid to late 1980s and early 1990s a more theoretically driven scholarship began to emerge. Drawing on theories from

economics, sociology, and political science, this scholarship explored the complexity of higher education in ways that previous scholars had not. Out of this relatively small field, Burton Clark's *The Higher Education System: Academic Organization in Cross-National Perspective* (1986) stands out both in terms of the ambitious nature of the work, as well as its broader influence. As Clark makes clear at the outset, his purpose was not only to "systematically" detail "how higher education is organized and governed … to set forth the basic elements of the higher education system, as seen from an organizational perspective" but also "to show how those features vary across nations" and thereby "improve the state of the art" with regard to the scholarship of higher education (1986, p. 2). Clark's monograph is notable for its cross-national and sociological focus, as well as his attention to authority relations. Working from a self-confessed Weberian legacy, Clark organizes *The Higher Education System* around a series of arguments, each one building on the last, and each one replete with cross-national examples. He opens his analysis with what he considers to be the primary purpose of higher education, as "a social structure for the control of advanced knowledge and technique" (Clark, 1986, p. 11), and then moves on to address five guiding questions relating to this work: "How is work arranged? How are beliefs maintained? How is authority distributed? How are systems integrated? How does change take place?" (Clark, 1986, p. 9). Clark's own summary answer to these questions is, in large part, encapsulated in the following quote:

> Tasks proliferate, beliefs multiply, and the many forms of authority pull in different directions. Yet in each case, some order emerges in various parts: disciplines link members from far and wide, universities symbolically tie together their many specialists, bureaucratic structures, local and national, provide uniform

codes and regulations. And the bureaucratic, political and oligarchical forms of

national authority contribute to the integration of the whole (Clark, 1986, p. 136).

In addition, Clark goes on to say, a "share of the order that governs relations in higher

education" is also produced by "market-like interaction" (1986, p. 136). Clark's analysis

positions higher education institutions as communities, or systems in their own right, with

their own specific and often divergent internal dynamics, authority relations, and

tensions; embedded and impacted by the contending forces of the state, the market, and

the academic oligarchy. In this model, higher education systems can be—and are both

better understood and classified—based on their proximity (as measured by influence) to

these three poles (see Figure 2.1). Movement in the direction of one pole necessarily

means movement away from another. Perhaps more importantly, regardless of where a

system sits in the triangle, it always sits apart from the actual poles of influence. Further,

Clark's model is predicated on an organizational-functionalist approach wherein even

though higher education is complex with various tensions and conflict, overall the

various pieces promote stability over the longer term. As Clark intended, amongst

scholars of higher education, his tripartite higher education systems model has been

relatively influential. According to the most recent Google Scholar results, *The Higher

Education System* has been cited almost 5,000 times. Higher education scholars have

used, critiqued, and pulled apart Clark's work as a foundation from which to build new

models to better understand how higher education is organized and governed (Birnbaum

& Edelson, 1989; Brint & Karabel, 1989; Jungblood, 2003; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002;

Pusser, 2008, 2014; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004).

Figure 2.1

Clark's Higher Education Systems Model
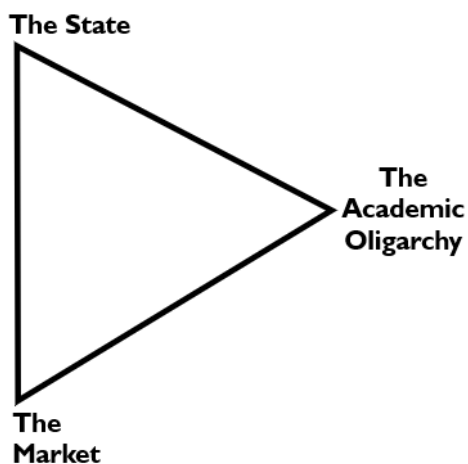
2.1.3 The Neoliberal Moment

In marked contrast to Clark, Sheila Slaughter (and her eventual collaborators) present a picture of higher education in which the boundaries between such things as the state, the market, and academe are indistinct at best (Slaughter, 1988, 1990; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). For Slaughter, not only is higher education an extension of the state, it is an extension of an increasingly neoliberal state that privileges production over social welfare. As such, in order to remain viable, the very nature of universities has changed in myriad ways that "blur the boundaries between public and private" (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, p. 12). In this model, universities become a focal point of activity that actually brings the state and corporations closer together.

Slaughter's work as a whole maps what she views as a fundamental shift in higher education from a predominantly public good knowledge/learning regime to a predominantly academic capitalism knowledge/learning regime. In both "Academic

Freedom and the State" (1988) and *The Higher Learning and High Technology* (1990),

Slaughter explicitly utilizes a neo-Marxist materialist heuristic to explore what she views

as "new configurations of actors and interests" that are emerging as higher education

"interacts with changing structural conditions in the political economy" and are

impacting the policy formation process (1990, p. 1). Slaughter argues that historically

higher education, as an extension of the state, has often been "caught up" in an inherently

political "struggle between those in charge of capitalist production and the subordinate,

relatively powerless groups who pressure the state for what they cannot get from the

private sector" (1988, p. 257). Further, although the central actors in these struggles have

not changed, "their complexity and the relationships between them have" (Slaughter,

1990, p. 2). Thus, the state is "no longer simply the source of monies or a policing

agency, but is simultaneously a multifaceted resource, the arena in which policy

formation is played out, and an actor in its own right with an often unpredictable agenda"

(Slaughter, 1990, pp. 2-3). As the state has changed, so has what she calls "the corporate

community," becoming "more vocal" and taking more active and assertive positions in

the policy formation process (Slaughter, 1990, p. 3).

In her subsequent work Slaughter extends this argument, claiming that the

academic community has also begun to engage in new and more entrepreneurial ways

(Leslie & Slaughter, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Universities increasingly have

embedded within them profit-oriented activities, and the state actively and passively

promotes commercialization through such means as legislation (such as the 1980 Bayh-

Dole Act), the reinterpretation of labor law (allowing universities more flexible use of

contingent workers), as well as the reduction and/or fluctuation in funding (turning

students into consumers and faculty into entrepreneurs) (Leslie & Slaughter, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). Thus, in an academic capitalism knowledge/learning regime, universities and the state become "integrated with the industrial economy" by forming closer relationships with and mirroring corporate practices (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, pp. 14-15).

In *Academic Capitalism* (1997), Slaughter and Leslie explore these themes through a thorough examination of public research universities in four countries: Australia, Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. They devote the first half of their book to analyzing and identifying patterns of policy change impacting access, the curricula, research, institutional autonomy, and financial trends. The second half of the book switches focus to specific case studies, followed by a final chapter that examines the impact of academic capitalism on academic life broadly. In substantiating their case, the authors weave extensive amounts of quantitative and qualitative data together.

Academic Capitalism (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997) was followed by *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy* (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). In this second book, Slaughter and Rhoades focus exclusively on nonprofit higher education institutions in the United States with the intent of offering "a fuller and more focused picture of academic capitalism" (2014, p. 10). Accordingly, Slaughter and Rhoades begin *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy* (2004) with a clear and detailed articulation of their theory of academic capitalism (articulated above). This is then followed by successive chapters that go from macro to micro analyses on policy, patents, and copyrights and then move on to various sectors and groups of actors in higher education institutions. Within

each chapter, Slaughter and Rhoades incorporate specific cases and examples while discussing and providing data on larger patterns.

2.1.4 Towards a Better Understanding of the State and Civil Society

Given the six thousand plus citations that Leslie and Slaughter's 1997 text has accrued, the concept of academic capitalism has clearly resonated for other scholars. At the same time, Slaughter et al. are not the only scholars attempting to assess the changes wrought by both globalization and a changing political terrain, nor in their challenge to prevailing models for understanding higher education. Since the early 2000s, scholars such as Simon Marginson, Imanol Ordorika, and Brian Pusser have taken an explicitly critical approach seeking, at least in part, to challenge the perception that universities are "apolitical and autonomous institutions" (Marginson, 2006, 2007; Ordorika, 2003; Ordorika & Lloyd, 2015, p.130; Pusser, 2004, 2006, 2008). Whereas Slaughter focuses on how higher education reacts and adapts to a neoliberal state, these scholars place an emphasis on the varying relationship of higher education to the state *and* civil society, given its role in the production, control, and management of knowledge. They show how universities react and adapt, as well as influence, enable, and at times help to construct the state.

Consider, for example, Imanol Ordorika's *Power and Politics in University Governance: Organization and Change at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (2003). In this thoroughly researched case study, Ordorika provides a political history of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), arguing that "political conflict" is the "most salient explanation for university transformations" (2003, pp.10 & 221).

Ordorika begins his text by laying out a theoretical frame informed by an array of scholars. The main ideas in this frame are the conceptualization of higher education as an extension of the state and the role of conflict—political conflict in particular—in bringing about change. For Ordorika, when considering how an institution is governed, the current "decision-making structures and processes" must be understood as the "historical products of relations between dominant and subaltern groups in education *and* the state" (2003, p. 23, italics mine). There is no natural evolution or adaptation, but rather changes to these structures and processes are a consequence of competing demands over ideology and resource allocation. In Ordorika's analysis, not only has UNAM been "simultaneously an arena and an object of political dispute" (2003, p. 157), it has also been where the state is "both challenged and reproduced" (2003, p. 192). Further, to understand how those contests play out, it is critical to understand the operation and use of power. Importantly, because higher education is an extension of the state, internal and external political contests are in fact linked (Ordorika, 2003).

Power and Politics in University Governance is a historical case study (Ordorika, 2003). Ordorika skillfully weaves the broader political history of Mexico together with the history of UNAM, starting from the emergence of authoritarian rule in the 1940s through the end of the 20th century and demonstrating the dialectical relationship between the Mexican government and UNAM. After establishing a theoretical frame, discussed above, Ordorika moves to "an overview of the Mexican state" and the associated "authoritarian political system" as they evolved over time. Ordorika defines three distinct phases, in each of which the authoritarian political system had specific and distinct "essential characteristics": emergence (1917-1944), consolidation (1944-1968), and

decline (since 1968)" (2003, p. 37). After outlining these phases, Ordorika uses the remainder of the text to trace the relationship of UNAM to the state and the political system within each. Ordorika argues that during phase one UNAM was incorporated into state apparatuses, and "state interests were institutionalized into the new political system at UNAM" (2003, p. 38). Pushing back against previous historians and the dominant narrative history of UNAM, Ordoriko demonstrates that in phase two UNAM did not "de-politicize," but rather new governing structures, i.e. a board, brought new political configurations. Like the Mexican state, UNAM became more authoritarian, restricting political competition to select groups (Ordoriko, 2003, p. 78). Finally, in phase three, in the wake of the 1968 student movement, as Mexico itself experienced increased social and political unrest, UNAM initially became more democratic, only to have these democratic gains eroded during the Institutional Revolutionary Party's regime as the state reasserted control over the university's governance processes. *Power and Politics in University Governance* is a significant contribution both because of the authoritarian context of the case and the nuanced theoretical frame.

In his introduction to *Burning Down the House: Politics, Governance, and Affirmative Action at the University of California* (2004), Brian Pusser quotes Sheila Slaughter's 1988 article "Academic Freedom and the State" as follows:

> It may be necessary to conceive of the State and higher education as engaged in multiple and sometimes conflicting functions simultaneously. For example, the State and higher education are both the subject and object of struggle. They are arenas of conflict in which various groups try to win ideological hegemony, yet at

the same time they are resources for members of contending groups intent on

political mobilization in external arenas. (Slaughter, p. 245; Pusser p. 9)

Whereas Ordorika focuses on and explores UNAM as an "arena" of political conflict

over many years, Brian Pusser's first book, *Burning Down the House: Politics,*

Governance, and Affirmative Action at the University of California (2004), is more

sharply focused on a single, significant instance in which the University of California

(UC) system was used as a resource, or lever, for "members of contending groups intent

on political mobilization in external arenas" (Slaughter, 1988, p. 245). Pusser uses the

1995 elimination of affirmative action in employment and admissions at UC to examine

the relationship between politics and governance in higher education.

Similar to Ordorika's work, Pusser's *Burning Down the House* (2004) is

theoretically ambitious. Bringing together theories of organizational behavior with

theories of the state and politics, Pusser examines how various interest groups, both

internal and external to UC, shaped the UC governance structure and process and

attempted to use it "as an instrument in a broader struggle for the control of political and

economic benefits" (p. 213). In contrast to Ordorika, who uses theory as a heuristic, as a

lens through which to understand a particular historical trajectory of events, Pusser uses

the particular historical trajectory of events around the UC case as a means through which

to test theory. Accordingly, Pusser introduces *Burning Down the House* with a review of

the literature on organizational models in higher education, political theory, Positive

Theories of Institutions (PTI), and theories of the state and higher education. The bulk of

the text is then devoted to the case itself. Pusser begins with the longer history of UC

governance, moves on to frame the immediate political context, then digs deeper into the

case itself. He presents a detailed accounting of the events and actions leading up to, during, and immediately after the July 20, 1995 board vote to end affirmative action at UC before ending with an accounting of what the case has to say about governance and higher education. Not surprisingly, Pusser concludes by describing what amounts to a political contest involving interest groups both internal and external to UC.

Interestingly, Pusser and Ordorika point to similar conclusions. Namely, that in both cases the external political environment had an impact on governance and decision making at the institutions under analysis; and further, that contests within the institution were instruments in, and had an impact on, broader political struggles.

Over the past 15 years Pusser has, through his scholarship, continued to focus on the politics of higher education. In this work, Pusser often explicitly draws on Clark's model, acknowledging the essential nature or analytic usefulness of the basic categories that Clark identified—i.e., the state, the market, and the academic oligarchy—while simultaneously putting forward an entirely different paradigm as to how they are all related. For Pusser "the market and the institutional estate can more usefully be seen as nested within the State … in constant contest, in a hegemonic struggle without simple resolution" (2008, p. 131).

In other words, like Slaughter and her collaborators, Pusser views colleges and universities as a part of the state. While Slaughter focuses more on markets and the impact of a neoliberal state, Pusser is more interested in the interplay between universities and other institutions of the state, on how universities react and adapt, as well as influence, enable, and at times help to construct not only the state, but also civil society (Pusser, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2015). As he argues most clearly in "Forces in

Tension: The State, Civil Society and Market in the Future of the University" (Pusser, 2014), the state shapes universities and the scarce benefits that they allocate, through state processes of provision, subsidy, and regulation. In part, because of their visibility and political connectivity, they are also politicized; they serve as sites of as well as instruments in political contests (Pusser, 2014, pp. 12-13). Pusser contends that, just as the state shapes universities, universities also shape the state *as well as* civil society (2014). Political contests "over equity, resource allocation, opportunity and social justice are played out in debates over policies and practices at colleges and universities, on occasion before they emerge in the wider political economy" (Pusser, 2014, p. 12). Further, universities may also contribute to as well as undermine the "legitimacy of the state" (Ordorika & Pusser, 2007; Pusser, 2014, p. 14).

By the mid- to late-2000s, several scholars studied the impact of increasing globalization and neoliberalism on higher education, framing colleges and universities as an extension of the state (Loss, 2012; Marginson, 2006, 2007; Pusser et al., 2012; Rhoads & Torres, 2006; Santos, 2006). Working within the critical tradition, many of these scholars framed their work as a mechanism for change by focusing on the future potential for higher education as a public good. Rhoads and Torres introduce their 2006 compilation of case studies, *The University, State, and Market* in terms of the book's contributions to a better understanding of the "various implications of the privatization and commercialization of higher education" and the concomitant "betrayal of both 'the idea of the university' and its potential contribution to public life" (p. xviii). Similarly, Pusser et al.'s *Universities and the Public Sphere* (2012) focuses on globalization and neoliberalism and the associated "reduction of autonomous, critical, discursive, and

emancipatory postsecondary space" (p. 1). By enhancing our understanding of higher education and its "role in knowledge creation and State Building," Pusser et al. seek to make visible—and perhaps enhance—universities' potential "to serve [as] an essential site for analysis and critique of the State" and the generation of essential public goods (2012, p. 3).

In contrast to Pusser et al., the historian Christopher Loss (2012) has taken a less emancipatory approach. In *Between Citizens and the State,* Loss positions higher education as a part of the state, as an intermediary institution through which individuals experience the state. He also positions the work itself as being at the intersection of history, higher education and politics. Although he draws on the work of political scientists, he largely ignores the work of other higher education scholars. Covering the history of higher education in the United States from roughly the end of the First World War through the late 1990s, Loss's main argument is that as higher education has grown, colleges and universities have been turned into "multi-purpose institutions" that mediate access to "democratic citizenship for millions of Americans" (2012, p. 1). Detailed and thoroughly researched, Loss's work is mostly a straightforward history. Although Loss touches on issues of power throughout the text, he appears to view power as primarily instrumental. Similarly, he appears to take for granted the idea that education creates greater democratic equality, as opposed to other potentially desirable outcomes such as social efficiency and social mobility.

2.1.5 Towards a Better Understanding of Power

As previously noted, largely absent from most scholarship on higher education is the concept of power. This is not to say that it has been entirely absent. Although

somewhat buried in the analysis, Slaughter et al. use Foucault's concept of disciplinary regimes (1977, 1980) and the associated diffusion of power as a foundational element in their theory of academic capitalism (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004). In addition, there are a select number of scholars who have used theories of power more extensively to better understand various aspects of higher education (Marginson, 1997c; Ordorika, 2003; Parsons, 1997; Pusser, 2008, 2012, 2015; Pusser & Marginson, 2013).

Using Callon and Latour's (1981) sociology of translation, Parsons seeks to better understand the operation of power within the federal higher education policy making process in the 1990s (1997). As such, the general question that Parson's is seeking to answer is how, within the specific context under study, does power operate and to what effect? Parsons finds this period to be one of intense change, when the "institutional, social, and beliefs foundations of the policy arena" shifted dramatically. Turnover in "policy actors" combined with changes to both the rules and institutional structures by which policy was made, also meant changes to the operation of power within the policy-making process (Parsons, 1997). Further, he finds that power—and shifting relations of power—played an important role in which policies were enacted, and which came to an end (1997, p. 211). As noted above, power is fundamental to Ordorika's analysis in *Power and Politics in University Governance* (2003). In this work and somewhat similar to Parson's, Ordorika finds that understanding the operation of power is necessary to understanding the outcomes of the various contests impacting the National Autonomous University of Mexico.

In addition to Parsons and Ordorika, within higher education the scholars Marginson and Pusser have published a number of works using power as a primary analytic frame to explore and better understand certain phenomena within higher education (Pusser, 2012; Pusser and Marginson, 2012, 2013; Marginson, 1997a; 1997b; 1997c; Marginson and Rhoades, 2002, 2007). Similar to Slaughter, Leslie et al. used Foucault's disciplinary regimes (1977, 1980) and the associated diffusion of power as a heuristic to variously explicate systems of higher education, the economics of higher education, and college and university rankings (Pusser and Marginson, 2012, 2013; Marginson, 1997a; 1997b, 1997c; Marginson & Rhoades, 2002, 2007). For example, in his article on the Australian system of higher education, Marginson argues that the exertion of power has become manifest through various initiatives, including the "stronger institutional management" as well as "new systems of competitive bidding, performance management and quality assessment" (1997c, p. 63). Similarly, Marginson also argues that the economics of higher education, the various markets that impact institutions of higher education, are institutionalized forms of power (1997a, 1997b). In this way, as both Marginson and Pusser argue in a later work, power can be discerned through its role in the creation of structures, like colleges and universities, that "institutionalize processes of authority" and inequality (2013, p. 550).

In contrast to Slaughter, Leslie, Rhoades, and Marginson, Pusser tends to use a more explicitly multidimensional model of power in his analysis (2008, 2012, 2015; Pusser & Marginson, 2013). Although considerations of power pervade much of Pusser's work, his most robust articulation of how he is defining power from a theoretical perspective appear in the article "University Rankings in Critical Perspective" (2013), co-

written with Marginson, as well as in a chapter he wrote for the book *Critical Approaches to the Study of Higher Education* (2015, pp. 59-79). Drawing on no fewer than six different theorists, Pusser and Marginson focus on the operation of power as something that is always intentional and relational as well as structural and ideological (2013). Given their focus on rankings, Pusser and Marginson are particularly interested in the role that power plays "in creating structures that institutionalize processes of authority and that tend to further privilege elites" (2013, p. 550). Pusser and Marginson find that rankings tend to support not just the status quo, but in fact function as a "mechanism for setting and legitimizing neoliberal state agendas" (2013, p. 560). In A Critical Approach to Power in Higher Education (2015), Pusser uses Steven Lukes's three-dimensional model of power. The first dimension is an instrumental view of power. In this dimension, one can analyze power through observed conflict "between identifiable interests that in turn reflect the decision-making behaviors of legitimate interests in a system" (Pusser, 2015, p. 63). The second dimension pushes one to consider the exercise of power in the shaping of contest "through the reliance on norms" (Pusser, 2015, p .63). The third dimension

> presents the challenge of imagining a different world in a conceptual universe so
> constructed and dominated by powerful interests that conflict and contest over
> many issues are essentially unfathomable. (Pusser, 2015, p. 62)

Using this model, Pusser argues that "political decisions and resource allocation practices" in relation to higher education—and more broadly—are "constructs, the products of power dynamics, history, culture, and context" (2015, p. 70). More importantly, in order to understand the operation of power in relation to those decisions,

one must pay attention to the ideological, to "what people believe and how those beliefs manifest" (Pusser, 2015, p. 74).

As explored more below, a key area of focus and debate for historians of Black education has been the negotiation of power, of which interests were going to control that education. It is thus striking that critical scholars of higher education have as yet addressed neither race nor colonialization in quite the same way.

2.2 Higher Education Scholarship on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

While a select number of scholars writing about the history of Black education have employed a political frame, higher education scholars writing about HBCUs generally have not. Like the scholarship on higher education more generally, the scholarship on HBCUs is relative broad. In terms of subject matter, the bulk of this literature tends to focus on students, philanthropy, the faculty, and federal and state policies. Despite the breadth within this literature, the state and the role of politics and power remain undertheorized.

The literature on students at HBCUs–their choice to be at an HBCU, their experiences, their identities, and their outcomes—is extensive. Scholars have focused on the factors that influence students' choices to attend an HBCU (Abiola, 2014; Conrad et al., 1997; Freeman, 1999, 2005; Freeman & McDonald, 2004; Freeman & Thomas, 2002; McDonough et al., Trent, 1997; Stroud, 2014; Tobolowsky et al., 2005; Van Camp, Barden, & Sloan, 2010). Many scholars have also addressed student retention (Brown, 1998; Lang, 1986; Nettles et al., Wagener, Millett, and Killenbeck, 1999; Rahman, 2014) and engagement (Bridges et al., 2005; Harper et al., 2004; Nelson et al., 2007) issues. The literature on student experiences at HBCUs and the impact of those experiences is

particularly robust, with a diverse array of topics covered. In addition to more broadly focused studies (Kennedy, 2012; Outcalt & Skewes-Cox, 2002), there are studies on the classroom experience (Boone, 2003), mental health (Kimbrough & Molock, 1996; Watkins et al., 2010), non-Black student experiences and identity (Closson & Henry, 2008; Esmieu & Martinez, 2014), LGBTQ experiences and identity at HBCUs (Barone, 2014; Iannucci, 2014; Means & Jaeger, 2013; Walker & Goings, 2018), Greek life (Daly, 2014; Gray, 2015; Kimbrough, 2003; Mitchell, 2017) and sexual assault (Commodore, 2014; Robinson, 2018). The literature on student outcomes has been a similarly robust area of investigation, with many scholars finding that HBCUs have better than anticipated outcomes, given the profile of their student population. In this area, while most authors have focused on more traditional outcomes, such as persistence, wages or salaries, and advanced degree obtainment (Allen, 1992; Constantine, 1995; DeSousa and Kuh, 1996; Dreher and Chargois, 1998; Flowers, 2002; Gasman & Commodore, 2014; Henderson, 2007; Kim, 2002; Kim & Conrad, 2006; Perna, 2001; Perna et al., 2009; Richards & Awokoya, 2012; Sibulkin & Butler, 2005, 2011; Solorzano, 1995; Strayhorn, 2008; Wilson, 2007), others have looked at identity and social capital (Berger & Milem, 2000; Brown & Davis, 2001; Cokley, 2005; Constantine & Watt, 2002; Lott, 2008; Wade, 2002).

As compared to the literature on students, the literature focused on contemporary issues in philanthropy at HBCUs is sparser. The most comprehensive non-historical approach is that of Gasman and Thompkins (2003). Although this is Gasman's only work on contemporary issues in philanthropy, she has published extensively on the history of philanthropy in higher education. This work, along with that of other historians focused

on philanthropy at HBCUs, is discussed below. This very practitioner-focused article details successful strategies while also providing some evidence as to the challenges facing HBCUs around alumni giving. In addition, there is some research on the motivations for giving (Hall-Russell & Kasber, 1997), the difficulty of fundraising overall (Boland & Gasman, 2013; Demby, 2013; Gasman & Commodore, 2014) as well as on specific organizations efforts to raise funds (Drezner, 2008).

The literature on faculty members at HBCUs is also relatively sparse. In relation to the faculty, scholars have focused on such topics as the composition of the faculty (Milem & Astin, 1993; Stier, 1992); their productivity (Betsey, 2007; Billingsley, 1982; McNeal, 2003); their role (Gasman, 2005; Guy-Sheftall, 2006), and their professional development and socialization at HBCUs (Johnson, 2001; Johnson & Harvey, 2002). In addition, there are a number of articles on the experience of being a white faculty member at an HBCU (Cooper et al., 2006; Foster, 2001; Foster et al, 1999, Foster & Guyden, 1999, 2004; Louis, 2008; Smith & Borgstedt, 1985).

The scholarly research on federal and state law, policies, and court cases pertaining to HBCUs focuses on policy at the local level and/or discusses the impact of policies and laws—seemingly without any explicit theoretical frame and with no discussion of power, legitimacy, or the broader political economy. For example, out of the 11 articles included in Brown and Freeman's 2004 edited volume *Black Colleges: New Perspectives on Policy and Practice,* only 2 are focused on policy at the state or federal level. In "The Changing Role of Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Vistas on Dual Missions, Desegregation, and Diversity," the authors discuss the pre-1954 history of HBCUs, specifically in relation to their mission and curriculum, move on to the

post-1954 history with special attention to *Brown v. Board of Education*, and finish with

United States v. Fordice (Brown et al., 2004). Highly descriptive and rich in detail, this

article lacks any sense of the larger political economy or the role or function of HBCUs

in relation to the state. This focus on the broader impact of these cases is largely similar

to most of the other scholarship in this area (Boland & Gasman, 2014; Cunningham et al.,

2014; Gasman & Commodore, 2014; Green, 2004; Lee, 2010; Minor, 2008). The one

exception to this is an article by Harper et al. (2009) that employs critical race theory

(CRT) as an analytical frame for understanding policy efforts. Despite the largely

straightforward historical nature of this article, the authors do explicitly seek to

understand and engage with issues and structures of power. Even with this, to the degree

that there is any hint as to how the authors define and/or understand the state, it is fuzzy

and appears to be conceptualized as an entity apart from HBCUs.

2.3 Black Education, Political Unrest, and the Dynamics of Power

Historians of Black education in the United States have long recognized and

attempted to examine the ongoing political contests that have surrounded and ensnared

Black education in the United States. Consider Ronald Butchart's classic historiography,

"Outthinking and Outflanking the Owners of the World": A Historiography of the

African American Struggle for Education (1988). The title says it all. Butchart

immediately positions education as a means of racial uplift for Black people *and* a site of

ongoing struggle. In the wake of the Civil War and throughout the last 150 years Black

people have persistently worked to create educational opportunities for their

communities, both as a central component to achieving full citizenship as well as

socioeconomic advancement, often against staunch resistance (Anderson, 1988; Ashley et

al., 2009; Brooks, 1983; Brooks, 2014; Butchart, 1980; Drewry et al., 2001; Green, 2016; Lovett, 2011; Richardson, 1980; Watkins, 2001).

Given that the struggle—an ongoing contest over both purpose and legitimacy—has been a persistent condition of life for Black schools, particularly in the post *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) environment (Allen & Jewell, 2002; Brown, 1997; Brown, 1999; Richardson & Harris, 2004), it is perhaps not surprising that this contest has also been a persistent theme in the literature. James D. Anderson's seminal book, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (1988) is notable in this regard. He opens by pointing to the struggle over purpose, as well as the long shadow that it casts:

> within American democracy there have been classes of oppressed people and that there have been essential relationships between popular education and the politics of oppression. Both schooling for democratic citizenship and schooling for second-class citizenship have been basic traditions in American education… Both legacies flow into our own present. (p. 1)

The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935 covers a lot of terrain. Anderson uses a plethora of primary and secondary sources to focus on the "structure, ideology, and content of black education" from 1860 to 1935 (1988, p. 2). He organizes the text into periods, detailing the actual structure of Black education in the south as well as the often conflicting ideology that shaped said structure. At the same time, his narrative, in which he highlights the role of ideology and contest, and his conclusions appear remarkably similar to the critical work described above. Anderson finds that during this period Black education was a central "arena" of conflict in the "struggle to define social reality and shape the future direction of southern society" (1988, p. 279). In Anderson's narrative,

educational movements are tied to what he calls "larger social movements," such as the rise of populism in the 1880s (1988, pp. 81-82) and he describes northern philanthropists' attempts to shape Black education as "their struggle for ideological hegemony" (1988, p. 83). Despite Black resistance—despite the Black community's efforts to build schools that would prepare former enslaved persons for "full equality and autonomy"—by 1935 a "second-class" system of Black education had emerged (Anderson, 1988, p. 281). This system was the "logical outgrowth of a social ideology designed to adjust Black southerners to racially qualified forms of political and economic subordination" (Anderson, 1988, p. 3).

William H. Watkins's 2001 *The White Architects of Black Education: Ideology and Power in America, 1865-1954* explicitly builds on Anderson's work. Watkins, inspired by yet unlike Anderson, opens *The White Architects of Black Education* by articulating a very clear theoretical frame. For him "schooling, in the modern corporate-industrial society" is "central to state political and ideological management" (Watkins, 2001, p. 9). He suggests that the philanthropists he chronicles are important to understand precisely because they were "part of a hegemonic order striving to (re)organize a nation torn by civil war, regionalism and strife" (parenthesis in original, Watkins, 2001, p. 2). After establishing his theoretical frame, Watkins goes on to explore the specific ideology and life circumstances of each "architect" in turn, relying on both primary and secondary sources. Watkins argues that ultimately, these individuals understood education as an arena where social ideology is transmitted, and they welded their political, economic, and cultural power to influence that ideology to serve their interests (2001, pp.20-22). Black education thus became:

a central policy instrument in consolidating the unpredictable newly freed slaves,

re-annexing the south, and guaranteeing a pool of cheap semiskilled and unskilled

labor. This was as political an undertaking as we have known …

accommodationist education was politically constructed. It taught the cultural

values of the ruling order. It taught conformity, obedience, sobriety, piety, and the

values of enterprise. Heavy emphasis on teacher training guaranteed that the word

would be spread. (Watkins, 2001, pp. 180-181)

The literature on the history of philanthropy and Black education is extensive.[3]

Further, many if not all of the historians focused on this topic have questioned the

activities and motivations of the various philanthropic efforts to build Black schools

(Anderson, 1997; Anderson & Moss, 1999; Cash, 1991; Grundman, 1978; Peeps, 1981;

Woodson, 2006). At the same time, Anderson (1988) and Watkins (2001) are distinctive

in how explicit they are about the relationship between education and politics.

In addition to Anderson (1988) and Watkins (2001), there are a number of other

historians examining the history of Black education with an explicitly critical lens.

Indeed, one would be remiss to speak of critical historical work on Black education and

omit Du Bois's discussion of the founding of the public school in *Black Reconstruction in*

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[3] Some additional notable examples include Anderson and Moss (1999), Gasman & Drezner (2009), and Gasman and Sedgwick, 2005). Anderson and Moss (1999) cover the same basic territory as Anderson (1988) and Watkins (2001). However, while Anderson and Moss acknowledge that Black education was a "central political issue and urgent social question" (p. 12), their monograph focuses more broadly on the complex array of competing interests surrounding higher education for Black people. In addition to privileging the viewpoints of Black people themselves, Anderson and Moss attempt to delineate both the impact and limitations of various philanthropic groups and individual actors (1999). Anderson and Moss find philanthropic groups to be complicit in both specific and systemic failures primarily due to their deference to White southerners. Interestingly, more recent work by Mary Beth Gasman & Noah Drezner credits the Oram Group's fundraising success to active partnerships with the Black communities they sought to serve (2009). Gasman & Sedgwick's 2005 compilation of work on Black philanthropy includes several important contributions which are also focused on education and higher education specifically.

America: 1860-1880 (1919), Carter G. Woodson's *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (1992), *The Mis-Education of the Negro* (2006), or Horace Mann Bond's *The Education of the Negro in the American Social Order* (1934). Indeed, even further afield, within the history of education more broadly, there are several scholars who continue to do critical work. In "The Ideas and Craft of the Critical Historian," historian Derrick Alridge provides a helpful historiography of "critical history and the study of education," touching on the work of Woodson, Du Bois, and Bond as well as Michael Katz, Clarence Karier, Joel Spring, and many others. However, for the purposes of this review and this work, I am focusing more narrowly on critical scholars whose work has focused on the history of Black higher education specifically. What ties this work together is the explicit acknowledgement that HBCUs are political and politically fraught organizations, as well as key locations of struggle for civil rights and full citizenship.

For example, Raymond Wolters' *The New Negro on Campus* (1975) offers a series of case studies of political unrest on campus during the 1920s, with an eye towards understanding "academic politics and the aspirations of black intellectuals" (1975, p. vii). As such, *The New Negro* is as much a historical text as it is a series of case studies on the Black struggle for power and a role in the governance of HBCUs. *The New Negro on Campus* is concerned with the contributions of "black students and alumni of the 1920s" to a longer history of resistance, due to their engagement "in a deliberate effort to establish institutional bastions for the assault on segregation and white supremacy" (Wolters, 1975, p. 341). Whereas both Anderson (1988) and Watkins (2001) overtly focus on external influences, Wolters (1975) is not just documenting a different era, his focus is on the actions of individuals in HBCUs and their broader political impact.

Wolters thus draws on archival sources to document the protests themselves as well as the concomitant intellectual debates on campus and within the Black press more broadly (1975).

Similar to Wolters' *The New Negro,* Joy Ann Williamson's *Radicalizing the Ebony Tower* focuses on student protests at HBCUs with the explicit goal of deepening "the scholarly treatment of race, power and the pursuit of democracy (2008, p. 1). While Wolters' work covered the 1920s broadly, Williamson covers student movements at HBCUs *in Mississippi* during the *1960*s. Much like the 1920s' activists, Williamson argues that the 1960s activists were concerned about "the meaning and purpose" of HBCUs and ended up transforming these institutions into "political opportunity structures" (2008, p. 9). Accordingly, the driving narrative behind *Radicalizing the Ebony Tower* is documenting *how* "constituents co-opted the campus space" in order to transform it (Williamson, 2008, p. 10). More recently, Williamson, now going by Williamson-Lott, has published a series of case studies focusing on conflicts between "public officials, trustees, and administrators" and "campus constituents" over academic freedom, *Jim Crow Campus: Higher Education and the Struggle for a New Southern Social Order* (2018). In this work, Williamson-Lott argues that despite an initially punitive response on the part of these administrators, over the longer term these contests lead to real changes and increasing protections for academic freedom (2018).

This broader interest in the history of HBCUs as political and politically fraught organizations, as key locations of struggle for civil rights and full citizenship, is also echoed by a few other historians. Thus, in Thomas Aiello's 2012 examination of the riots that shut down Grambling State University in the early 1970s, Aiello positions student

unrest as a direct outcome of the contradictions upon which HBCUs broadly—and Grambling specifically—were built (2012). Aiello argues that because public HBCUs were created in large part to "diffuse the potential for integration attempts at white universities," the administrators of these institutions were selected for their conservatism (2012, p. 264). The purpose of these institutions was not to bring "man into the fullest and roundest development of his powers as a human being" (Du Bois, 2001, p. 10) but rather to give Black people a discrete set of skills by which they might make a living and to otherwise keep them in their place (Aiello, 2012, p. 264).Yet education did invariably have a transformative effect. Black people at HBCUs in the south became increasingly "frustrated with the status quo" and administrations choose to become increasingly authoritarian in order to maintain the status quo (Aiello, 2012, pp. 261-291). For Aiello, as well as Williamson before, this is the necessary backdrop and driving narrative behind HBCUs broadly. The focus on student unrest only brings this inherent struggle into stark relief.

In addition to the work described above, Melissa Wooten, a sociologist, has published a book-length historical case study on Black colleges and how they evolved as organizations during the civil rights era (2015). *In the Face of Inequality* is particularly relevant to my own work. Wooten specifically situates her study as a study of organizations and how "race as a social structural system influences organizations" (2015, p. xii). Wooten argues that prior to the Civil Rights movement, Black colleges "were key to America's system of inequality" (p. xii). During and after the civil rights movement "societal needs around racial inequality shifted" and Black colleges had to adapt (Wooten, 2015, p. xii). Her question, then, is how did they in fact adapt? Especially

given the fact that racism as a "regime" of inequality did not go away simply because

Black Americans were better able to assert their civil rights. Efforts by Black colleges to

adapt were stymied in large part because those efforts threatened white privilege and the

inequality regimes that upholds that privilege (Wooten, 2015, p. 2-3). These inequality

regimes "produced a specific regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive barriers that

affected the ability of Black colleges to grow and develop" (Wooten, 2015, p. 9). Using

largely archival sources, Wooten assembles a series of case studies; each one focused on

a different organizational adaptive strategy. Although Wooten does not explore the role

of the state and politics specifically, in taking an organizational approach to

understanding the evolution of HBCUs, she makes an important case for considering the

impact of the broader political and social context. She concludes by pointing out that

while it is all well and good to tell Black colleges that, in order to be sustainable, they

need to do things like diversify their revenue streams, it matters little if the particular

social and political context makes such action impossible (Wooten, 2015, p. 150-151).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Like many other minority-serving institutions, Virginia State University continues to face a host of well-documented challenges, such as inadequate financial resources and low retention and graduation rates. Many scholars of higher education have sought to understand these challenges for an array of under-resourced and politically marginalized postsecondary institutions (including community colleges, rural colleges, and minority-serving colleges). This case study adds to prior research in higher education by looking to the founding of one HBCU to unearth the social and political factors that gave rise to these many challenges. As such, it seeks to situate the history of Virginia State University within an explicitly political framework that implicates both state and civil society factors as articulated in the conceptual frame.

3.1 Process Tracing

Given this study's focus on contextual and temporal factors, I have chosen to use process tracing, a variant of case study, as my primary methodology. The main rationale for case study research is when, in seeking to understand a particular phenomenon, it is neither informative nor even possible to extract said phenomenon from its environment or to create a boundary between the phenomenon and its environment (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2018). Unlike an experiment performed in a lab where the phenomena can be isolated from complicating variables, case studies often treat phenomena that must be examined in situ, precisely because it is those complicating variables that one may be interested in

better understanding. Process tracing is a systematic and rigorous qualitative method of analysis for understanding those complicating variables. Scholars using process tracing work through five basic procedural steps as they seek to link causal factors, events/activities, sequences, and outcomes together, treating them as complex systems (Trampusch & Palier, 2016,). Once a research problem has been identified, a scholar engaged in process tracing will thus start with theory, then select a case based on the potential of said case to shed light on the research question or area of interest. Once a case is identified, the scholar will collect and analyze the data, then test any findings using counterfactual analysis and process tracing tests, as described in more detail below.

Although process tracing is concerned with causality, such concern is not necessarily deterministic in nature. Rather—and as used herein—process tracing allows for a probabilistic focus on causal processes and mechanisms, along with the temporal, spatial, and social context in which such processes and mechanisms unfold (Falleti & Lynch, 2009, p. 1153; Trampusch & Palier, 2016, p. 3;). Process tracing might be better thought of as an exploration of consequences, intended or not, shaped by various specific contextual factors. Process tracing, and the findings unearthed through it, have a lot in common with other case study methodologies. At the same time, researchers using this method are always focused on causal processes and mechanisms in conjunction with the temporal, spatial, and social contexts. Accordingly, this method is particularly suited for this study, which seeks to explicate the role and influence of political contest in the creation and development of Virginia State University.

The variant of process tracing used for this study is inductive and iterative, and it is heavily informed by the work of Kathleen Eisenhardt and her collaborators on building

and modifying theory from cases (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), as

well as Beach and Pedersen (2013), Trampusch and Palier (2016), Van Evera (1997), and

Falleti and Lynch (2009) on process tracing specifically. I also use basic principles of

qualitative data analysis to help structure the creation of the case narrative. For the

purposes of this study, I have organized process tracing procedural steps into five phases,

as outlined in Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1 below and described in detail later in this chapter.

These steps assume that the researcher has identified a research problem, i.e., the

recurrent crises of legitimacy that HBCUs so often face, before embarking on any

procedure.

Table 3.1

Process Tracing Procedural Phases

Phase	Required Steps
1. Establish Conceptual Theory	clarify & specify epistemological and ontological assumptions, as well as conceptual models, esp. with regards to causality & causal mechanism (Trampusch & Palier, 2016, pp.13-14; Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp.163-164)
2. Select Case	Theory-oriented; based on above (Trampusch & Palier, 2016, pp.13-14; Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp.163-170)
3. Collect Data	Maintain detailed records (Trampusch & Palier, 2016, pp.13-14; Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp.163-170)
	Take measures to reduce selectivity and bias in data collection including the use of multiple sources, both primary and secondary, and the preservation of contextual information (Trampusch & Palier, 2016, pp.13-14; Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp.120-143)
	Search for disconfirming evidence (Trampusch & Palier, 2016, pp.13-14; Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp.163-170)

Table 3.1

Process Tracing Procedural Phases

Phase	Required Steps
4. Construct Narrative(s)	Organize, classify & code data
	Maintain detailed records (Trampusch & Palier, 2016, pp.13-14; Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp.163-170)
	Evaluate the content of the data collected given contextual information, other sources, extent secondary literature, etc. (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p.122-123; 125-126).
	Return to data collection as needed
5. Test Findings	As possible, perform counterfactual analysis & process tracing tests (Trampusch & Palier, 2016, pp.13-14; Van Evera, 1997; Mahoney, 2012)
	Compare findings to extent literature (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007)
	Return to data collection as needed

After identifying the specific problem I was interested in addressing, I started this research by first establishing the conceptual theory, then focused on selecting a case for its theoretical potential to answer the research questions of interest (see below for specific considerations). Once data were collected, assessed, and evaluated, the next step was to construct a narrative. Process tracing can be inductive or deductive, depending on the variant used (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp. 9-22; Trampusch & Palier, 2016, p. 7;). As Trampusch and Palier observe, "the most inductive form of process tracing is used to deliver a historical explanation of a specific outcome," broadly defined (2016, p. 8). As such, this study is inductive. Process tracing is iterative, in that it requires the researcher to consider, at each step in the process, whether or not additional data is needed and to essentially restart the process of collection and analysis, checking new information against old, as needed to build a plausible, albeit likely incomplete, set of findings.

Figure 3.1

Process Tracing Procedural Flow
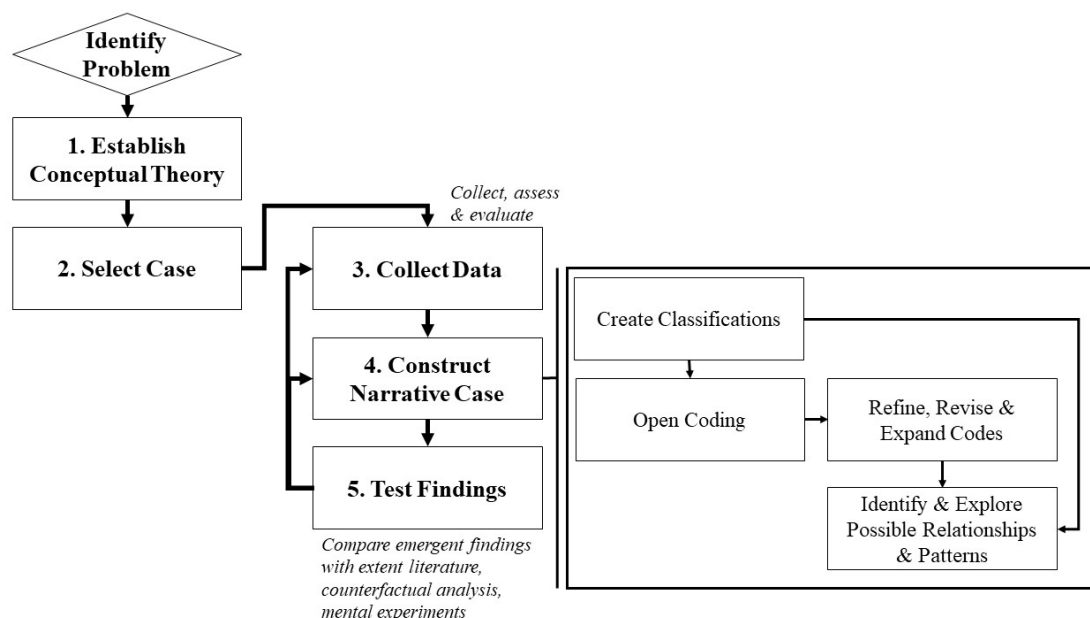
Note: Procedural flow based on methods as described by Trampusch & Palier, 2016, Beach & Pedersen, 2013, Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Van Evera, 1997; and Mahoney, 2012

3.2 Case Selection

Single Case Design

Given the complexity and time required to do a case study, I considered the number of potential cases carefully. The potential analytic benefits of using more than one case are substantial (Yin, 2018, p. 88). At the same time, there are some inherent feasibility limits. Given the effort required to document and analyze a case, it is often not possible to do more than one or two. As Trampusch and Palier point out, "process tracing is very costly, both in terms of time (research) and space (writing)" (2016, p. 12). Further,

one case may be sufficient when it is unusual or revelator or when the question posed involves time as a key variable (Yin, 2018, p. 69-72). After careful consideration, I decided to focus on one case: Virginia State University (VSU).

Case Selection

When selecting a case, one's ability to actually do the research, such as the accessibility and relative abundance of the archives and the potential of the particular site or example to answer the research question are of primary concern (Yin, 2018, p. 38; Stake, 1995, p. 6). I selected VSU for both of those reasons.

While there are extensive archival resources pertaining to the history of education in Virginia, not every HBCU is equally well represented. Of the six HBCUs that were founded in Virginia, five are still in operation today. St. Paul's College, a private Episcopalian-affiliated institution, along with its archives, was shuttered in 2013. Some of these institutional archives lack guides to their own collections. While outside organizations have helped fill this void, the guides are often incomplete. Preliminary research indicated that there was a relative abundance of archival resources on Virginia State University in particular. As a public institution, in addition to the institutional archives, there were also materials related to Virginia State University at the Library of Virginia. This case also held good potential for better understanding the relationships and logic among my primary constructs. My sampling strategy is thus primarily theoretical in that I selected the case of Virginia State University for the potential it holds to modify or augment the theory undergirding my conceptual frame and to better understand the phenomena in question (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 537; Stake, 1995, p. 4).

From a theoretical standpoint, as a public institution emerging during a disrupted political and social context, Virginia State is unusual and likely to be a productive and revelatory area of study. It is also an ideal focus for this research due to the accessibility of various archives and the degree to which other researchers have already identified specific relationships or constructed historical timelines. Virginia State has a particular— and perhaps more clearly delineated—relationship to the state as compared to private institutions because it was founded as a public institution by the state legislature with the stated purpose of providing postsecondary education for Black people. The allocation of both physical and human resources in order to come into being, as well as a provision to ensure an almost all Black governing board, also point to a confluence of interests and political will, or power, that may be particularly interesting to understand. As I work inductively through my analysis of the creation and early evolution of Virginia State, I anticipate segmenting my findings into multiple episodes, periods of conflict or critical turning points. This segmentation will necessarily be driven by my findings and through the analysis described below.

The Commonwealth of Virginia. As noted in the introduction, although there are commonalities across the south with regards to Black educational opportunities in the post-bellum period through the present, there are also clear differences by state and locality. For example, despite having roughly similar populations North Carolina had 16 HBCUs by 1900, while Virginia had only three (Lovett, 2011; U.S. Dept. of Education, 2017). In fact, the provision and accessibility of education for the Black community in Virginia has long been an area of contest. In the wake of the Civil War, the Black community in Virginia engaged in an ongoing struggle to secure their rights as citizens,

including equal access to educational opportunities. The political and social contests that marked Virginia during this period, including those over education, as well as the Black community's exertion of power, albeit tenuous, is in part what makes Virginia and the contests around the creation of, and the subsequent evolution of, Virginia State University ideal foci for this study (Dailey, 2000; Forsythe, 1997; Jackson, 1946; Kousser. 1974; Moore, 1975; Rabinowitz, 1974).

Virginia State University. Virginia State University has been a public institution of higher education from inception. Chartered by the Virginia legislature in 1882 as the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (VNCI), the entity that would become Virginia State University was a source of political conflict. The product of campaign promises and political wrangling in the legislature, VNCI was one of just a few HBCUs across the nation that was explicitly founded as a postsecondary institution, with a liberal arts college in addition to a normal school, an annual operating fund from the state and an initial guarantee of Black leadership (Toppin, 1992, p. 13). This beginning is an exceptional story not replicated amongst HBCUs more broadly.

Table 3.2

Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Virginia by Year Founded

Founded	Name (2020)	Type/Affiliation
1868	Hampton University	Private
1882	St. Paul's College[4]	Private/Episcopal
1882	Virginia State University	Public
1886	Virginia University of Lynchburg	Private/Baptist

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[4] St. Paul's closed in 2013 (Hawkins, 2013)

Table 3.2

*Historically Black Colleges and Universities in Virginia by Year
Founded*

Founded	Name (2020)	Type/Affiliation
1888	Virginia Union University	Private/Baptist
1935	Norfolk State University	Public

For the purposes of this research I first focused on the context and circumstances
surrounding the initial founding of VNCI, circa 1880, through 1917 when the Virginia
State Board of Education accredited VNCI for the first time, nearly 35 years after it was
founded. Then I traced the institution's history through today, with a focus on critical
turning points (Toppin, 1992, p. 59). These were rough initial parameters that I altered as
my research progressed. As I became more familiar with VNCI's history, from both a
feasibility perspective as well as a theoretical perspective, it became clear that it was
important to follow the breadcrumbs all the way back to the Underwood Constitution in
1868 and then move forward in order to capture the full context of the political
environment. I ended up stopping at 1902, when the name of VNCI was changed to
Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute (VNII). After this point in time, the
disenfranchisement of an estimated 90% of all adult men meant relatively little conflict
and relatively little change for VNII.

3.3 Data Collection

I collected and analyzed data from a broad array of both secondary and primary
sources as described in more detail below.

Although I relied on primary sources for much of my research, secondary sources
served two necessary purposes. First, secondary sources provided additional context and

depth to my own work. The broader social and political history of normal schools in Virginia, and of Virginia and the United States more broadly, provide important context for my research. This work would have been much more difficult had it not been for the work of others before me. I looked to and utilized select scholarship on education and normal schools in Virginia (Burks, 2002; Emerson, 1973; Green, 2016; Link, 1986), as well as politics (Carey, 2000; Dailey, 2000;) to better understand both the broad sweep of history and additional contextual information.

At the same time, secondary sources also helped inform what and how I gathered my data. In other words, these sources informed my data collection strategy. For example, Virginia State University has organized their archives according to the names of the individuals who created the records. Understanding the broad strokes of the history of Virginia State University and the specific names of early institutional leaders from Edgar Toppin's book *Loyal Sons and Daughters: Virginia State University 1882 to 1992* (1992) enabled me to focus my research in particular collections. As I worked through various archives, the ability to use specific names to search for records or to narrow down specific dates of interest facilitated the collection of data. Although these works and their purposes are very different than my own, they provided helpful information about the basic narrative details, the broader educational terrain, and some of the archival resources available. In addition, checking against these sources helped me make sure that I was not overlooking particular pieces of evidence or sources of data.

3.3.1 Primary Sources: Archives and Manuscript Collections

Primary and archival sources form the principal basis of this study. These sources come primarily from David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke

University in Durham, North Carolina; the Harrison B. Wilson Archives and The African

American Art Gallery, Norfolk State University in Norfolk, Virginia; the Library of

Virginia, in Richmond, Virginia; and the Special Collections and University Archives,

Virginia State University, in Petersburg, Virginia, with some additional materials

obtained via web-based archival resources, such as the HathiTrust and the Library of

Congress.

The Virginia State archive contains institutional records, including catalogues,

annual reports, and correspondence. This archive also contains the personal papers of

individuals who were associated with Virginia State University as former administrators

and faculty. The Library of Virginia contains a broad range of items associated with

Virginia State University, including legislative and executive reports, proceedings, and

resolutions. In addition, the Library of Virginia has extensive newspaper collections,

which I accessed. The David M. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Collection

houses the papers of William Mahone, the chief organizer and architect of the Readjuster

movement in Virginia. The Readjusters were an active alternative political party during

the 1870s and 1880s, the effectiveness of which was driven by an interracial coalition.

3.3.2 Maintain Detailed Records

The data or evidence collected is the foundation on which any case study is built.

It is important to maintain detailed records that include contextual information for all data

collected (Beach & Pedersen, 2013. pp. 120-143, 163-170; Trampusch & Palier, 2016,

pp.1 3-14;). These records are critical for the researcher and necessary for any external

assessment of the work.

As I collected information on the case, I took a variety of measures to obtain and record details and contextual information from my sources. Whenever possible, I scanned or photographed the entirety of the record, obtained a transcript, and/or took extensive notes on the full record from which the information was drawn. For archives and/or materials where it was not possible for me to obtain a scan or a photograph, I transcribed and/or described the material of interest in detail. When I had to omit line-by-line information, as was necessarily the case at times, I made notes and/or otherwise documented the information omitted to try to avoid losing any context. For example, one important source of information came from the annual reports submitted to Virginia's General Assembly by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. These are extensive reports, hundreds of pages in length. In addition to information on the secondary education system, these reports have embedded in them annual reports from each public institution of higher education in the state, including Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (VNCI, which later became Virginia State University). Many of these reports are available both at the Library of Virginia and on-line via the Hathi Trust. Given the length of these reports, it was not practicable for me to retain, read, and analyze the entirety of each. Rather, for each report from 1883 through 1917, I scanned or extracted a copy of the table of contents in addition to the full report on VNCI. I also read and took extensive notes about the reports from other postsecondary institutions.

As I collected items, I catalogued them using the format outlined below in table 3.3. I also gained a high level of familiarity with items and began to make notations pertaining to classifications and coding.

Table 3.3

Example Research Catalogue Entry

Key (assigned unique identifier)	TBA
Date accessed	February 1, 2018
Archives name, Institutional affiliation	Johnston Memorial Library - Special Collections and University Archives, Virginia State University
Location	RG1 H
Folder number	n/a
Unique identifier and collection name (as it appears on box)	Minutes, Board of Visitors, 1883-May 30, 1889, pages 19-229
Title	Minutes of the Board of Visitors of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute – Chesterfield County Virginia
Date	3 March 1883
Type of document	Meeting minutes
Publisher/Organization	Board of Visitors of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute

Table 3.3

Example Research Catalogue Entry

Detailed Description	Original manuscript
	Detailed minutes of the board as recorded by AW Harris
	Contains information on:
	- the election of the Architect & Superintendent of Buildings (Waite – sp?)
	- resolution to open the "Normal department" to students by the first Monday in October, 1883
	- establishes curriculum and entrance requirements for the normal "departments"
	Local residents "Mr. Farro & Mr. John Oliver" raise objections as to the proposed location of the new school, request the board consider an alternate location outside of town
Format (s): File Name(s)	Photos & notes
	20180201-105155.jpg; 20180201-105213.jpg; 20180201-105220.jpg; 20180201-1052370.jpg
Notes	pp.20-30
Additional details for possible coding & classification:	AW Harris (Secretary to the Board) A.k.a. Alfred Harris
	Maj. Waite (sp.?) (Architect & Superintendent of Buildings
	Mr. Farro
	Mr. John Oliver
	Normal School (Curriculum, entrance requirements)
	Location
	Contest?

3.3.3 Selection Bias Mitigation

Selection bias—either in relation to the case itself or in the data collected—can

occur in a variety of ways. For this case, certainly there is a chance that I might miss

something by only going to a select number of archives, or not looking at every single newspaper. In fact, unlike qualitative researchers more broadly, as a researcher working from archival data, I have little control over the quality and type of records available. Despite some of the inherent limitations associated with archival sources (discussed further below), I have taken several measures to try to avoid bias in the selection process. As recommended by process tracing methodologists, these include the use of multiple sources whenever possible, preservation of contextual information, and searching for disconfirming evidence (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp. 120-143, 163-170; Trampusch & Palier, 2016, pp. 13-14;).

For example, I actively sought out materials, such as newspapers, produced by individuals or groups of individuals from across the political spectrum, and produced for a variety of purposes. Similarly, in looking to recreate what actually did and did not change at Virginia State University over time, I sought out reports produced by the administration for the Superintendent of Instruction, as well as the catalogue and reports appearing in journals and newspapers that were intended for a very different audience.

As a primary organizing strategy, I created and maintained spreadsheets that contain information on people, events, and organizations or institutions. I started this work while I was reading through the secondary literature, and it eventually became a part of a classification system in the relational database discussed below. The two spreadsheets that came out of this allowed me to organize and cross reference information and were eventually coded along with the source data (also discussed further below). In particular, the events spreadsheet became a critical organizing tool as I sequenced the historical timeline.

3.3.4 Relational Database

As I collected archival data, I pulled it into one relational database using qualitative analysis software. The framework of this database allowed me to have sources, codes, classifications, and memos which could be linked relationally. Sources are essentially the raw data or material. I annotated sources as described below. Codes are themes, ideas, categories or concepts. I started with provisional codes based on my theoretical frame and as I worked through my data, I created and applied codes to each source, primarily as an organizing and analytical technique, as detailed below. Classifications are attributes, or essential or basic information about the data and demographic characteristics of the participants for future management and reference. For example, classifications contain information such as an individual's gender, political party affiliation, dates of birth and death, etc. Memos are analytical and reflective notes that can also be linked to particular sources and codes.

3.4 Constructing the Narrative

Eisenhardt describes constructing the narrative of a case as the "most difficult and least codified part of the process" (1989, p. 539). Process tracing methodologists describe this work as bringing causal-process observations (CPOs, i.e., specific pieces of "evidence") together with broader generalizations and associations (Mahoney, 2012, p. 571). Some researchers advocate moving from gathering the data and making preliminary analytic notes directly to constructing a narrative, while others advocate for a more systematic and structured coding and distillation process (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2018). Regardless of the exact route, the point of this process is for the researcher to become very familiar with the case such that they can construct a temporal narrative and begin to see the patterns and relationships within it (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 540; Yin, 2018, p. 211).

For my own purposes, in addition to process tracing, I have leaned on other qualitative analytic processes to inform this work. The advantages of this methodological approach are that it provides a clear set of structured iterative steps through which I can progress to better understand the phenomena in question.

3.4.1 Analytic Notes

When considering large quantities of data, it is easy to lose sight of the bigger picture and/or begin to identify patterns that may be useful to test at a later date. In order to stay connected to the larger work and capture thoughts as I created classifications and codes and began to construct a narrative timeline, I wrote analytic notes or memos. This allowed me to capture the preliminary ideas, patterns, and relationships I thought I was seeing, as well as more general comments and reflections on the data and how I was assessing and evaluating my sources. Because I traced a process over time, very early in the data gathering and planning process I began to create a very basic narrative timeline-driven memo for this case. This memo started with what I believed might be key events or activities and evolved over the course of my analysis. Thus, the memo contains events that I thought might have been important, such as the civil rights cases of 1883, that did not end up in my dissertation because I found no specific evidence linking the outcome of those cases to the case in question.[5] In addition, I used the memos to do some preliminary "testing" (discussed below) of emergent findings as well as to document the evaluation and assessment of my data, a necessary component of process tracing (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, p. 122-123, 125-126).

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[5] The civil rights cases of 1883 were a group of five cases which came before the Supreme Court of the United States that year. The court held Congress could not outlaw racial discrimination by private individuals despite the 13th and 14th amendments to the Constitution.

3.4.2 Classifications

Classifications come directly from the source data (both primary and secondary) and can be created concurrent with initial coding. Some scholars may refer to classifications as attribute coding (Saldana, 2009, p.114). Classifications are used to record essential information about the data and demographic characteristics of the participants for future management and reference. Classifications are tables of attribute information (fields) associated with various aspects or parameters of the case. As I worked through my research process, I created three classification tables based on different analytic needs. For example, the catalogue that I created as I collected data became a classification. The catalogue classification is a table of information about my sources containing the fields specified in Table 3.3, above. Each source thus had various attributes associated with it, such as the date on which I accessed it, the archive from whence it came, and the type of document, etc. Similarly, as I worked, I developed a "people" classification for capturing and cross-referencing specific details related to various individuals. Additional classifications included one on events and one on HBCUs. The classifications reference the sources and helped me keep my data organized. I created an initial set of classifications and then refined them as the analytic process evolved. For example, initially I did not have information in the people classification related to whether someone was an elected official, what offices they held, or their primary occupation. However, as I collected data from primary and secondary sources, these were obvious fields to add and helped identify relationships I would otherwise not have known about.

3.4.3 Codes & Coding

In addition to the classifications, I also coded sources. A full list of all codes used is available in Appendix B. I began with a set of provisional codes related to my conceptual model and research questions. This first set of codes were developed concomitant with my theoretical model and literature review. In addition to these provisional codes, I used emergent codes, which arose from the data during open coding. Given the variability of the archival data, I had to be adaptive in my use of emergent codes. I used some basic codes, to capture specific social groups for example, as well as descriptive or conceptual codes to capture additional levels of meaning.

Open coding is followed by axial coding, identifying and exploring relationships and patterns among the codes and within the case. While open coding helps one identify specific activities, axial coding helps one with the nature and context of activities, and the motivating and precipitating factors. My conceptual frame and my research questions presupposed some relationship between political contest and the creation and development of Virginia State University. It is at this step that I began to identify and explore that possible relationship and construct some understanding of the contours of how contest and power operated within this case. During the coding process, both as I refined and expanded codes, as well as when I began to explore possible relationships and patterns, I found that I returned to both my conceptual theory and my research questions repeatedly in order to ascertain whether or not my codes were sufficient to capture the information and relationships in which I was interested.

Close to the end of this process, I had a timeline of discrete events (what happened when) that I had coded, as well as a set of emergent findings related to my research questions. In the end, I created several different visualizations of my coded

timeline. The product of this phase of the research was concrete documentation of political contests and coalitions in the form of individuals and groups of individuals engaging in various events and activities, as well as findings related to each of my research questions.

3.4.4 Test Findings

As the penultimate step in my analytic process, I tested my findings. First, I used process tracing tests to examine my own work. First introduced by Van Evera (1997) and built on by Bennett (2010), there are now four well-established empirical tests used in process tracing (see Table 3.4). These tests are classified according to whether passing the test is necessary and/or sufficient for accepting a particular finding. In applying these tests, I relied on the methodological guidance established by Collier (2011) and Beach and Pedersen (2013). The decision to apply a particular test depends on the specific finding, as well as other contextual information. Regardless of which test is applied, the researcher is required to align each finding with an evidence base, their interpretation of said evidence (i.e., the inferences that they are drawing from the evidence), and a summary assessment of the outcome of the test. In essence, the point is to push the researcher to rigorously examine the evidence and their own logic in relation to that evidence. A finding or hypothesis that passes a "hoop" test means that the evidence lends weight to that finding but is not decisive in and of itself. In contrast, a finding that passes a "doubly decisive" test means that the evidence decisively supports that finding and eliminates other possibilities. In order to conduct a "doubly decisive" test, typically the researcher must formulate alternative possible explanations for the evidence. A sample of some of the tests that I ran in relation to major finding can be found in Appendix B.

Table 3.4

Process Tracing Tests

		Sufficient for affirming causal inference	
		NO	**YES**
Necessary for affirming causal inference	**NO**	**Straw-in-the-Wind** Implications: if *passing*, affirms relevance of finding, but does not confirm it; if *failing*, finding is not eliminated, but is weakened	**Smoking-Gun** Implications: if *passing*, confirms finding; if *failing*, finding is not eliminated, but is weakened
	YES	**Hoop** Implications: if *passing*, affirms relevance of finding, but does not confirm it; if *failing*, eliminates finding	**Doubly-Decisive** Implications: if *passing*, confirms finding and eliminates others; if *failing*, eliminates finding

Note: Table adapted from Bennett (2010, p.210); Van Evera (1997, 31-32); Collier (2011, p.825).

As a last step, I compared my findings with the extant literature. Specifically, I looked back at the literature on the state and higher education and asked: "What is this similar to, what does it contradict and why[?]" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 544). Tying my emergent findings to existing literatures serves as a critical check on my own analysis and thereby enhances the internal validity and potential generalizability of my findings.

3.5 Validity & Trustworthiness

As a historical case study with a specific focus on the political, the degree to which any one narrative is probable also rests on the considerably more difficult task of trying to discern such things as the nature and context of activities, the motivating and precipitating factors, and the quality of various relationships and interactions. This is a difficult and precarious task, accounted for only in part by the work described above.

Unlike qualitative researchers more broadly, as a researcher working from archival data, I have little control over the quality and type of records available. I cannot immerse myself in a context, nor can I ask the subjects of my research to check my work. Basic information that might help a historian contextualize, interrogate, or evaluate any source was often missing. As I considered various documents, I did not always know why a document was created, by whom, and for what audience. And even when that information was available, other contextualizing factors were often missing.

At the same time, in selecting and interpreting data, my own biases and interests will necessarily have an unintended impact. As a white Mexican American woman who has spent the majority of her life in the southwestern region of the United States, as an individual who has never worked at, much less attended a HBCU, I must acknowledge my positionality as an outsider to these institutions and the communities they serve. As such, there will necessarily be patterns and signs that I miss, as well as those that I misread.

These are challenges and limitations that, to one degree or another, qualitative researchers face and attempt to mitigate. To the extent possible I maintained detailed records on all sources and all analytical procedures. This included as much contextual information as was available and/or could be ascertained through supplementary analysis. Just as other qualitative researchers may seek credibility through *dependability* (Lincoln & Guba, 1982; Patton, 1990), in addition to the extensive notes and citations present in my text, I maintained an audit trail to be available for external review. In addition, when possible, I tried to "triangulate" multiple data points to provide some level of trustworthiness. This meant privileging information for which I could find multiple

sources, and/or multiple different types of sources (Beach & Pedersen, 2013, pp. 128). Further, as much as possible I tried to be transparent in the text itself about what source or sources I used and about any possible limitations. I also searched for disconfirming evidence in both the primary sources as well as the secondary literature.

4. FINDINGS

Broadly, this study seeks to add to the scholarship on, and thus our understanding of, the challenges facing under-resourced and politically marginalized postsecondary institutions, such as HBCUs. Given the degree to which the state and political contest have shaped higher education over time, this study uses a historical case-based approach informed by theories of the state. More specifically, it situates the history of Virginia State University, a public HBCU, from its founding in 1882 through the restoration of the college program in 1923, within an explicitly political framework to answer the following research questions:

1. In what ways and to what degree did contest associated with the state and civil society influence the creation and development of Virginia State University?

2. In what ways, if any, have there been critical moments where changes associated with the state and/or civil society may account for the challenges the institution has faced and continues to face today?

3. What were the sources of legitimacy for various participants in the contest over the founding of VSU?

4. Is there evidence of the state, formal associations of the civil society, or informal organizations involved in that contest, and how did each of those entities exercise power? What was the specific outcome of those contests, and how or to what degree are those contests/outcomes still visible today?

In alignment with other scholarship focused on the relationship between higher education and the state, this study found that political conflict and an evolving state were salient explanations for Virginia State University's transformations and challenges over time. These findings suggest that not only was Virginia State University born out of and evolved in relation to ongoing contest within the state and civil society, but also that the legitimacy of VSU, a racialized project of the state, was dependent on the institution's ability to adapt to changes in the state over time. Further, VSU's leadership did indeed react and adapt, as well as influence, enable, and at times help to construct and legitimate the commonwealth of Virginia. The contest, the evolution of the state, VSU's adaptations, and how those adaptions would be interpreted with regard to the legitimacy of the institution as well as the legitimacy of the state–all of these are structured by race and by the placement of individuals into racialized categories.

This chapter is organized into three sections. The first section, 4.1, specifically attempts to provide an overview of the findings as they relate to key elements in each of the questions above. The second section, 4.2, is a chronological historical narrative. The historical narrative provides more detail on the processes and mechanisms of change, along with the associated temporal, spatial, and social contexts. For the purposes of this study, periods are demarcated by specific turning points or shifts with regard to the relative power held by specific groups within the civil society. For each of the periods identified, control of the state itself, as well as how and in what ways race would structure both the state and civil society, were the most salient areas of contest. From the end of the Civil War in 1865 through 1902, when a new constitution was enacted that disenfranchised an estimated 80% of Virginia's population (Lowe, 1991), there was

ongoing contest over the control and legitimacy of the state government. Similarly, throughout this period, the shape and form of Jim Crow was being hammered out, through contests around the state, and within the civil society. In 1882, the results of these contests created a specific set of conditions that were favorable for and thus enabled the establishment of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (VNCI), the school that would develop into Virginia State University. Just a year later, amid increasing race-based violence and voter suppression, a conservative white minority took control of the state, including VNCI as an apparatus and project of the state. Although the creation of VNCI could not be undone, as the new government solidified their control, they attempted to transform VNCI from an institution focused on racial uplift, into an institution that relegated Black people to a place of second-class citizenship.

The third and final section of this chapter, 4.3, is also a chronological historical narrative. This section is necessarily less detailed than the preceding section in that it is an attempt to assess the degree to which the outcomes of the political contests discussed above, over the role and purposes of Virginia State University, are manifest in the organization and outcomes of the institution over the longer term. Although making such an assessment is fraught, there are some clear connections between the institution that exists today and the issues that the institution has and continues to face.

4.1 Overview

This section is organized into three subsections, each of which focus on answering specific elements of the research questions. The first subsection, 4.1.1, focuses on the research question: In what ways and to what degree did contest associated with the state and civil society influence the creation and development of Virginia State

University? This subsection also specifically highlights the sources of legitimacy for participants in this contest. The second subsection, 4.1.2, focuses on contest and identifies critical moments of change post-founding. Similar to subsection 4.1.1, this subsection highlights sources of legitimacy for participants in those contests. This subsection also attempts to summarize the outcomes of those contests and moments, and how and whether those outcomes continue to still be visible today. The third and final section, 4.1.3, focuses on the exercise of power and how specifically various entities exercised power in the contests outlined in the first two sections.

4.1.1 Contest and the Creation of Virginia State University

The creation of Virginia State University was a direct outcome of the 1881 election in Virginia and the larger context of state and civil society contests that marked the decades immediately following the Civil War. In the aftermath of the war, Virginians rebuilt society under dramatically changed social, economic, and political circumstances. During this period, particularly in the late 1870s and early 1890s in Virginia, to what degree and in what form race might continue to shape and stratify society was, if not entirely uncertain, contested. The legitimacy of the state in Virginia was fragile. When it came to the governance of the commonwealth, the question was not simply who could control the state apparatus, but, in fact, how would the state be structured and what would the state be responsible for? Black Virginians had clear and often articulated answers to these questions. In the days and weeks and months and years following the end of the Civil War, Black people positioned the state provision of education as a key area of political and social mobilization and thus a source of legitimacy for both political parties as well as the state.

When Virginia established a new constitution in 1869, this new constitution obligated the state to create and maintain a system of free public schools. The Underwood Constitution, as it would come to be known, with its enshrinement of the state's educational obligations, along with the preservation of former Confederates' voting rights while expanding the franchise to Black men, set the terms on which the ongoing contest over a rebuilt Virginia would transpire. It also set the stage for the creation of Virginia State University. Building on their work in the immediate aftermath of the war, Black Virginians engaged in continued efforts to make good on the promises set forth in that constitution, to exercise their right to the franchise and to ensure the education of their children as citizens within a democratic state. Further, Black Virginians engaged in these efforts in the face of waning Republican support, as well as violence, harassment, poll taxes, gerrymandering, and the overall relentless efforts of Virginia's Conservative Party to disfranchise them.

By the late-1870s, both major political parties in Virginia had developed fault lines. Republican refusal to treat Black Virginians equally undermined the legitimacy of the party's leadership in the eyes of the Black community. Support of debt repudiation and support for social services split Conservative Party leadership and undermined the legitimacy of the Conservative Party as well. These fractures led to the establishment of a viable third party, the Readjusters. Lead by a former Confederate general, William Mahone, and an assortment of experienced political leaders (some of whom were Black), the Readjusters successfully established their legitimacy as a viable third party by bringing together the very issues that led to fractures in the Republican Party and the Conservative Party. A central part of the Readjusters platform was the repudiation of

Virginia's war debt and the state provision of social services, of which education took primacy.

In 1881, following an enormously successful campaign in which all parties attempted to woo the Black vote, Readjusters took the governorship and won majorities in both the state house and the senate. When combined with federal patronage, the electoral wins gave Readjusters effective control of the entire state apparatus in Virginia. The Black community was a tremendously important constituency for the Readjusters and, in turn, Readjuster support for issues that were important to the Black community, like education, were an important source of legitimacy.

In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War, and in the contest over the establishment of a new constitution, over and over again Black Virginians made education, and specifically the state provision of education, a key area of mobilization and a key source of legitimacy for the state. The very idea that the state, as opposed to the family or some civil society organization, would provide education was an ideological shift. In Virginia this shift started, in part, with the passing of the Underwood Constitution and persisted due to Black Virginians' insistence that it was in fact a fundamental responsibility of a legitimate state. In the lead up to the 1981 election, Readjusters adopted this stance as a source of legitimacy for their party and, in the aftermath, for a Readjuster lead state.

When Delegate Alfred W. Harris introduced House Bill 271, "a bill to incorporate the Normal and Collegiate Institute," it was against this backdrop. In the post-Civil War contest over the role of the State, the Black community had insisted on the provision of education as a legitimizing factor. In the political contests leading up to the 1881 election,

the Black community made education (along with other issues) a priority. Although it is unclear whether Harris's fellow Readjusters understood his intent at the outset and stood ready to support it, the fact of the bill's passage is in itself a signifier of the strength of Black political power in this particular historical moment. In the end, the General Assembly established Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (VNCI) as an unequivocally Black school; governed by Black men, with Black teachers and committed to educating Black people "exclusively" (Virginia, 1882a, chap. 199, p. 474).

4.1.2 Critical Moments, Contest, Challenge, and Change

Unfortunately for the Black community and for Virginia as a whole, VNCI would not remain as it had been established. Despite a relatively auspicious beginning, over the longer term inequality and precarity would be defining features of Virginia State's existence. As a pivotal turning point for the commonwealth and what would constitute a legitimate state therein, the contentious election of 1883 was perhaps the most "critical moment" for VNCI's future. Even though the findings herein suggest that over the many intervening years contests associated with the state and civil society continued to influence the development of the institution, inequality and precarity provide a remarkably predictable through line. The legitimacy of Virginia State, as a racialized project of the state, and the legitimacy of the broader state, were not always congruent. VSU functioned variously to strengthen and undermine the legitimacy of the state. VSU's survival as a state project was dependent on balancing adaptation to changes in the state, often in ways that were adverse to the interests of the Black community, with fulfilling the ideals and interests of the Black community. The contest, the evolution of the state, VSU's adaptations, and how those adaptions would be interpreted with regard to the

legitimacy of the institution as well as the legitimacy of the state–all of these were structured by race and by the placement of individuals into racialized categories.

In Virginia, the period spanning the election of 1883 through the 1902 establishment of a new constitution was marked by an initial escalation in racially motivated terror and violence, diminishing over time as Black people were expunged from any position of legitimate authority or power within the state. Democrats used violence, intimidation, and bribery in an attempt to suppress the Black vote, and in turn engaged their own base through fearmongering, or, as one historian has described it, inciting a state of "racial hysteria" (Moore, 1974, p.116). In essence, Democrats built their legitimacy around the ideology of racism. They positioned Black people as illegitimate state actors to be feared; and in turn they positioned themselves as the saviors of a white state. On election day majority white precincts across Virginia saw record voter turnout. The Democratic Party achieved a two-to-one majority in both houses of Virginia's General Assembly. Following this triumph, Democrats continued to use this ideology and to do everything they could to maintain power and ensure continued electoral success.

Once the balance of power within the state had shifted through fear and violence, Democrats turned to more mundane tactics in their attempt to institutionalize and make permanent a race-based regime of inequality, wherein white elites would hold on to power and any associated economic and social rewards. In the years to come Democrats altered city wards and the boundaries of congressional districts and changed the way elections were held and overseen. By the mid-1890s, Democrats had managed to reduce Black male voter turnout from an estimated 80 to 90% to close to 20% (Kousser, 1974, p.

174). The establishment of the 1902 Constitution, which wrought both further restrictions in voter eligibility as well as to the state's obligations in terms of schooling, was the culmination of many years of work on the part of white elites to solidify their power and delegitimize Black people as state actors.

The elimination of Black people as legitimate state actors and the changing role of the state with regard to education had a direct impact on the legitimacy of VNCI and what it, as a project of the state, could be and do. Further, once Democrats had positioned themselves as the party of Jim Crow, maintaining segregated schools and a society in which Black people were relegated to second-class citizenship was a source of legitimacy. In Virginia, after 1883 through the middle of the 20th century, state-sponsored education for Black people was increasingly more limited, separate, and unequal. The new constitution apportioned state funds based on population within districts, and then left decision-making as to how those funds should be spent in the hands of local white school boards.

The legitimacy of a state supported postsecondary school for Black people was at issue in a state where most Black people would never even finish high school. Prior to 1902, legislative and executive branch actions concerning VNCI mostly focused on eroding Black control of the institution. By 1891, the legislature had changed the governance structure of VNCI, replaced Black members of the Board of Visitors (BoV) with white members, and cut VNCI's annual appropriations from $20,000 to $15,000. Concomitant with these actions came repeated changes in institutional leadership, VNCI's mission, and the associated curriculum. In 1902, the General Assembly divested VNCI of the collegiate program and replaced it with manual and industrial training.

In 1929 the General Assembly changed the name of the school to Virginia State College for Negroes and in 1930 established a new charter, dissolving the BoV and placing the school under the administration of the State Board Education along with the state's other normal schools (Toppin, 1992, pp. 77-83). When Virginia State eventually added graduate studies and established the Negro Graduate Aid Fund, both initiatives were rooted in efforts to maintain a segregated system of higher education in Virginia by meeting the separate but equal principle established in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) in response to contests arising in civil society, supported by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).

The story of contest and change post-*Brown vs. Board of Education* and post-1964 Civil Rights Act is complicated. Although, as numerous scholars have pointed out, the broader Civil Rights movement was an inflection point after which there were changes to the racial stratification of the entirety of the United States, not just Virginia, those changes did not necessarily mean a reduction in race-based disparities at the structural level. In fact, and similar to the experiences of other HBCUs, the viability of Virginia State as a Black school in a supposedly race-neutral society was still in question. By the mid-1960s, changes within Virginia's system of higher education further undermined the continued legitimacy and viability of Virginia State. The creation of the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), the continued duplication of programs and the expansion of Richard Bland College, combined with a move towards the elimination of Virginia State's School of Agriculture (as a means to eliminate the operation of a dual land grant structure) threatened Virginia State's ability to remain competitive. Through a combination of direct action and litigation, Virginia State faculty and students, supported

by the NAACP, managed to stop Richard Bland's program duplication and expansion as well as the elimination of Virginia State's School of Agriculture. Further, this litigation also eventually led to a more serious effort on the part of the U.S. Department of Health and Education and Welfare (HEW) to enforce Title VI in Virginia, as well as to the create Virginia's 1978 desegregation plan, which included the elevation of Virginia State from College to University. Unfortunately, the commonwealth's commitments to HEW remained largely unmet, and precarity continued to plague Virginia State.

Political contest, concomitant with social unrest and the outcomes of that contest within Virginia, led to VSU's evolution from a Black school focused on education for social mobility and democratic equality to one focused loosely on the industrial arts and teacher preparation through the early part of the 20th century. Similarly, the mid-20th century transformation of VNII into Virginia State University was driven by a series of contests associated with the state and civil society that transformed the racialized social system present in Virginia. Although racial stratification did not disappear, in the wake of the Civil Rights movement (and all that it entailed), the structures upholding that stratification, including Virginia State, changed.

4.1.3 The Operation and the Use of Power

As noted in the introduction to this dissertation, for the purposes of this research I have chosen to utilize Stephen Lukes's three-dimensional view of power as a primary organizing frame (1974). Luke defines power as instances in which "A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests." (1974, p. 30). In this frame, power can be exercised actively and passively; through both conscious, overt, and visible actions, as well as through systems and the institutionalization of bias. Further, as

outlined above, Virginia State University was born out of and evolved in relation to ongoing contest within the state and civil society. The entities involved in those contests exercised power in a variety of ways, often in alignment with ideological frames. Over time, one sees both active and overt uses of power, as well as instances in which oppression became systemic, structural, and covert in nature. Interestingly—and it is difficult to discern to what degree this might be impacted by what is available in the historical record—within this research, the overt use of power appears more prevalent in the Jim Crow period. However, as Virginia and the United States moved into the supposedly post-racial era, the exercise of power appears more covert, more dependent on systems and institutionalization.

One of the most noteworthy things about Virginia State's history is in fact that it emerged at a time when Black Virginians wielded power in a relatively instrumental way and thus secured certain types of benefits and resources from the state, such as the establishment of Virginia State University. Such benefits threatened to mitigate, if not eliminate, the race-based caste system sought by elites. Because Black Virginians held some degree of power, their interests and their vision was reflected in Virginia State's mission at inception. As the Black community's power was eroded, as Black people were delegitimized as state actors, their ability to secure such benefits diminished. The transformation that Virginia State subsequently underwent as a result is important to consider carefully here, especially in relation to how power operates in higher education. Virginia State substantively transformed *from* a Black institution intended to bring about more equal opportunities and rights *to* a Black institution that was more narrowly focused on preparing Black people to fill specific and limited types of roles as future workers.

This transformation was never totalizing. While the official mission and role of the school changed, the ambitions of students and community members did not. The changed formal mission of the school, the imposed scarcity of resources, the limits to self-governance—none of these things appear to have been desired by the Black community or in their best interests. In the same way that one can discern the exercise of power in the original establishment of Virginia State, one can discern the exercise of power, by a white elite in this subsequent transformation.

4.2 Historical Narrative

4.2.1 Reconstruction as Context: A Ruptured State (1865-1878)

On October 1, 1883, Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute (VNCI), the entity that would evolve into Virginia State University, opened its doors for the first time, welcoming a class of 66 students (Virginia Department of Education, 1884). A project of the state, chartered by the Virginia legislature just over 18 months prior, at first glance VNCI appears to be a historical anomaly. The 18-year path from the end of the Civil War and emancipation in 1865 to higher education in 1883 is in no way obvious. As a publicly supported postsecondary institution for Black students offering what was intended to be a college-level curriculum in addition to a normal school (the first publicly supported normal school in Virginia), with an annual operating fund of $20,000 from the state and a guarantee of Black leadership (Burks, 2002, p. 68; Toppin, 1992, p. 13), VNCI stands out among its peers (Acts & Joint Resolutions, 1882). In 1882, out of the 40-plus postsecondary institutions in the United States offering "higher education" to Black

people, only two others (Southern University and Alcorn University) were similarly established by an act of the state with an arts and letters college curriculum. [6]

For those with some familiarity of this period and with Virginia in particular, that an institution such as VNCI was established in this place at this particular point in time contributes to the incongruity. As the former capital of the Confederacy, the only former Confederate state to pass directly from military rule under reconstruction to an elected Conservative Party majority state government, and the birthplace of Massive Resistance, Virginia does not have a strong reputation for supporting the advancement of Black people.

In order to make sense of VNCI and the critical historical moment that brought it into being, one has to understand the fragile legitimacy of the state in the wake of the rupture that was the Civil War, as well as the fractures and unlikely partnerships that marked Virginia politics over the 18 years prior to VNCI's founding. This period, the ongoing contests over control of the state, and the political nexus of activity surrounding those contests, is the focus of this section. During this period, the passage of what would become known as the Underwood Constitution was a critical moment not only because it established the state government of Virginia, but also because it guaranteed Black men the right to vote and mandated that the state create a system of free public schools.

The broad contours of this period are well established. In the wake of the Civil War, the question of political legitimacy, of who has the right to rule and participate in

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[6] Southern University was established by the Louisiana State Legislature (Act 87) in 1880 to serve as an institution of higher learning, graduating students and graduate degrees pertaining to arts and letters for black people. Alcorn University was founded in 1871. The state legislature provided $50,000 cash annually for the University's first 10 years to support its establishment and overall operation. Additionally, 30 acres of land were sold for $188,928; Alcorn received three-fifths of the proceeds, or $113,400. This funding was used for Alcorn's agricultural and mechanical components. Initially, the institution's three major study components were the four-year college track, the two-year college track, and the three-year graded track.

governance was uncertain and thus grounds for fervent contest. The Civil War disrupted and laid waste to the physical, political, economic, and social structures that constituted antebellum Virginia. Perhaps more importantly, with emancipation and military rule, the task that lay ahead for Virginians was not simply to rebuild their society, but to do so under dramatically different and unfamiliar circumstances. From the moment of secession and the literal splitting of the state in two, Virginia changed irrevocably. Over the course of the war, an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 Virginians died in battle (Kenzer, 2012; Salmon and Campbell, 1994, p. 51;); property damage was immense, resulting in the devaluation of farmland by half, as well as the destruction of railroad lines and various structures in cities like Petersburg and Richmond (Dailey, 2000, p. 17; Salmon and Campbell, 1994, pp. 50-51). In the years following the war, food scarcity and infectious disease took the lives of thousands of people (Dailey, 2000, pp. 17-18; Green, 2016, p. 33). In 1860, with just over 52 thousand Virginia households holding 490,865 people in bondage, over a third of Virginia's population were enslaved (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1864; Kerr-Ritchie, 1999, p. 19).[7] The official 1865 emancipation of this population was just one step in a longer process of massive political and social transformation marked by antagonism, negotiation, and contest (Dailey, 2000; Forsythe, 1997; Green, 2016; Kerr-Ritchie, 1999)[8].

[7] While this is true, according the 1860 census, of the four other states with slave populations numbering over 400,00 (Georgia, with 462,198; Mississippi, 436,631; Alabama, 435,080; and South Carolina, 402,406) the ratio of white to slave was different – in Virginia it was more like 2/1, whereas in the other states it was 1/1.

[8] According to the 1860 US census, the white population in Virginia in 1860 was 1,047,299; the free colored population was 58,042 and there were 490,865 enslaved persons.

A Critical Moment: The Underwood Constitution

In the wake of the war, Virginia's government was restored on decidedly rocky ground, first under a provisional governor with both local and state government dominated by former Confederates, and then as Military District Number 1 with the first Reconstruction Act in March of 1867 (Emerson, 1973, p. 37; Salmon & Campbell, 1994, pp. 51-52). Under the command of General John M. Schofield, Virginians, many of whom were former enslaved persons participating in democratic political processes for the first time in their lives, elected delegates and convened a state constitutional convention that met from December of 1867 through April of 1868.

Although the constitution that emerged was indelibly marked by what was deemed the radical Republican majority, it was also the product of contest and compromise. Given the fact that the Republicans outnumbered Democrats 72 to 33, one might have expected their agenda to take priority (Emerson, 1973, p. 38). Yet, there were limits to their power. This constitution—the Underwood Constitution, as it would become known—provided for universal suffrage for men as well as for the establishment of a state-wide system of publicly supported schools. The new constitution also included two clauses that respectively sought to disfranchise and disqualify from public office anyone who had fought for or otherwise had a position in the government of the former Confederacy. The inclusion of these provisions gives some sense of the degree to which the Republican delegates, 24 of whom were Black, wielded power at the convention itself (Jackson, 1946, pp. 1-44). In the end, concerned about the direction the constitution was heading, General Schofield forced the convention to dissolve early and then postponed the public referendum on the new constitution indefinitely (Emerson, 1973, p. 39).

Fully one year after the convention, upon the recommendation of President Grant, Congress set July 6 for the constitutional referendum and authorized the voters of Virginia to vote separately on the controversial clauses (Emerson, 1973, p. 40). The intervention of General Schofield and the subsequent actions of President Grant and the U.S. Congress provide some sense of the uncertain and contested balance of power during this period. Despite the passage of the 15th Amendment and the Republican administration in Washington, DC, General Schofield and his emissaries in Virginia were reticent to cede power to former enslaved persons and upend long-standing social norms. Given the fact that Black people made up over 40% of the population in Virginia (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1864, 1872), universal manhood suffrage combined with the disfranchisement of former Confederates could well have tipped the balance of power in a wholly democratic Virginia.

This was not to be. The results of the constitutional referendum were a mixed bag. Out of the 269,884 registered voters, over 40% were Black, reflecting the population of the state at large (Emerson, 1973, p.40; US Department of the Interior, 1872). With 219,721 votes cast, representing a turnout of 81%, the electorate overwhelming approved the new constitution while rejecting the clauses that would have disfranchised and disqualified from public office anyone who had fought for or otherwise had a position in the government of the former Confederacy. On October 8, 1869, meeting under the authorization of the new constitution minus the two clauses, Virginia's general assembly ratified the 14th and 15th amendments to the constitution (Emerson, 1973, p. 41). The following day Military District Number 1 was dissolved (Emerson, 1973, p. 41).

Table 4.1

Votes Cast on Select Items in Virginia's 6 July 1869 Election

| | Votes Cast | | | | |
| Item | For | | Against | | Total |
	n	*%*	*n*	*%*	*N*
New Constitution	210,585	96	9,136	4	219,721
Disfranchisement Clause	84,410	40	124,360	60	208,770
Test Oath Clause	83,458	40	124,741	60	208,199

The Aftermath: Fractures and Contest in Civil Society

The passage of the Underwood Constitution and the 14th and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution left the legitimacy of the state apparatus within Virginia uncertain. Contending with an emergent Black polity, the two dominant political parties, the Republicans and the Conservatives, fractured. While the primary dividing line for Republicans revolved around issues of equal rights and equal opportunities, for Conservatives it came down to the debt, taxation, and the provision of social services.

An Emergent Black Polity. With the 1869 election, Conservatives had effectively taken hold of the reins of government in Virginia.[9] Yet that hold was tenuous. at best. Each election between 1869 and 1902 (by which point over 80% of Virginia's population had been disenfranchised) was a contest the outcome of which was often uncertain. In the months and years to come the Black community in Virginia, a

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[9] In the immediate aftermath of the Civil War and throughout the reconstruction period, the Conservative Party in Virginia was in fact the conservative party of Virginia. Dominated by former Confederates and aligned with the Democrats at the national level, the Conservative Party refused to use the term Democrat until 1882, despite the fact that they operated as the Democratic Party of Virginia.

community whose first experiences as citizens in a democracy revolved around the Underwood Constitution, was highly engaged in advocating for themselves. They repeatedly called for and laid claim to their civil and political rights, the least of which was the right to vote (see Daily, 2000, pp. 15-16; Lowe, 1991, pp. 77-79).

Despite what one historian has described as a "relentless machine" of "poll taxes, gerrymanders, and election frauds," and the general lack of support from the national Republican Party, Black Virginians organized and persistently engaged in visible contests as they sought to secure their rights (Green, 2016, pp. 165-167; Moore, 1975, p. 168; Robinson, 2010, pp. 59-60). In areas like Petersburg, the largest Black majority city in Virginia, and Richmond, Black people held various elected and appointed offices through the end of the century (Forsythe, 1997; Jackson, 1946; Rabinowitz, 1974, p. 566). A critical part of their ability to maintain some degree of representation within the state structure was that they showed up—they were remarkably consistent and reliable voters. By one historian's estimates, Black voter turnout was high through at least 1895, after which the secret ballot was imposed (Kousser, 1974, pp. 173-174). One historian has provided some evidence that in Virginia, the Black community prioritized engagement in local politics over national politics when it came to the allocation of their time and resources (Robinson, 2010, p. 59, p. 88). Due to their numbers (constituting upwards of 40% of the population) and engagement (and thus reliability as voters), the Black electorate could be a formidable voting bloc with real power, as demonstrated by events leading up to and the creation of VNCI (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1882; Moore, 1975, p. 168).

Education as a Key Area of Mobilization. Public education, in Virginia and across the south, became both a source of legitimacy for and an entirely new apparatus of the state in the aftermath of the Civil War—largely due to the civil society demands of the Black community (Butchart, 1980; Du Bois, 1992; Green, 2016; Rabinowitz, 1974, 1978; Tyack & Lowe, 1986). During war and in its immediate aftermath, in Virginia and in communities across the former Confederacy, Black people newly freed from the bondage of slavery actively sought education. During a time of intense deprivation, Black communities expended enormous amounts of effort and scarce resources organizing makeshift schools. Scarcely a month after Union troops had taken control of Richmond early in May of 1865, the Black community had created and organized a system of schools for freedmen. Housed primarily in churches throughout the city and unified by a single administration, the system established standard school hours of operation and appointed teachers centrally.[10] As the historians Hilary Green (2016) and Howard Rabinowitz (1974, 1978) have demonstrated, similar scenes unfolded across Virginia as the Union took control. In fact, both Virginia Union University as well as Hampton University owe their origins to similar efforts. Black Virginians were not alone in their efforts. Across the south, Black communities built schools and pressed the Freedman's Bureau for support.

Perhaps more importantly, in Virginia and in state constitution after state constitution across the south, Black legislators represented their communities by enshrining the right to and the provision of an education in law as a project of the state (Butchart, 1980, pp. 169-179; Du Bois, 1992, pp. 637-669; Green, 2016; Rabinowitz,

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[10] "Cheering News From Richmond: Glorious Surprise." *Anglo-African*, May 6, 1865, p. 2 – also quoted by Green, 2016, p. 16 & p. 205.

1974, 1978; Tyack & Lowe, 1986). In Virginia, Black legislators in the General

Assembly took up the details of providing free public schools in the very first session

after the establishment of the new constitution. James Bland, a Black delegate from

Prince George County, declared that the creation of a system of education:

> shall receive our special attention to the end that wide spread ignorance which
>
> now curses our commonwealth may be replaced by intelligence, morality, and
>
> honesty, and that those of our posterity who may arrive at years of maturity shall
>
> be better prepared to enter upon the discharge of the duties of an American
>
> citizen." (Quoted in Jackson, 1946, p. 72)

It is important to note that education as a project of the state, as work that was

fundamental to the state apparatus, represented a dramatic shift in scope. In this, as in

many other things, the Civil War was an inflection point–a period that transformed both

what was as well as what was possible.

The very idea that Black people could or should be educated, much less that it

was a responsibility and obligation of the state, did not go uncontested. Reflecting on this

in a 1930 speech to Howard students, Du Bois noted that the provision of formal

education to individuals so recently freed from slavery "awakened widespread and deep-

seated doubt, fear and hostility in the south" (2001, p. 87). Indeed, there is ample

evidence of Virginians who expressed the idea that Black education was laughable and

misguided at best and outright threatening at worst. "Hoeing, ploughing, spinning, and

sewing are more necessary now to the negro than the singing of emancipation hymns or

the study of that multiplication table and alphabet which are supposed to be the panacea

for all the ills that negro flesh is heir to," noted one newspaper editorial in 1873

(Rabinowitz, 1978, p. 153). Doubt about the usefulness of education to Black people, or their ability even to be educated, was interlaced with fear that it would actually make them "worse" and "pave the way to idling and inefficiency in manual labor, and immorality" (Johnson, 1903, p. 396).

More frightening still for many white people was a host of potential social and political ills (Rabinowtiz, 1978, p. 158). As Richmonder and influential Presbyterian minister Robert Lewis Dabney pointed out in countless editorials published in the 1860s and 1870s, in common schools "the children of the decent must become companions of the children of the vile, and thus be corrupted; and that demagogues can use this system to give currency to their views and ensnare the people" (quoted by Johnson, 1903, pp.3 96-397; additional examples pp. 396-398). Historians have amassed ample evidence that Dabney was not alone with regard to his fears of general moral corruption, eventual miscegenation, and alien (i.e., Yankee) influence and that these fears were frequently articulated and acted upon through the harassment and assault of teachers (Dailey, 2000, pp. 71-75; Rabinowtiz,1978, pp. 157-159).[11]

Even amongst those who agreed that Black people should be educated there were deep divisions both in terms of who should provide the education, as well as what that education would entail (Du Bois, 2001, pp. 89-91; Green, 2016; Rabinowitz, 1978; Tyack & Lowe, 1986). Across the south, no less in Virginia, although there might have been broad agreement that education was going to be a tool of "racial uplift," whether that uplift would be achieved through an education centered on preparing Black

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[11] This occurred in Virginia as well as in communities across the south. Southern white people burned Black schools and harassed Black families who attempted to go to school. They ostracized as well as verbally and physically assaulted those who taught in Black schools, sometimes killing them. See Butchart, 1980, pp. 181-195; Tyack & Lowe, 1986, p. 242.

Americans for "useful" social roles and practical skills or for democratic citizenship through a broader liberal arts type education was a matter of deeply felt and explicitly political conflict (Butchart, 1980, pp. 77-95; Tyack & Lowe, 1986, p. 242).

The very idea that the State, as opposed to the family or some civil society organization, would provide said education was a seismic shift driven in large part by the demands of the Black community. In 1865, Black Richmonders were creating their own schools, in churches and privately owned buildings throughout the city. By 1882, they were petitioning the Richmond School Board as well as their elected representatives to appoint Black teachers to Black schools (Green, 2016, pp. 165-167; *Virginia Star*, December, 1882). This shift started, in part, with the passing of the Underwood Constitution. At the same time, the Black community more broadly articulated a particular and consistent stance in relation to the state provision of education—that it was in fact a fundamental responsibility of a legitimate state—and that stance and the associated rhetoric was eventually adopted and utilized by the Readjusters.

The Readjusters were an alternative political party that emerged during the late 1870s. Led by former Confederate general William Mahone, the party was an unlikely yet effective interracial coalition made possible by fractures in the Republican and Conservative parties.

Republican Division. Although the general reference point for Republican obsolescence in the South is the contested presidential election of 1876 and the Compromise of 1877, for Virginia, the obsolescence of the Republican Party started much earlier. In the direct aftermath of the war, Republicans in Virginia were divided. One group, dubbed "Radical Republicans" and composed of mostly former enslaved

people and a small group of white people, were deeply committed to equal rights and equal opportunity for Black people. Another group, known as "Moderate Republicans" and composed mostly of white "native Unionists" and former Whigs, refused to accept a future in which Black people were anything other than an "agricultural laboring class" (Lowe, 1991, pp. 72-72).

Over time, historians have placed the blame for the divide on both the Moderates and the Radicals. Some have argued that the Radicals refused to cooperate (Lowe, 1991) while others have portrayed the issue as one of abandonment, whereby Moderates and the national Republican Party ignored and abandoned the Radical Black majority of Republicans in Virginia (Dailey, 2000). Certainly, there is ample evidence that Black people in Virginia had good reason to be dissatisfied with the Republican Party at large.

To better understand the general situation, consider the following example from 1871, as it played out in the Richmond *Daily Dispatch* over a period of weeks. The series started with coverage of a convention to nominate candidates for the state Senate from Henrico County and the city of Richmond and for the House of Delegates from the city of Richmond. When it came time to choose nominees for the House, no Black candidates were selected, a point of contention that could not be overcome (Local Matters, 1871a). Lewis Lindsey, a delegate, raised objections, saying that he "could not go back to his constituents and tell them that the African race had again been slighted" (Local Matters, 1871b; Wynes, 1961, p. 9). To which he was told that "to place a colored man on the ticket would be to risk the success of the party" (Local Matters, 1871b; Wynes, 1961, p. 9). The dispute was eventually brought to the state Republican Party Executive Committee for resolution. The Executive Committee declared the House nominations to

be null and void (Local Matters, 1871b). When a new slate of candidates was nominated, it still contained not a single Black candidate:

> The dissatisfaction of the Radicals of Henrico County with the legislative ticket nominated at the custom house a few weeks ago has not been at all concealed. On the contrary, it has been loudly proclaimed on many occasions … [and] has finally culminated in a new Convention and the nomination of another ticket. The new Convention was held at the county court-house on Saturday, and was largely attended and correspondingly disorderly. Resolutions were adopted denouncing the regular nominees for the Senate as made by unfair means, and unworthy of the support of the party.... [Changes to the ticket were made.] These changes, however, did not make the ticket entirely satisfactory, for Lewis Lindsey, who expected the nomination for the Senate, got on the rampage and refused to be brought into the traces. He is dissatisfied with the whole ticket, not only because his own claims were ignored, but because not a single colored man will be on the House ticket for the city. (Local Matters, 1871b)

What is interesting and informative about this account is both the engagement of the larger body politic (evidenced by the expectations from the delegates that they will be held accountable by their constituents and convention attendance) as well as the behavior of the Republican Party Executive Committee and the eventual outcome. Thus, despite calling for a new convention, in the end not a single Black candidate ended up on the ballot.

Well before 1877, Black people in Virginia had clear evidence that the Republican Party was going to be of little help. As the work of various historians has

demonstrated, the example above was not singular (Dailey, 2000; Moore, 1975). Due in large part to Republican unwillingness to support Black candidates, over time the number of Black Virginians serving in the General Assembly steadily decreased. In 1869, Republicans had sent thirty Black representatives to the General Assembly (Dailey, 2000, p. 36; Moore, 1975, p. 168). By 1878, only five Black people served (Moore, 1975, p. 168). While the Black community remained engaged in politics, their power within and allegiance to the Republican Party was limited.

This was not a winning strategy. White Republican unwillingness to work with and cede power to Black Republicans fractured the party and left it in disarray. Describing the situation in 1873, one nameless political operative wrote that there was "no pretended organization of the Republican party…beyond a nominal Chairman" (Memorandum, ca. 1873). After 1873, Republicans suffered more and more losses to the Conservative Party, and the Conservative Party used their majority in the General Assembly to "systematically wrest what rights they could from Virginia's African Americans" (Dailey, 2000, p. 37). In addition to gerrymandering, poll taxes, and other election frauds, the Conservative Party controlled General Assembly abolished a third of local political offices, reduced the size of the House of Delegates by a third, and added petit larceny to the list of actions that disqualified one from voting (Dailey, 2000, p. 37).

By 1877, the Republican Party had divided and was in such disarray that their Executive Committee ceased to exist in practice, and they failed to nominate a candidate for governor (Dailey, 2000, p. 36; Moore, 1975, p. 169).

Conservative Division. Just as the Republican Party split apart, so too did the Conservatives, albeit for markedly different reasons. While the primary dividing line for

Republicans revolved around issues of equal rights and equal opportunities, for Conservatives it came down to the state debt, taxation, and the provision of social services such as education.

Prior to the Civil War the commonwealth of Virginia had invested heavily in the railroads. Having taken out loans to buy railroad stock in order to facilitate construction on the eve of the Civil War, Virginia was $33.3 million in debt and thus one of the nation's largest borrowers (Dailey, 2000, p. 17). Four years later, the railroads were in ruin and the state's primary source of revenue, property taxes, had been compromised (Dailey, 2000, pp. 17-18).[12] Yet in 1866 the legislature "unanimously assumed full responsibility for the principal of the pre-war debt and authorized the issuance of bonds to cover the interest which had accumulated during the war" (Virginia, 1866, p. 79). Despite dire economic circumstances, under Conservative majority rule the state remained committed to funding the debt as opposed to readjusting or repudiating it, a path taken by other southern states.

In 1871, with the debt topping $45 million, the General Assembly made what would turn out to be a disastrous decision. The state issued new bonds in an attempt to refinance the debt. However, by allowing individuals to pay their taxes with bond coupons in lieu of cash, the General Assembly effectively undercut the commonwealth's primary source of revenue. Virginia started running a deficit (Dailey, 2000, pp. 28-29; Moore, 1975, pp.17-19). The state's problems were compounded by a nationwide

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[12] After the Civil War, property taxes had diminished for two reasons. On the one hand, property damage was immense, resulting in the devaluation of farmland by half as well as the destruction of railroad lines and various structures in cities like Petersburg and Richmond On the other hand, (Salmon and Campbell, 1994, pp. 50-51, Dailey, 2000). Prior to emancipation, enslaved Black people were items of personal property and as such, generated tax revenue for the state as well. As historian George Ruble Woolfork points out: slavery as "a species of taxable wealth…contributed materially to an important area of public needs-the support of government on the city, county, and state levels" (1960, p. 182).

economic collapse in 1873 followed by four years of economic depression (Moore, 1975, p. 168; Emerson, 1973, p. 53). As historian Jane Dailey explains, by 1878 "Virginia was in the midst of a full-blown fiscal crisis. That year 47 percent of the state revenue was collected in the form of nonmonetary coupons from bonds. Annual income fell about $800,000 short of the budget. To meet all obligations, the state auditor estimated, would require a 75 percent tax increase, an impossibility given the depression" (Dailey, 2000, p. 29).

The Conservative Party thus began to split between a "Funder" majority, mostly made up of what one historian has called Virginia's "traditional ruling class" and a "Readjuster" minority, made up of the "fringe elements" of the party (Moore, 1975, pp. 18-19). With former Confederates on both sides, the divide between Funders and the Readjusters was one of geography, age, and social class, and thus distinctly different economic interests. Funders were mostly large landholders living in the southeastern part of the state or elites living in the cities. The Readjusters were a more heterogenous group. James Tice Moore has argued that there were in fact three distinct white Readjuster factions (1978). The first group was drawn from an embittered and "ruined planter class" composed of older men living in the Piedmont and Tidewater regions (Moore, 1974, pp. 54-55). The second group was composed of a younger group of men from the southwest and valley, mostly professionals (Moore, 1974, p. 55), but also small farmers and herdsmen who had grown resentful of the Confederacy early on during the war (Lowe, 1991, p. 74). The third and most progressive group came from cities in the Tidewater and the Fall Line (Moore, 1974, p. 56). It was this group and their de facto leader, William Mahone, that would come to dominate the Readjuster movement.

General William Mahone. James Tice Moore has described Mahone as "the antithesis of the Old Dominion's traditional leadership type….A tavern-keeper's son, he personified the spirit of the dynamic middle class" (1974, p. 56). Mahone was also a railroad magnate, both before and after the war, and a purportedly influential yet divisive political figure (Blake, 1935; Brent, 2016; Dailey, 2000; Eckenrode, 1904; Levin, 2005; Moore, 1974, p. 56; Pearson, 1917, pp. 68-84). It is clear that Mahone used every political tool he could muster in support of his agenda, from newspaper articles and editorials, to generous monetary support of politicians and an active lobbying operation (Pearson, 1917, pp. 68-84). While Mahone's so called "real" motivations or attitude towards Black people have been lost to history, his rhetorical and tactical strategy, as well as the political machine that he created, have lived on in both the archives and in the work of numerous historians (Blake, 1935; Dailey, 2000; Eckenrode, 1904; Pearson, 1917).

1877 was a turning point for Readjusters and for Virginia politics as a whole. It was during this election cycle that Mahone emerged as a leader, and in so doing placed the debt's detrimental impact on education at the center of debate. During the 1877 Conservative primary, Mahone decided to put his hat in the ring for governor. In defining his position, Mahone advocated for "a complete readjustment of the debt of the commonwealth and of the annual liabilities thereunder which shall be within certain and reasonable capacity of the people to pay" (Mahone, 1877, quoted in Pearson, 1917, p. 72). Further, he positioned the reallocation of funds originally designated for the schools to pay back the debt as a violation of the constitution and a violation of the will of the

people (Dailey, 2000, pp. 42-43; Pearson, 1917, p. 72). In so doing, Mahone used the

education as an issue to cast doubt on the very legitimacy of state government.

Despite gaining some traction, Mahone did not win the governorship. However,

his actions and the Conservative Party's continuing indifference to the debt, combined

with the disintegration of the Republican Party, led to a surge of independent candidates

running for the legislature in the central and southwestern part of the state (Moore, 1978,

p. 58). When all was said and done, 22 independents, nearly all of whom supported the

readjustment of the debt, did end up winning seats in Virginia's House of Delegates

(Dailey, 2000, p. 42). Their election led at least in part to the passage of the Barbour Bill,

which essentially placed the claims of creditors last in terms of the state's funding

priorities. Although the bill never took effect, its passage did provide an example of

cross-party cooperation—with Conservative Party Readjusters, Republicans and

independents voting together—and forced Conservative Party Funders to take a stand.

When Governor Holliday vetoed the bill, he rationalized his decision by arguing that the

debt had a prior claim on the state and said that people who wanted schools should pay

for those schools themselves (Dailey, 2000, pp. 42-43). In the wake of the 1877

primaries, many Conservatives had perceived the party to be softening on the debt

(Moore, 1978; Pearson, 1917). Yet, in the wake of Holliday's veto, it became clear to

Readjusters that the Funders would not be swayed to compromise on the debt issue.

Readjusters as a whole, both those within the Conservative Party ranks as well as the

ones who truly considered themselves to be independents, became similarly entrenched

and aligned in their interests and also increasingly willing to reach across the proverbial

aisle for some help.

The passage of what would become known as the Underwood Constitution was a critical historical moment not only because it established the state government of Virginia, but also because, in guaranteeing Black men the right to vote and mandating that the state create a system of free public schools, it changed both the relationship of Black people to the state and the role of the state in a fundamentally new way. These changes, along with the fractured political and social context of Virginia, proved to be necessary precursors to the establishment of VNCI.

4.2.2 Third Party Politics & the Founding of VNCI (1879 ~ 1883)

The spring of 1879 marked a significant turning point in Virginia politics. The divisions within the Republican and Conservative parties increased the relative value of the Black electorate and proved to be fertile ground for a true third party to emerge. While every individual Readjuster may not have believed that Black people should participate in politics, the Readjuster Party leadership recognized the need for this participation and thus sought support from the Black community. The Black electorate was critical to Readjuster success. Knowing their own worth, Black leaders strove to translate it into agenda-setting power. This brief period was marked by contest over control of the state and two critical moments in which control of the state shifted: 1) the election of 1879, in which Readjusters wrested control of the Virginia General Assembly from Conservatives with the help of Black Republicans; and 2) the election of 1881, in which Readjusters, having incorporated Black Republicans—and thus the Black community's priorities—into the party, took effective control of the entire state apparatus in Virginia, paving the way for the establishment of an institution such as VNCI.

In February of 1879, the Readjusters formally came together as a separate party and quickly got to work (Dailey, 2000, pp. 43-44; Moore, 1978, pp. 63-64; Pearson, 1917, pp. 118-119). The men that made up the Readjuster leadership were seasoned political leaders formerly of the ranks of the Conservative Party. As such, they were well equipped to run a coordinated and sophisticated campaign across the state of Virginia (Moore, 1978, pp. 63-64; Pearson, 1917, pp. 118-131). Mahone's rhetoric as a gubernatorial candidate in 1877 set the tone for the Readjusters as a separate political party. The new party coalesced around a platform of protecting voting rights, repudiating a portion of the state debt, and restoring social services, of which free public education became primary.

The Black Polity. In the election that ensued, Black people became, for the first time, a really critical sector of the electorate with some degree of power. With the Conservative vote split, both Funders and Readjusters courted the Black vote (Moore, 1978, p. 63; Moore, 1975, p. 170-171). Virginia's election was of keen interest to the national parties. Fearful of what the chaos in Virginia might bring, President Hayes, a Republican, encouraged Black people to remain loyal and "spurn all forms of financial 'repudiation'" (Moore, 1975, p. 171).

The historian Harold Forsythe has argued that, similar to the south at large, in post-bellum Virginia, "[p]olitical mobilization among freedpeople was to a great degree an extension of social order…[I]ndependent churches, fraternal and benevolent societies, family groupings, and informal plantation associations constituted the political society that responded to enfranchisement in the late 1860s" and continued to form the network of social ties undergirding the political organization of the Black community throughout

the 19th century (1997). For Black Virginians, the necessity and importance of political and civil rights were enmeshed in their everyday lived experiences. Churches functioned as places of worship and also as schools, community centers, and meeting places for political organization (Brown, 1994; Carey, 2000; Green, 2016, p. 22, p. 159; Montgomery, 1995, pp. 163-190; Oliver, 1997; Raylor, 1926; Robinson, 2010, p. 74; Turner, 2013). The Readjusters were keenly aware of and attentive to this social order. In addition to keeping detailed records on capitation (or poll) taxes (a common practice of all parties, so that the party could pay those taxes for members who were unable), William Mahone also kept lists of Black churches and ministers across Virginia, mapped out with routes for canvasing (Box 189, c.1).

A Critical Moment: The 1879 Election

In the end, the Black electorate appears to have split between the Republican Party and the Readjusters. The election of 1879 turned out to be a huge victory for the newly formed party. As reported by *Richmond State,* Readjusters took 20 seats in the Senate and 41 in the House, Funders took 14 and 42 respectively, and Republicans took 6 and 16 (November 10, 1879; Moore, 1978, p. 64). Out of the 24 Republicans, 13 were Black. This meant that Readjusters had a majority, but with the seats split three ways they needed a coalition to get anything done.

Mahone and his fellow Readjuster leadership zeroed in on the 13 Black Republicans as their most likely allies (Article, 1879, December 11; Goodwin, 1879; Hughes, 1879; Moore, 1974, pp. 64-65; Richardson, 1879). Just after the November election, D.J. Goodwin wrote to Mahone that the Readjusters "must give them [the Black Republicans] something in the way of offices and also in a legislative point of view…to

win the masses of that party" (Goodwin, 1879). Tellingly, he went on to specifically suggest that they find a way to fulfill their campaign promises, and "provide for the public schools. We must let them know that we are their friends" (Goodwin, 1879).

Given the fragility and disarray of the Republican Party and the degree to which it had failed the Black population in Virginia, as well as the concessions that the Readjusters were so clearly ready to make, Black Republicans were not averse to forming a coalition despite discouragement from the national Republican Party (Article, 1879, December 6; Article, 1879, December 8; Dailey, 2000, pp. 46-47; Moore, 1975, p. 171). In the days leading up to the start of Virginia's assembly and in the early days of the assembly itself, Mahone met repeatedly with the Black Republicans. The end result was a tight and well-organized coalition (Article, 1879, December 6; Article, 1879, December 8; Moore, 1975, p. 172). Indeed, as James Tice Moore has described it, that year the alliance between the Black Republicans and the Readjusters "dominated the legislature until its adjournment in March 1880" (1975, p. 172).

Writing in December of 1879, the Richmond *Daily Dispatch* described Mahone as "talking them [the Black members of the Republican Party] into submission" and the Readjusters as a whole as talking "mighty pretty to the negroes" but making "no specific promises" (Article, 1979, December 6, p. 1). Yet, it is also clear from the article in question, as well as Mahone's correspondence, that the Readjusters did in fact make some promises. Mr. T.T. Fauntleroy, "who was thought to have a sure thing of it for Secretary of the Commonwealth," didn't make the slate when "somebody" let it slip that he was well known for speaking "eloquently against putting negroes on juries" (Article, 1979, December 6, p. 1). In addition to making important concessions with regard to state

patronage, Readjusters also decided early on to support a poll tax repeal in part as an overture to the Black Republicans. In return, Black votes provided the margin of victory on other Readjuster priorities and were critical to Mahone's election by the Virginia Legislature to the United States Senate (Moore, 1975, p. 172).

Although the Readjuster-Black Republican alliance appeared relatively tight during the 1880 legislative session, there was ongoing conflict that reverberated throughout the rest of the year. With a presidential election on the line, campaign dollars and representatives from both national parties flowed into the state, and neither party was willing to break rank. In the election cycle that followed, the Readjuster ticket secured less than 17% of the vote (31,527 out of the 180,469 votes cast), coming in a disappointing and resounding third (Moore, 1974, p. 76). There was, however, a surprising silver lining to these results. Readjusters maintained an intact party structure, and the white Readjuster leadership emerged from the fray angry, as well as increasingly committed to their cause and with a better understanding of the degree to which they were beholden and thus willing to make concessions to Black Republicans (Dailey, 2000, pp. 53-54; Moore, 1974, p. 76;). Similarly, Virginia Republicans had come in second in terms of votes, but still lost, even with the Conservative Party divided. The Black population in Virginia was clearly disillusioned with the party of Lincoln and, perhaps more importantly, demanding accountability and action in the wake of the election. In Lynchburg, Alexandria, Portsmouth, and Elizabeth City, Black communities demanded the removal of "federal spoilsmen" (Moore, 1974, p. 77; Editorial, 1881, April 26; Editorial, 1881, January 7; Editorial, 1881, January 21; Editorial, 1881, March 24; Editorial, 1881, April 1; Editorial, 1881, May 13; Editorial, 1881, June 24; Editorial,

1881, July 8; Editorial, 1881, February 25; Editorial, 1881, March 11). And in Richmond, Black leaders called for a "Negro state convention" to consider endorsing the Readjusters.

The 1881 Petersburg Convention. The convention that the Richmonders called for met in Petersburg, the commonwealth's largest Black majority city and a key Readjuster enclave, on March 14, 1881 (U.S. Department of the Interior, 1882; Address to Virginians, 1881). With almost 300 Black Republicans present, plus a large audience, the press reported robust debate. At the end of the day the convention resolved to support the Readjuster party (Address to Virginians, 1881; Daily, 2000, p. 54; Moore, 1974, p. 77;). In addition to pledging their support to the Readjusters, the convention delegates also reaffirmed their allegiance to the national Republican Party, and reiterated the importance of education, jury service, and the franchise as "the best safeguards of all that is valuable in our citizenship" (Address to Virginians, 1881).

That August the Virginia Republican primary convention split in two over the Republican-Readjuster coalition. Rightfully fearful of having their delegates purged, those advocating for a coalition with the Readjusters (coalitionists) set up a second convention—not to nominate candidates, but rather to pledge their support for the Readjusters (Moore, 1974, p. 80).

The national Republican Party was similarly divided in their support, with President James Garfield averse to the repudiation of the debt and the Readjusters more broadly, while others endorsed the coalition movement (Moore, 1974, pp. 78-80). With President Garfield's death in September (over a month after being shot), the national scene changed quite dramatically for coalitionists. President Chester Arthur, believing

that the Readjusters offered a unique opportunity to break the solid south, acted almost immediately to remove anti-coalitionist spoilsmen in Virginia and replaced them with "Mahonites" (Moore, 1974, p. 82). At the time, federally appointed positions in Virginia stood at almost 2,000 (Dailey, 2000, p. 57). Just as critically, with President Arthur's ascension and the clear support of the coalition movement, funds rolled in from Republican coffers across the country, providing Mahone and the Readjusters with the resources needed to pay supporters' poll taxes and thus enable them to vote (Moore, 1974, pp. 81-82). For the Readjusters, the timeline was tight. In the wake of the election, one Conservative Party-leaning newspaper in Richmond described reports of hundreds of poll taxes being paid the Monday before Tuesday's election (Article, 1881, November 9, p. 1). Regardless, on Tuesday, November 8, 1881, the Black electorate turned out in force, according to reports from newspapers across Virginia (Article, 1881, November 11, p. 2).[13]

The Provision of Education as a Key Facet of a Legitimate State. During the 1870s through the early part of the 1880s, the Black community in Virginia became increasingly vocal over issues of access to and quality of education; they saw those issues as ones to be solved not by civil society, but rather by and through the state. In both Black newspapers as well as Black political and Black labor conventions the issue of education was a repeated and persistent theme (Dailey, 2000; Robinson, 2010, pp. 66-68). In a letter from Orra Longstone to an 1875 "labor convention," she urged Black people to show allegiance to "that party which will educate the colored children; that the

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[13] This issue of the *Daily Dispatch*, a Conservative/Democratic newspaper, contains both descriptions from the newspaper itself, as well as reprints from local and national newspapers detailing the election results in Virginia.

free-school feature should be made the longest, broadest, and strongest plan in their platform" (Langstone, 1875). The Petersburg convention's placement of education as a central safeguard to citizenship was no accident, but rather a reflection of the broader view of Black communities across Virginia, in cities as well as more rural areas (Green, 2016; Rabinowitz, 1974, 1978). As one Black editor wrote in 1882, grouping the issue of Black teachers for Black schools with other civil and political rights: "No candid white person in the South will deny that the colored people have been denied their civil and political rights. For, are they not as a class excluded from our juries, from holding office, aye, from teaching their own children in the capacity of public free schoolteachers?" (Editorial, 1882 November 18). D.J. Goodwin's suggestion to Mahone that the Readjusters "provide for the public schools" reflected Goodwin's understanding of state-supported education as a deeply felt and often- articulated priority for the Black community.

Figure 4.1

Timeline of Political Events Leading up to the Establishment of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute
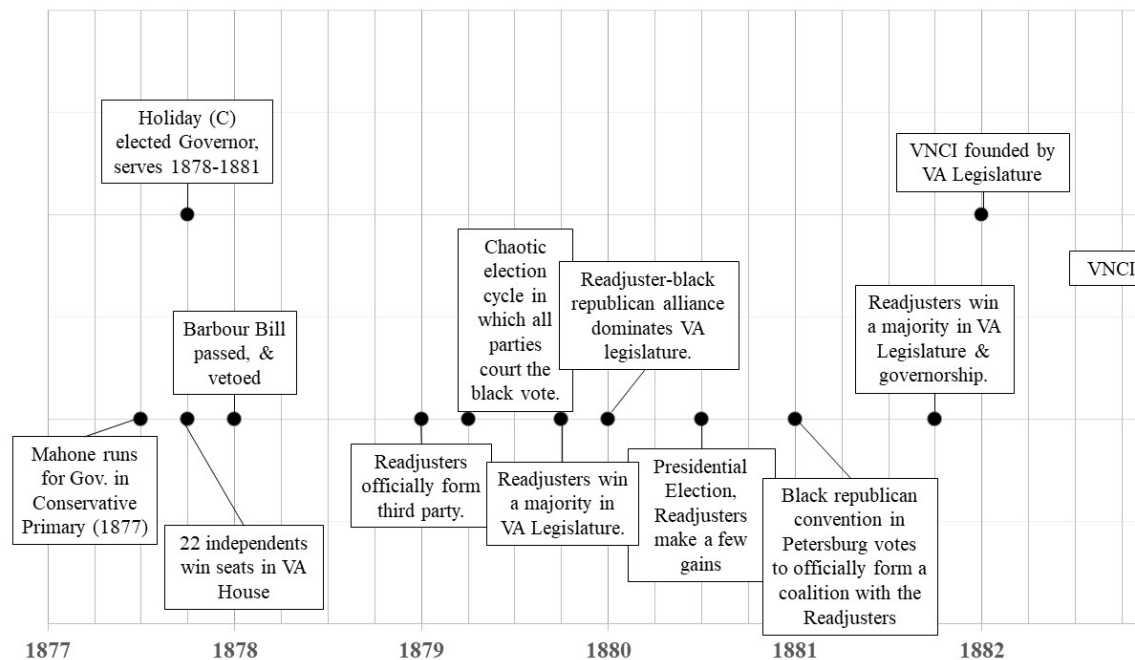
When, on March 28th, 1881—just a few weeks after the Petersburg convention—Mahone gave a speech outlining the "attitude of the Readjusters in Virginia," he showed considerable and deliberate alignment with the Black Republicans and the broader Black community. Echoing the sentiments of the delegates as to the importance of education, jury service, and the franchise, Mahone emphasized remediation of the debt, the provision of free schools, the elimination of poll taxes, and a "fair count" as the central planks of the Readjuster platform (Mahone papers).

A Critical Moment: The 1881 Election

Of Elections and Charters. The 1881 election in Virginia was a resounding success for the Readjuster party. Not only did the party take the governorship, they also won majorities in both the house and the senate, which, when combined with federal

patronage, gave them effective control of the entire state apparatus in Virginia. Unsurprisingly, given the rhetoric of their campaign and the promises that Mahone had made, one of the Readjuster's first priorities was directly related to the state provision of education.

In order to appreciate both the significance of the creation of VNCI as well the power of the Black electorate in this particular historical moment, it is important to understand the condition of Virginia's system of education and to be clear about how people understood the state's obligations to provide for a system of free schools. Certainly, the Readjusters felt some obligation to "do something" about the condition of the commonwealth's system of education, especially as that system functioned in relation to the Black community. And clearly, there were some options that were off the table. For example, in his address to the General Assembly, newly elected Governor Cameron said outright, "The question of mixed schools calls for no discussion" (Virginia, 1882a, p. 101). Given the degree to which Black schools had been neglected, Readjusters had many possible options to show their commitment to improving educational opportunities for Black people (Virginia, 1882a). Over the intervening years, the state had simply not built and opened Black schools at rates commensurate with white schools. In the late 1870s through 1881, white schools outnumbered Black schools almost three to one, despite having roughly the same numbers of pupils (Virginia, 1881). The Black schools that did exist were also under-resourced and poorly staffed. In lieu of appointing qualified Black teachers to Black schools, school boards had developed a habit of appointing white teachers who had failed the state teaching exam (Dailey, 2000, p. 71). In addition to

burdening Black schools with unqualified teachers, this practice left qualified Black teachers without a job. Readjusters could have focused exclusively on any of these issues.

Further, although Virginia had as yet not established a normal school, it is clear from both the text of the Underwood Constitution as well as the debate over the provisions of the constitution that the "system" of free schools was always intended to include several normal schools (Virginia, 1868, *The Debates and Proceedings of the Constitutional Convention*). For years William Ruffner, the state superintendent of public education, had requested that the legislature make some provision for normal schools in annual report after annual report (Virginia Department of Education, 1880, pp. 137-138). And, under the impetus of the Readjusters, several attempts to create normal schools had already been undertaken in the preceding years (Burk, 2002, p. 68; Emerson, 1973, p. 80). As such, the idea that the Readjusters would put forward and pass legislation establishing one or more *white* normal schools would not, in and of itself, have been surprising.

Indeed, it does appear as though establishing normal schools was on the minds of many people. On December 15, 1881, Delegate Pollard introduced a resolution in the house to "establish and foster normal schools as provided by section 6, Article VII, of the constitution" (Virginia, 1882b, p. 45). A few weeks later, on January 5, another Readjuster delegate put forward a resolution that "the committee on schools and colleges be instructed to make immediate enquiry as to the propriety of establishing one or more normal schools in the state, and to report by bill or otherwise" (Virginia, 1882b, p. 87). Yet neither of these resolutions progressed beyond the committee stage, and when a bill finally did emerge, it went beyond the parameters of a typical normal school.

Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. On February 1, 1882, Delegate

Alfred W. Harris introduced House Bill 271, "a bill to incorporate the Normal and

Collegiate Institute, and provide for the support of the same" (Virginia, 1882b). Delegate

Harris's bill was a significant departure from what had previously been proposed. Not

only would VNCI be a Black school, it would also have a liberal arts college in addition

to the normal school; and perhaps more important to the Black community, it would have

Black teachers and a BoV composed of six "well-qualified colored men" in addition to

the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Virginia, 1882b).

On February 14th, attempting to put a stop to a series of amendments, Harris

launched a defense of the bill and articulated the case for Black teachers, Black control,

and education as the foundation stone for equal opportunity, as well as equal political and

civil rights. In articulating his case, Harris leaned heavily on the emergent institution's

intended mission, which was to be about both social mobility and democratic equality.

Thus, Black teachers were necessary because of their commitment to the "intellectual

advancement of the colored race" and "would be interested in the advancement of our

children from love of race and pride in their own work" (Richmond *Daily Whig*, February

15, 1882). Although the school would of course have a "Normal department" it would

also provide "for the higher and professional education of our people" (Richmond *Daily

Whig*, February 15, 1882). Although Harris cedes separation of the races as a necessity,

he makes a clear claim to equality:

> that the Negro, with an opportunity, could and would stand shoulder to shoulder
>
> with his white brother in all that goes to make a full, complete and good man. The
>
> Negro is doing it at Harvard, at Yale, and in all the first institutions of the

country…I know that with such an opportunity as this institution will give we can demonstrate to that class of gentlemen in Virginia who do not believe that we can comprehend the higher training, that we are their intellectual equals; and will ease the fears of those who yet think that it will not comport with the dignity of old aristocratic families to give the Negro a fair show. I want a place where all our blacks, girls and boys, may go and drink from the fountain of knowledge until their ambition is satiated, and then step into the world prepared as good and upright citizens to meet its responsibilities, and battle for a place among men upon their merit. (Richmond *Daily Whig,* February 15, 1882)

Figure 4.2

Alfred W. Harris, Founder, Virginia State
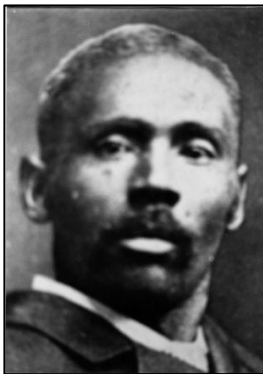
University

Special Collections & University

Archives, Virginia State University

The final series of bills passed by the General Assembly established VNCI as an unequivocally Black school, governed by Black men, with Black teachers and committed to educating Black people "exclusively" (Virginia, 1882, chap. 199, p. 474). In addition, the bills that eventually made it through the legislative process provided a one-time

payment of $100,000 for land and buildings and an annual operating fund of $20,000 (Virginia, 1882b). Despite local opposition, by late April, a commission appointed by the governor had selected, approved, and arranged for the purchase of Fleets Hill, a former farm on the edge of Petersburg, to house VNCI (Virginia, 1882b). The act of incorporation outlined a set of expectations for the new school that included: 1) a "normal department, in which shall be taught such branches as are usually taught in the best normal schools in the country…to be prescribed by the visitors"; and 2) "a college, and such professional departments as the board of visitors may think expedient and proper…In the college department shall be taught classics, the higher branches of mathematics, and such other branches as are usually taught in colleges, which branches shall be prescribed by the board of visitors to said institute" (Virginia, 1882a, chap. 199, p. 474). In addition to the oversight of the academic programs, the act charged the board with the appointment of a rector, a board secretary, and a treasurer; oversight of the care and repair of the grounds; the appointment, removal, and governance of professors and "other necessary agents"; the admission, governance, and discipline of students; as well as determining tuition and fees as needed.

The significance of VNCI's establishment is difficult to overstate. Commenting on the new institution in his first annual report as the State Superintendent of Education, Readjuster R.R. Farr noted both the great need for VNCI as well as the historic nature of entrusting "the black man" with "his own destiny" by placing Black men in control of the institution (1882, p. 64). Harris's wife, who helped him draft the bill, later noted that,

> the demand was so audacious that at first it was considered almost a joke; but the
>
> leaders needed the votes of the Negro members in the Legislature…the Negro

members stood solidly behind this bill; and, as a political necessity, it was passed…the feature of the bill which placed the Institution [sic] under colored management and authorized employment of colored instructors was one of the hardest fought points…" (Gandy, n.d.)[14]

In noting the lack of higher education for Black people and thus the necessity of VNCI, Farr drew explicit attention to the University of Virginia, Virginia Polytechnique, and the Virginia Military Institute as institutions that provided the types of opportunities for white people that he hoped VNCI would provide for Black people. As James Storum, an early administrator of the school put it,

"No State in this country has taken a position as radical as this, placing State funds and a State institution in the hands of colored men. This certainly is the first opportunity the colored people have been given to test their capacity to manage a public trust." (Virginia Department of Education, 1885, p.295)

Both Farr's and Storum's assessments are telling. VNCI was a project of the state. Over the previous 15-plus years, Conservatives and Republicans had attempted to excise Black people from any position of power within the state and its constituent parts. As noted above, Black people were not just denied the franchise, they were systematically excluded from juries, from holding office, and from teaching their own children. Placing Black men in charge of a project of the state, much less a project that was meant to be on par with white institutions and create greater equality between the races was a radical act. Over the course of a very short period of time, control of the state in Virginia had shifted

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[14] This is the only reference I have found in the historical record to Mrs. Harris, and her first name is not given. This quote may come from an article which Gandy references from "The Virginia Lancet, 1924 Anniversary issue of the Gazette," but some pages are missing and it is not entirely clear if this is the case.

dramatically. Whether or not Harris's fellow Readjusters understood his intent at the outset, the fact that the Readjuster coalition got behind this bill is a signifier of the power of the Black electorate in this moment.

VNCI was only one of many legislative victories for Readjusters during the 1881-1882 session of the general assembly. With almost the entirety of the state apparatus under Readjuster control, the party carried out a series of reforms that had a profound impact on the state government of Virginia, and on the lived experiences of Black people in Virginia during this period. By adjusting the state's debt burden, cracking down on corruption and revenue agent defaults, increasing the corporate tax rate, and holding state employee salaries steady, Readjusters created enough revenue to fund a whole host of social welfare programs (Moore, 1974, pp. 109-118). In addition to establishing VNCI, Readjusters abolished the whipping post, repealed the poll tax, increased the number of public schools, mandated equal pay for Black teachers, and otherwise took direct and indirect action to enable Black people to serve in positions of power within the state. During this period Black people served as jurors, prison guards, police officers, government clerks, postal workers, school board members, and school principals (Dailey, 2000; Green, 2016; Moore, 1974, pp. 109-118).

Viewed within the longer history of Virginia, VNCI as it was first created may appear anomalous. However, within the specific context of Readjuster Virginia, during a period in which "the whole structure of racial subordination tottered" (Moore, 1974, p. 103), VNCI was a logical, if also a radical and contested, outcome of the broader political landscape.

4.2.3 Expunging the Black Polity: VNCI Adjusts (1883-1902)

Broadly, the period spanning the end of the Civil War through 1902 was marked by a series of contests in which a white elite attempted to reinstate, or solidify the structure of, a society wherein economic, political, and social opportunities were primarily structured by race. Indeed, this may well be an accurate statement regarding the entirety of U.S. history. At the same time, for the purposes of this research it is important to demarcate this particular period, from 1883 through 1902, for the degree and severity of those contests within Virginia. Following the 1882 General Assembly session, Conservatives, now calling themselves Democrats, used every possible means to engineer what one historian has called a state of racial hysteria (Dailey, 2000, p. 155). This period is marked by contest in the form of an initial escalation in racially motivated terror and violence, which only diminished as Black people were steadily expunged from any position of authority or power within the State. Black Civil Society organizations that were in any way even tangentially political in nature similarly came under siege.

During this period there were two critical moments in which control of the state shifted: 1) the 1883 election, wherein Democrats' campaign of racial terror helped them regain their majority control of the Virginia government; and 2) the 1902 establishment of a new constitution that effectively disenfranchised Black people in the state of Virginia.

The expulsion of Black people as state actors and as a part of the electorate had a direct impact on the legitimacy of VNCI. Over this period VNCI, as a Black institution intended to bring about more equal opportunities as well as equal political and civil rights for Black people, underwent a substantive transformation that culminated in the total elimination of the college program. VNCI went from being an institution that was

explicitly focused on education for social mobility and democratic equality to one that was formally focused on preparing Black people to fill specific and limited types roles as future workers. At the same time, while the official mission and role of the school changed, the ambitions of students and community members did not. Although it might be an overstatement to describe a Black institution as having the sort of double consciousness that Du Bois described in "Strivings of the Negro People" (1897, later republished in The Souls of Black Folk), there is evidence that VNCI was pushed by various constituents "to satisfy two unreconciled ideals" when it came to the education of Black people.

A Critical Moment: The 1883 Election

In 1883 former Conservatives, now calling themselves Democrats (for the first time in Virginia), used every possible means to engineer what one historian has called a state of "racial hysteria" (Moore, 1974, p.116). As one Democrat wrote in August, "The coming contest is to decide…whether we shall have in Virginia Radical Rule, with the Negro holding the balance of power, or whether the white man shall rule. Side issues have no place in this fight" (Fincastle (Va.) *Herald*, August 30, 1883). Echoing sentiments heard at the state Democratic convention, one editor wrote that Black people "must know that they are to behave themselves, and keep in their proper places…negroes are not to be placed in any office in which they would be the official superiors of the whites…It means that the whites are the superior and governing race" (Richmond *Dispatch,* November 9, 1883). Undoubtedly, during this election cycle Democrats weaponized race and incited violence; making every issue except the control and the subordination of Black people a side issue.

Violence and intimidation permeated the election. Readjuster candidates reported increased incidents of heckling and physical altercations with both Democratic opponents as well as rally participants (Dailey, 2000, pp.142-143; Lynchburg Virginian, October 15, 1883; Moore, 1974, pp. 116-117;). The Democratic Party leadership called on "all decent white people" to ostracize or otherwise bring harm to Readjusters (C.W. Bryan to Mahone, December 10, 1883, Box 192). Local Readjuster leaders reporting back to Mahone documented the results of various extortion schemes. Failure to support the Democratic ticket resulted in such consequences as severed lines of credit, increased rents, eviction, social ostracism, and the loss of jobs (Barksdale, 1883; Curtlett, 1883; Dailey, 2000, pp. 144-145; Hale, 1883; Jones, 1883; Mechanics and Workingmen's Association of Lynchburg, 1883; Moore, pp. 116-117; Phillips, 1883; Robinson, 1883; Woods, 1883; Young, 1883). In the weeks and days leading up to the election, Democratic campaign workers visited potential supporters' homes, frightening their base with stories of "social equality" between the races (Heermans, 1883; Moore, 1974, pp. 116-117; Swann, 1883; Talley, 1883). Numerous editorials and circulars warned people that social equality invariably led to "race-mixing" (Dailey, 2000, pp. 144-149; see for examples; Editorial, 1883, August 8, p. 4; Editorial, 1883, November 22). The following editorial, arguing against mixed school boards, sang a common refrain:

> And, to get the negro to vote for their [the Readjuster] party they think it wiser to have mixed than unmixed school boards, because they think the negro will be flattered by it, as he aspires to social equality with the whites; and they know the negroes are sagacious enough to see that the first step towards mixed schools and mixed marriages is mixed school boards. And that is the secret of the policy of the

Coalitionsists (sic) [the Readjusters]. They know that their advocacy of that policy encourages the negroes to believe that ultimately they will, through the agency of that party, secure that they are most anxious to obtain –mixed schools, mixed marriages, and perfect social equality…Those who favor social equality with the negroes can vote, consistently their views and wishes, for the Coalition party, but those who oppose social equality cannot. Voters should bear in mind that 'it is the first step which costs'…" (Editorial, 1883, August 23, p. 2)

Leading up to the election, the racial tension that Democrats had fostered came to a head in Danville. In the aftermath of the 1881 election, the Readjuster controlled State had altered the locus of power in Danville by dividing the city into three wards, two of which were Black majority (Dailey, 2000, p. 113). In elections held the following summer, Readjusters took control of Danville's Common Council by an eight to four majority (Dailey, 2000, p. 113). Four of the eight Readjuster council members were Black (Dailey, 2000, p. 113). The Common Council undertook long neglected improvements to Black neighborhoods (such as the construction of sidewalks) and appointed two Black police officers (Dailey, 2000, pp. 113-115). In October of 1883, a group of Democratic leaders—local white merchants and businessmen—published what has since become known as the Danville Circular. Appearing in numerous newspapers and as a broadside, the circular gave a detailed account of the "injustice and humiliation" to which the white population had been subjected by the "misrule of the Radical or negro party" (Coalition Rule in Danville, 1883). Amongst the many complaints articulated, three themes stand out: 1) Black people being appointed to public offices; 2) Black people's prominence in public places; and 3) Black people's behavior in the homes and

offices of white employers (Coalition Rule in Danville, 1883). On November 2nd, William Sims, chairman of the Pittsylvania Readjuster Party, denounced the circular in front of a large mostly Black crowd (Dailey, 2000, p. 121). In response, the following day almost the entirety of the Democratic Party of Danville met to affirm the truth of the Circular. As they were finishing up their meeting, a morning street altercation involving a Black man jostling a white man was brought to the crowd's attention (Dailey, 2000, pp. 122-123). From there, violence ensued. By the end of the day, the white crowd had killed five Black men, and injured several others. That afternoon and through Monday "white democrats were patrolling the streets…armed with pistols and guns…" (Mahone, 1883a).

Tuesday, November 6, as Election Day and in Danville as well as across Virginia, the Democrats's continued their strategic use of fear and violence to suppress Black voter turnout.[15] In and around Danville, depositions taken after the election suggest that Black people stayed home in fear of their lives. As one woman testified, "[My husband] was afraid to go, and the colored men in my immediate neighborhood were in the same fix. It was no time for colored people to be going out of doors much less to be going to the polls to vote the re-adjuster ticket" (Mahone, 1883b). In Halifax, just 30 miles from Danville, Readjusters also filed reports of intimidation and violence:

> They have carried the election here by fraud, intimidation, shooting, and cutting
> the negroes. The funders went to the election . . . swearing they would kill the

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[15] Using Mahone's own assessment, Shibley (1972) has written that "Mahone's men believed that bribery had been the cause of the loss of the election" (p.111). It is important to note that Democrats used different strategies in different areas. The individuals writing to Mahone from counties with higher proportions of black people submitted more reports of voter suppression efforts. The individuals writing to Mahone from counties with higher proportions of white people submitted more reports of bribery.

negroes. The negroes have no protection here. They are scared now and I think

most of them would leave the country if they could…

I know of a number of negroes that will loose [sic] their homes on account of their

politics. The funders in a number of places rode around day before the election

and told the negroes if they went to the election they would be shot. We have lost

at least 160 negro votes by the committee striking off names from the Registration

books . . . and at least 60 votes by the funders paying them from $2 to $5 to stay

at home and not vote. . .” (J.D. Lay to William Mahone, November 12, 1883, and

November 19, 1883; quoted in Wynnes, 1961, p. 33)

Black people in more urban areas also faced violence and other forms of voter

suppression. In testimony submitted to Congress, Black people in Virginia reported a

variety of ruses and threats used to deny them a vote, from creating barriers to voter

registration to outright intimidation, such as stationing more police outside of the polls,

and violence (House Doc., 1st Ses., 48th Cong., 1883-4, Vol. XIV, Part II, p. 1248, p.

1282; quoted in Johnston, 1929, pp. 265-266).

In addition to fearmongering around the horrors of Black rule, Democrats also

rallied their supporters through bribes to show up at the polls. At the end of the day,

majority white precincts saw record voter turnout (Editorial, 1883, November 7, p. 1).

Describing the scene in the days after the election, the *Daily Dispatch* quoted a “high-

toned, Christian gentleman and unswerving Democrat” as saying:

We have cause to be thankful. Here in Richmond we had some very dim

perception of the danger that was menacing us…the result of the ‘malign

influence’ at Danville awakened apprehensions of the most serious kind, and no

one could foretell what would have been the consequence had the election so ended as to have threatened our social fabric with the troubles that have been experienced elsewhere. It is certain that our beautiful city would have been intolerable…" (Editorial, 1883, November 8, p. 1)

Once all ballots were counted, the Democratic Party had achieved a two to one majority in both houses of Virginia's General Assembly (Article, 1883, November 10, p. 1). Democrats celebrated their triumph against the "radical rule" of Black Republicans and Readjusters. The *Daily Dispatch* described hundreds of "quiet" and "orderly" white men going "nobly" to the polls to rescue Virginia and the city of Richmond from the "dread peril" of Black rule:

They voted, and then in almost every case quietly went away; the white people to calmly and earnestly call upon every white man to come forward and do his duty in the fight to rescue Virginia and the city [of Richmond] from the dread peril that threatened…men having the good of the city, its peace and future prosperity, at heart, rose, dressed themselves, and made their way quietly to the polls…Richmond did her duty nobly…At some of the precincts some three or four colored men attempted to vote illegally. They were promptly arrested and taken away…

People unused to late hours stood on the streets rejoicing at the prospect of better days for Old Virginia. Feelings of pride swelled their bosoms as the [sic] contemplated the rebuke given to the enemies of Virginia and the fermenters of strife, disturbance, and bloodshed…It was a night to be remembered, and the crowd remained until midnight, when all the good people went home to sleep

sweetly and dream of the dear, good old days of yore, when the good, the brave,

and true met recognition worthy of their merit." (Article, 1883, November 7, p. 1)

The Aftermath: Changes in the State

The election of 1883 was a turning point for politics in Virginia. Democrats had

learned an important lesson about the perils of democracy. Once they had regained

control of the General Assembly, they did everything in their power to ensure continued

electoral success. In 1883 and in the years to come Democrats amended city charters (to

consolidate or eliminate wards), altered the boundaries of congressional districts, and

changed the way elections were held and overseen, all to favor Democrats.[16]

Some Democratic Party efforts would have had more limited effects if it had not

been for the passage of the Anderson-McCormick Act in 1884. In and of itself, the

Anderson-McCormick Act was simply a series of amendments to existing electoral laws.

Under the provisions of the revised law, all current positions responsible for the

administration and oversight of elections were to be immediately vacated (Virginia, 1884,

p.146). The General Assembly was then empowered to appoint three-member "electoral

boards" for four-year terms in each city and county (Virginia, 1884, p. 147). These

boards then had responsibility for appointing individuals into the positions vacated,

effectively giving the majority Democrat General Assembly control of voter registration,

the way elections would be conducted, as well as the compilation and reporting of votes

cast (Virginia, 1884, pp. 148). Although the act initially encountered some legal issues,

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[16] For example, under the Readjuster majority, the General Assembly had split Danville into three wards, two of which had black majorities, effectively giving Black people a 2/3 majority in the city council. Under the Democrat majority, the General Assembly eliminated the wards. This combined with various efforts to disenfranchise Black voters, meant that Black people had virtually no representation on the city council. In 1884, districts were re-drawn. In 1887, a new predominantly white Sixth District was created (Shibley, 1972, p. 117; *Code of Virginia, 1887*, Title 5. Chap 7, Sec 50).

by the fall of 1884 the central provisions of the act held.[17] Numerous historians have

concluded that in the years following the establishment of the act, election tampering

increased to the benefit of Democrats. Stuffing the ballot box seems to have been a

particularly popular strategy. Although the election judges would eliminate excess

ballots, with complete control they would do so to the benefit of their own party (Shibley,

1972, pp. 122-123; Morton, 1919, pp. 144-145). In addition, Democrats continued to use

outright bribes, as well as violence and intimidation against Black people to discourage

them from voting (Morton, 1919, pp. 144-145; Shibley, 1972, pp. 122-123; Wynnes,

1961, pp. 39-50).

By 1885 the Readjuster party had fractured, with some of the more prominent

leaders aligning themselves with the new Democratic Party. More importantly,

throughout the 1880s and 1890s, voter intimidation and fraud continued unabetted. Black

Virginians who managed to register to vote were subjected to segregated and excessively

long voting lines, as well as challenged and rejected ballots (Buni, 1967, p. 11). Although

it is difficult to draw a straight line between the Black community's shift away from the

explicitly political to a more self-help sort of paradigm and the intimidation and fraud

that they frequently faced at the polls, a number of historians have noted such a shift

(Buni, 1967, pp. 10-13; Robinson, 2010, pp. 151-163;). Even the notoriously political

Lancet "renounced support for any political party and chose instead to focus on racial

self-help" (Robinson, 2010, p. 157).

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[17] The act was initially vetoed by Governor Cameron, a Readjuster, and then re-passed over the veto. Then the act was invalidated by the Supreme Court of Appeals as unconstitutional due to some provisions requiring election officials to be freeholders. This was subsequently taken out of the law. See Shibley, 1972, p. 119, as well as Virginia, 1884. 146-151.

Ten years after the passage of the Anderson-McCormack Act, Democrats found a more effective way of disenfranchising Black people. The 1894 Walton Act required the use of standardized ballots containing only the names of the various candidates, along with the name of the office for which they were running (Virginia, 1894). In order to vote, individuals would be given a ballot, then required to withdraw to the voting booth and "draw a line with a pen or pencil through the names of the candidates he does not wish to vote for, leaving the name or names of the candidate or candidates he does wish to vote for unscratched. No name shall be considered scratched unless the pen or pencil mark extend through three-fourths of the length of said name…" (Virginia, 1894, p. 150). The use of a standardized ballot and a voting booth effectively functioned as a literacy test. By one estimate, in the election of 1893, just before the Walton Act was passed, 65% of the adult Black men in Virginia went to the polls to cast a vote (Kousser, 1974, p. 174). After the Walton Act, Black male voter turnout was estimated to be in the low 20s as a percentage of the Black male population (Kousser, 1974, p. 174).

VNCI Adjusts

Established in the context of a powerful Black electorate, VNCI was a Black school: governed by Black men, with Black teachers, and in the words of founder Harris, committed to educating Black people such that they might "go and drink from the fountain of knowledge until their ambition is satiated, and then step into the world prepared as good and upright citizens to meet its responsibilities, and battle for a place among men upon their merit…" (Editorial, 1882, February 15). Yet, by the end of 1884, with Democrats solidly in control of most apparatuses of the state in Virginia (based largely on a platform of white supremacy and white rule), the General Assembly began to

erode Black control of VNCI. By 1891, the legislature had fundamentally changed the governance structure of the fledgling institution, put in place a white BoV, and cut the institution's annual appropriations from $20,000 to $15,000 despite rapid enrollment growth (Virginia Department of Education, 1891). Concomitant with these changes came repeated changes in VNCI's institutional leadership, mission, and associated curriculum.

Governance & Finance. Out of the seven Black men appointed to serve on VNCI's Board of Visitors along with Superintendent Farr, three were current or former elected members of the General Assembly and were known for their political leadership and oratorical skills. These individuals were Peter J. Carter; Daniel M. Norton; and Alfred W. Harris, the House delegate that had proposed the legislation establishing VNCI in the first place (Virginia, 1881, p. 384; Virginia Department of Education, 1883).[18] In addition to these three, Governor Cameron appointed Reverend William Troy, F.E. Buford (referred to variously as a judge), W.H. Pleasants and R.L. Mitchell (Virginia Department of Education, 1883). While one might assume that all seven were leaders within Virginia's Black community, the historical record reveals little about Troy, Buford, Pleasants, and Mitchell prior to their board appointments. The board met for the first time in February of 1883, in large part because the funding for the school was not available up until that point, and officially opened the school on October 1 of that same year (Virginia Department of Education, 1884, p. 3).

Early in the board's tenure, Carter, Harris, and Mitchell emerged as leaders, with Carter elected to serve as rector, Harris as secretary, and Mitchell as treasurer (VNCI, 3

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[18] The act that established VNCI set the number of BoV members at six, plus the superintendent of education. It is not clear to me, and I have not been able to resolve, why or how the governor appointed seven.

October 1883). In September of 1883, Harris was given even greater responsibility by his fellow board members, who selected him to serve as proctor of the institute and superintendent of buildings and grounds in addition to maintaining his role as secretary of the board. Along with these new responsibilities came an annual salary of $1,250, making Harris the highest paid employee at the school (VNCI, 20 September 1883). By early in 1884, there seems to have been some blurring of roles and conflict as to who was responsible for what. For example, in February, when two male students were punished for drinking by a vote of the faculty, Storum complained to the board of being chastised for having "transcended" his "authority" when, under pressure from both students and faculty members, he declined to expel the students in question (VNCI, 4 March 1884). Although it is not clear who sent the chastising communication, it seems unlikely to have been a board member (given that he was complaining to them). Further, VNCI's first official annual report submitted to the superintendent of public instruction in June of 1884 included two sections, the primary one written by Mitchell, as treasurer, and what appears to be an addendum written by Harris, as secretary to the board (Virginia Department of Education, 1884). Neither the rector's name (Carter) nor the principal's (Storum) appear in the submission. In contrast, the three other school reports for institutions of higher education were submitted by the respective principal or president (Virginia Department of Education, 1884).

By the end of 1884, with Democrats solidly in control of the General Assembly as well as numerous city and county offices based largely on a platform of white supremacy and the restoration of white rule, Black people were being pushed out of positions of power within the State. In the winter of 1884, the General Assembly started what became

a series of actions that in due time eroded Black control of VNCI and brought it even more closely under the control of the State. The General Assembly's Democratic majority divested VNCI's BoV of most of its authority by placing it under the "direct supervision of the state board of education," giving the Board of Education the power to appoint the secretary to VNCI's board, to remove BoV members "for cause" and stipulating that,

> "[i]n all matters with reference to the Virginia normal and collegiate institute, the board of education shall approve the same to make them valid, and the said board of education is hereby made responsible for the proper management of the said school in all of its departments. This shall apply to all matters of the erection of buildings, the appointment of teachers, and all other matters…(Virginia, 1884, pp. 170-173)

The General assembly had left a board in place, but without the authority to act independently on any matters except the day-to-day. Per Virginia's 1869 constitution, the Board of Education was composed of three ex officio members; two of whom were elected officials—the governor, William Cameron, a Readjuster, and the attorney general, Frank Blair, a Readjuster—and one of whom was appointed by the General Assembly, the superintendent of public instruction, R.R. Farr, also a Readjuster. In addition, the act created a position that did not as yet exist, that of president. Per the act, the president was to "be appointed by the board of education," as opposed to the BoV, "for a term of three years" starting on "January the first, eighteen hundred and eighty-five" (Virginia, 1884, p. 170).

Eighteen eighty-five was a year of dramatic change for the new institution. On December 31, 1884, Virginia's Board of Education selected "Professor H. P. Montgomery, one of the Superintendents of the Washington public schools" to serve as President of VNCI (Virginia Department of Education, 1885, p. 78). It is not clear whether they also sought at this point in time to make changes to the BoV or to Harris's position as secretary. By the institution's annual report, Montgomery declined the position (Virginia Department of Education, 1885, p. 78). The events that transpired after Montgomery declined the position are not entirely clear in the historical record. The report that appeared in the Virginia School Report (or Superintendent's Report) for 1885, submitted in October of that year, described what transpired as follows:

> …after it was positively known that Professor Montgomery would not accept, [the Board] designated the Principal of the school, Professor Colston (sic), to act until a suitable president could be selected.
>
> After considering the applications of all who had presented their claims for the place, the Board determined not to confine its selection to applicants, but to seek out the man that would add most dignity and weight to the position ; and whether he had applied or not, to tender him the appointment. After taking everything into consideration, education, intelligence, honesty, energy and general ability, Hon. J. Mercer Langston, Ex-Minister of Hayti, (sic) was considered pre-eminently fitted for the great work ; and the Board of Education, November 19, 1885, unanimously elected him president of the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. This was done without solicitation on the part of Professor Langston or his friends. Indeed, he knew nothing of it until the official announcement of the

action taken by the Board was made. (Virginia Department of Education, pp. 78-79)

Institutional records and stories from the press hint at a more complicated story of conflict, instability, and change. In January of 1885, James Storum was principal and Harris was still serving multiple roles, as secretary and member of the BoV and as proctor of the institute and superintendent of buildings and grounds. In February of 1885, Mitchell, treasurer and member of the BoV, accused Harris of usurping his role by signing warrants and vouchers on his behalf (VNCI, 24 February 1885; Alexandria Gazette, Volume 86, Number 43, 19 February 1885, p. 3). Initially, Mitchell took his complaints directly to the legislature (Petersburg *Daily Index-Appeal*, Feb 11, 1886, p. 1; Petersburg *Daily Index-Appeal*, December 9, 1885, p. 4). Harris defended himself by claiming that he had signed on Mitchell's behalf with Mitchell's full knowledge and permission, but he was contradicted by Storum, who backed up Mitchell (VNCI, December 1885). In April, the BoV dismissed Harris from his position over the accusations, and in the same month the Board of Education used their new powers to remove the entirety of the remaining Board members (VNCI, April 1885; Richmond *Daily Index*, Oct 16,1885). As the official sponsor of the bill that led to the establishment of VNCI, and as proctor, superintendent, and secretary of the Board, Harris had taken on great responsibility and wielded tremendous power. Whether or not his departure was welcomed or not, it is difficult to imagine that the change was not significant, and even more so when compounded by the unseating of the entirety of the BoV.

In August, an entirely new BoV was seated (Virginia Department of Education, 1885). Although appointed by Readjuster Governor Cameron, the appointees had to be

approved by the Democratic controlled General Assembly. In September, the new BoV
removed Storum from his position as principal, replacing him with James Colson, one of
the first five instructors hired by the BoV in 1883 (10 September 1885). Although Storum
was initially allowed to remain on the faculty, on December 4, the BoV dismissed him
for failure to obey board orders (Minutes of the BoV, December 4, 1885).

The tumult within VNCI's administration was covered by state newspapers and
elicited a reaction from both students as well as local community members in Petersburg.
One editorial described the legislature's work as "crafty and deceitful actions" that were
part of a plan to destroy and "overthrow of honest colored men" and place them "before
the public in an improper and false light" (Petersburg *Daily Index* Oct 16, 1885). Another
newspaper wrote:

> For sometime [sic] past there has been a storm brewing at the colored normal
> school near this city…[the school] was, as originally designed, an institution in
> every respect worthy of the patronage of the colored people of the state…But the
> school has fallen into the hands of the politicians, and instead of being what it was
> at first intended to be, it has, in some measure, come to be an institution wherein,
> as the colored people think, educational interests are subordinated to political
> ends.
>
> We have already published an item stating that R.L. Mitchell, the ex-treasurer,
> had placed in the hands of Mr. Miller, a democratic member of the legislature,
> charges against A.W. Harris, the late secretary. A few days ago we published
> another item stating that Professor Storum, late the principal of the school, then
> reduced to a lower rank, had been removed entirely. This action of the "powers

that be" has not been received favorably by the colored people in this community,

or by the students at the institute. The later met yesterday and agreed upon the

following memorial…The paper was signed by nearly all of the students… (The

Petersburg *Daily Index-Appeal,* Dec. 9 1885, p. 4 – The Normal School)

In the student "memorial" that followed, the school was described as having "fallen into

the hands of unscrupulous politicians" and called upon the legislature to "remedy"

several recent "objectionable" actions, including the removal of Storum "without

assigning any reasonable or just cause, but for partisan purposes" and the "appointment

of some persons for teachers who are unquestionably incompetent as such" (The

Petersburg *Daily Index-Appeal*, Dec. 9 1885, p. 4 – The Normal School).

Out of the 123 students at VNCI that fall, 43 of them signed the aforementioned

petition (Virginia Department of Education,1886, p. 11). By the fall of 1886, with

Langston in place at the helm and an entirely new governing board in place, VNCI's

annual report to the superintendent of education downplayed the drama, claiming that

"[m]any students took part in this affair without understanding what they were

doing…Some signed it without reading it, and others read it but could not comprehend

the language in which it was written." Although the faculty declined to expel the signers

of the petition en masse, another student, Mr. Holly, who chose to go public with his

concerns, was not as lucky. After returning from his winter break, Mr. Holly was

expelled for publishing an article in the *Boston Advocate* in which he had "severely

criticized the Board of Education, The Board of Visitors and some of the faculty"

(Faculty Minute Book, VNCI, January 4, 1886).

Langston took his seat as President of VNCI on January 15, 1886. He would,

however, not serve under the same BoV that had at first welcomed him to the institution,

nor under the auspices of the Board of Education that had appointed him. In the fall of

1885, a new Democratic governor, Fitzhugh Lee, and a new Democratic attorney general,

Rufus Ayres, had been elected, giving the Democrats control of virtually the entirety of

the government of Virginia as of January 1, 1886. With Farr's term expired, the

Democratic-controlled general assembly appointed a new superintendent of public

instruction, John Buchanan. By the beginning of the 1886-1887 school year, a new BoV

was yet again in place. Of the five individuals appointed, four of the six new BoV

members would go on to serve through 1889 (VNCI Catalogue, 1888-1889). Langston

lasted for exactly two years. In December of 1887, as the Board of Education considered

whether or not to reappoint Langston to the presidency, conflict again erupted. According

to Langston, Virginia's Superintendent of Public Instruction disliked him and was upset

at the positive press coverage that VNCI received under his leadership (Gandy, n.d.).

VNCI's faculty put forward a petition accusing Langston of "inciting a riot among the

students" (Article, 1887, December 2; Article, 1887, December 7). Langston had

apparently intervened, in opposition to the faculty, on behalf of some students who were

being disciplined for "insubordination" (Article, 1887, December 2; Article, 1887,

December 7). Langston claimed that "there were some" among the teachers who were

"seeking the presidency of the institute to the neglect of their duties…" (Article, 1887,

December 2), and further, that his support for the Republican party and a recent op-ed he

had published—in which he had suggested that Black people might be more willing to

join Democrats if Democratic leaders treated them fairly—was in fact "the cause of the special complaint against him" (Article, 1887, December 7).

There is little direct evidence as to the machinations of the Board. At the same time, VNCI's 1888 report to the Superintendent of Education lends some support to Langston's claims. First, the report was submitted by James Johnston, newly elected president and long-time VNCI faculty member. Johnston had come to VNCI as a teacher after being fired from a position as principal of one of Richmond's Black public schools in 1884, as part of the fallout from the 1883 election (Green, p. 159, p. 168). Second, Johnston makes a point to disavow politics and express support for the Board of Education, and specifically for the Board of Education's decision to limit the free speech rights of VNCI employees and officers. In the introduction to the 1888 report, Johnston wrote as follows:

> The worst thing that can happen to this or any other institution of learning is that the officers, teachers, and employees should take an active part in partisan politics.
>
> It makes a political machine out of what ought to have no political complexion; it causes constant intermeddling with matters that do not concern the welfare of the Institution; it makes bitter enemies where friends ought to be found, and worst of all, it causes waste of valuable time on the part of students that ought to be spent in fitting them for the stern duties and realities of mature years.
>
> Our Board of Visitors, at their last annual meeting, very wisely decided that no officer, instructor, or employee of the Institution should engage in political speaking, canvassing, or newspaper-writing. I feel that I reflect the sentiment of

everyone connected with our school when I say that all are highly gratified at this

action, and look upon this as an evidence that the Board will at all times look for

integrity and ability in their selections rather than party and politics. (Virginia

Department of Education, 1888, p. 109)

Johnston, the second president of VNCI, would go on to serve a total of 26 years,

eventually stepping down in January of 1914 due to ill health.

Academic year 1888-1889 was a turning point for VNCI both in terms of

leadership as well as finances. In the spring of 1889, the legislature reduced VNCI's

annual appropriations by 25%, from $20,000 to $15,000 (Virginia Schools Report, 1889).

Given the limits to the historical record, it is difficult to assess the reasoning behind some

of the financial changes that were instituted between the 1887-88 and the 1888-89 to

make up for the shortfall in funds. A close assessment of VNCI's annual reports reveals

some stark differences, though. In just one year, the institution increased the total number

of students by 49%, from 219 in 1888 to 326 in 1889. The largest increase was in the

number of state students, which almost doubled, from 75 to 145 in 1889. Per statute, for

each Virginia House of Delegates' district, school superintendents could select as many

as two state students to attend VNCI each year "free of charge for tuition." State Students

were thus only obligated to pay for boarding. Between 1888 and 1889, VNCI increased

the state student fees for boarding by 33%, from $30 to $40, while the composite tuition

and board fee for regular students stayed steady at $60 for the full academic year. Even

with these changes, which seem to have constituted the only immediate means available

for increasing revenue, VNCI was only able to make up around $2,000 of the total $5,000

that had been cut.

Of course, VNCI also took measures to reduce expenses. In 1888, the fledgling institution had 15 employees (9 of whom were instructional) at a cost to the institution of $9,236 in salary and wages. VNCI managed to reduce this expense by over $1,000, down to $8114 despite increasing their instructional staff from 8 to 13 individuals. It appears as though the savings was at least in part achieved through salary reductions, turnover and hiring new instructional staff at a lower rank and lower rate of pay. Thus, out of the nine individuals working for VNCI in 1888, only five stayed through to the next year. Further, while one "professor" was added to the roster, one "teacher" was replaced with two "assistant teachers" and two new "instructors" were hired.

Further, departing from a format established by his predecessors, President Johnston added a section to the 1889 annual report called Present Needs. Twelve in number, the list gives some sense for the degree to which VNCI was struggling, and the overall lack of power vested in the administration of the school. For example, chief among the enumerated needs is the development of new sources of revenue. Johnston suggested the approval of such measures as restoring the $5,000 that had been cut, petitioning the respective boards of the Peabody Fund and the Slater Fund "to appropriate $1,000 per year toward the support of shoe-making, printing, tailoring, and carpentry…", starting a night school for "students whose work will not allow them the privilege of attending the day school," and petitioning the local county for funding in consideration of the local secondary school children attending VNCI's model school.[19] Johnston also asked that the business manager be empowered to do such things as paint the roof of VNCI's main building, subdivide some of the larger dormitory rooms in order to make

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[19] Model schools were schools set up in association with normal schools in order to provide opportunities for the normal school students to practice teaching.

room for more students, and "furnish a reception room" (Virginia Department of Education, 1889). Most of Johnston's requests do not seem to have come to pass, and the financial records for 1890 and 1891 are similarly stark. By 1892, though, the institution seems to have diversified its sources of revenues. In addition to an appropriation from the Peabody Fund, collections are reported from a shoe shop, a sewing department, a farm, rental of the school's piano, and additional fees for such things as a physician and copies of one's diploma (Virginia Department of Education 1892 & 1893).[20]

The 1890 legislative session brought yet another push for changes and the beginning of what some have described as a particularly dark period in VNCI's history (Toppin). The 1889 election had resulted in a new Democratic governor, Philip McKinney, and another Democrat-controlled legislature. More important to VNCI's future, 1890 ushered in the beginning of the eight-year reign of John Massey as state superintendent of public instruction. At the 1889 state Democratic Convention, Massey had complained of "seeing the white men taxed to educate Negroes who show their ingratitude by arraying themselves against us at every election" and would later go on to tell VNCI's 1891 graduating class that "Negro slavery was a blessing" (Toppin, p. 51, & p. 53). During the 1890 legislative session, Democrats attempted to variously "abolish the school entirely" and remove the collegiate program (*The Independent*, Apr 3 1890; also noted by Toppin, 1992, p. 51). Unsuccessful in these endeavors, the new Board of Education, led by Massey, replaced VNCI's Board of Visitors with a new and entirely

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[20] The physician's fee appears to have been a fee required of every student, the collection of which went towards paying the school physician's salary.

white slate of appointees (*The Independent*, Apr 3 1890; Toppin, 1992, p. 51).[21] The tides had turned. A Black person would not serve on VNCI's board again until 1964 (Toppin, 1992, p. 51).

Academic Programs. As described above, while VNCI remained a Black school, with Black teachers and a Black administration, by 1890 the school was no longer governed by Black leaders. Regardless of whether or not there was a direct connection, along with this change any commitment to educating Black people such that they might "go and drink from the fountain of knowledge until their ambition is satiated…and battle for a place among men upon their merit" had clearly also began to erode. To get some sense for how those in power were thinking about Black education, consider the excerpt below from the 1898-1899 Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, submitted by Massey's successor Joseph Southall, in a section entitled "The Education of the Negro":

> …our common schools are not giving the Negro the right kind of education to aid him in becoming a better and more profitable citizen…we have been giving him a smattering of book-knowledge that tends to educate him out of his environment rather than to aid him in making an honest living and becoming a good and profitable servant of the State. The education that we are giving the Negro makes him dissatisfied with the menial pursuits in which his fathers engaged, and in which he must engage, if he is to make an honest living and become a useful

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[21] During an extra legislative session in 1887, the Virginia legislature gave the Board of Education the power to appoint VNCI's board. Given the composition of the Board of Education, which included the governor, the attorney general, and the superintendent of public instruction, this was a relatively minor change from previous years, when the board was appointed by the governor alone. It did, however, take the legislature out of the approval process (see Acts, Extra Session, 1887, chpt 325).

member of the community… (Virginia Department of Education, 1899, pp. xxxiv-xxxv)

Southall then goes on to talk about the need to give Black people "moral and industrial training" so as "to make them thrifty in habits and productive in labor," especially given the "undeniable excess of criminality among the Negro population" and the fact that they have to compete "with the most powerful and progressive race in the world" (Virginia Department of Education, 1899, pp. xxxvi-xxxvii). Southall's vision and that of his fellow Democratic Party members stands in stark contrast to the one that Harris had posited in 1882. In fact, Southall's positioning of education for Black people, which was shaped by and echoed more broadly within Virginia and the United States at the time, went a long way towards undermining the legitimacy of VNCI's mission as it was then constituted.[22]

Despite what appears to be some pandering to this vision of industrial education, the vestiges of Harris's more liberatory vision remained relatively strong in terms of VNCI's actual programs through at least 1902.[23] As such, the formal curriculum that was established and fully implemented by 1886, with a College Department, a College Preparatory Department, a Normal Department, a Normal Preparatory Department, and a Modal School evolved but in relatively minor ways (as determined by comparing the actual classes offered from one year to the next) during these years. While the rhetoric of the president's annual reports regarding such topics as industrial, manual, moral and

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[22] For more information on the forces shaping black education in Virginia specifically and the United States more broadly during this time, see Harlan, 2011 and Anderson, 1988.

[23] The first discussion of industrial education as well as moral and religious education appear as early as 1885-1886, just three years into VNCI's operation (Virginia Department of Education, 1886).

religious education varied over time, the actual courses of study and classes offered were relatively constant.

At the same time, over the years President Johnston repeatedly used the possibility of industrial education as the basis for his requests for more resources. This at least suggests that he was under increased pressure from the state to move VNCI towards a more industrial model of education; or at the very least it suggests that he understood industrial education specifically to have some enhanced level of legitimacy as a state-supported endeavor for a Black school. For example, in the 1889 Superintendent's report, Johnston devoted an entire section to Industrial Features, taking up a full page and describing numerous possible enterprises in which VNCI's students might be engaged:

> We might successfully run a number of industries, at comparatively little extra expense…A shoemaking department would furnish for half dozen young men employment from one year's end to another. A tailoring department would find much to do even with our present mode of dressing, but if we adopt a uniform, as is very desirable, that department would give instruction and employment to quite a number. A printing room might also be largely engaged in doing the work that is now necessarily done outside of the school, thus giving most valuable instruction as well as employment…. A monthly school magazine could be gotten up and published on our grounds… (Virginia Department of Education, 1889, p. 120)

It is difficult to imagine that Johnston would have been quite so loquacious if he had not believed his argument to hold some sway. Over the longer term, while more formalized courses in sewing and cooking were established for female students, industrial and

manual activities for men were limited and focused on providing income as opposed to training. After 1902, this would no longer be the case.

4.2.4 Black School, White State: Losing the Collegiate Program (1902 ~ 1923)

A Critical Moment: The 1902 Constitution

The 1901-1902 Virginia Constitutional convention was long in the making. As discussed above in section 4.2.3, in the election of 1883 and its aftermath, white Virginians sought to disenfranchise Black Virginians first through intimidation and fraud, and then through various legal maneuvers, including both the Anderson-McCormick Act and the Walton Act. Although the Walton Act was effective, Virginia's constitution still guaranteed adult males, regardless of race, the right to vote. The remedy was clear – the constitution itself had to change. As Delegate Carter Glass would say once on the constitutional convention floor:

> Discrimination! Why that is exactly what we propose; that exactly, is why this Convention was elected—to discriminate to the very extremity of permissible action under the limitations of the Federal Constitution with the view to the elimination of every Negro who can be gotten rid of, legally, without materially impairing the strength of the white electorate." (Virginia, 1902b, II, 3076)

In order to call a constitutional convention two hurdles had first to be overcome: the legislature had to pass enabling legislation for a referendum; and the referendum had to pass a popular vote. With two prior failed referendums under their belts, Democrats knew well that the second hurdle was by far the more difficult (Buni, 1967, p. 13; Kousser, 1974, pp. 176-177). They passed the enabling legislation in 1899 and, to increase the possibility that the referendum would pass, took a variety of measures:

…the legislators scheduled the referendum to coincide not with the state or national elections, when GOP turnout might be large, but with the contests for local office. They also biased the ballots, printing on them only the words, "For the Convention." To vote as the Democrats wished, one had merely to place the ticket in the ballot box. To oppose the convention, one had to mark through all three words and place no other mark on the paper, a provision which made it easy for officials to discard ballots against the convention. (Kousser, 1974, p. 177)

The Democrats were successful. In May of 1900, with only 31 percent of the eligible electorate voting, the referendum passed by just 6 percentage points (Kousser, 1974, pp. 177-178). For over a year one-hundred Delegates met off and on.

For the Elective Franchise Committee much of the debate centered around how to disenfranchise Black people without also disenfranchising poor whites (Kousser, 1974, pp. 179-180). The committee eventually settled on an array of voter eligibility requirements, including a lengthy residency requirement, a poll tax, and a temporary understanding clause (Kousser, 1974, p. 180; Buni, 1967, p. 18). Despite a pledge to submit the new constitution to a popular referendum, a majority of delegates proclaimed the constitution law in May of 1902 (Buni, 1967, p. 18).

Virginia's 1902 constitution was remarkably effective at suppressing the vote across the board. In 1904 and 1905, only 27% of the adult males in the state cast a vote in the presidential and gubernatorial elections respectively (Kousser, 1974, p. 174 & p. 226), compared with 44% in 1901 and, pre-Walton Act, upwards of 80% in the 1880s (Kousser, 1974, p. 174). By one estimate, the active electorate was so small from 1905 through the late 1940s that "state employees and office holders cast approximately one-

third of the votes" in each election (Kousser, 1974, p. 181). In the near term, this meant

almost total disenfranchisement for Black Virginians (Kousser, 1974, p. 174, 241).

In addition to the changes in voter eligibility, the 1902 constitution also brought

changes in the realm of education, and specifically in terms of the state's responsibilities

thereto. [24] While convention delegates did not question the role of the state in the

provision of education whole cloth, there was considerable debate with regards to the role

of the state in the provision of education for Black people specifically. Delegates

expressed fears that educated Black people would become political and economic threats.

As Paul Barringer, chairman of the faculty of the University of Virginia, put it: "Shall we,

having by a great effort gotten rid of the negro as a political menace, deliberately proceed

to equip the negro of the future as an economic menace?" (quoted in Harlan, 2011, p.

138). Another delegate expressed horror at the idea of Black schools "turning out" voters

"by the thousands to meet you, and to meet me at the ballot-box" (Harlan, 2011, p. 139).

Had there not also been a fear of denying Black people an education only to have

"outside dreamers and fanatics" provide one that would be "dangerous to the peace of

Virginia," it is possible that the convention may have opted to be rid of Black schools

entirely (Harlan, 2011, p. 140). Describing the deliberations in retrospect, R.C. Stearnes,

Virginia superintendent of public instruction from 1913 through 1918, wrote:

> We rejected the idea that the negro should remain uneducated, but were just as
>
> firmly of the opinion that the old type of scholastic education which has been
>
> provided for him was in many respects a misfit. (Virginia Department of
>
> Education, 1917, p. 46)

---

[24] With regard to the franchise, by one estimate, "from 1905 through 1948 state employees and office-holders cast approximately one-third of the votes in state elections" (Kousser, 1974, p. 181).

In fact, by 1917, when Stearnes wrote these words, the state of Virginia had developed a network of "industrial supervisors" to serve the Black population in Virginia, largely funded by the federal government and private philanthropy (Virginia Department of Education, 1917, p. 46).

Although the convention delegates concerned themselves exclusively with secondary education, the general sentiment as to the purpose of education and the state's role in relation to education is important to consider. After all, limiting what is legitimate state supported secondary education has a direct impact on what is considered to be legitimate state supported postsecondary education, even if left unstated. The legitimacy of a state supported postsecondary school for Black people was at issue in a state where most Black people would never even finish high school. While the Black community may have won the fight over Black teachers for Black schools, limiting the state provision of education to the sixth grade and the longer term scope to what delegates described as "simple training in agriculture and the domestic arts" and learning to "read the Bible" also limited the type of education that any potential Black teachers might need and thus the potential mission, or even existence, of any school educating those teachers (Harlan, 2011, pp. 140 & 141).

In the end, convention delegates couched their educational reform efforts within a frame of professionalization and protection from partisan politics. While the new constitution certainly had some mandates that brought educators and educational administrators into the governance process, any claim of removal from partisan politics seems spurious at best. The new constitution expanded the membership of the Board of Education to include two district superintendents and a board or faculty member of a state

institution of higher education, in addition to the governor, the attorney general and the

state superintendent of public instruction (Virginia, 1902a, IX; Burks, 2002, p. 103). The

new constitution also mandated that the state superintendent of public instruction be "an

experienced educator" elected, not appointed, by "the qualified voters of the State at the

same time and for the same term as Governor" (Virginia, 1902, IX; Burks, 2002, p. 103).

Further, although the new constitution did not have anything to say directly about the

number of grades or any differentiation by race, the apportionment of state funds by

population combined with local control of schools exacerbated inequalities at the

secondary level (see Harlan, 2011). In essence, although school appropriations were

determined by population, regardless of race, no controls were placed on allocation

beyond the district.

Financial Precarity and the Loss of the Collegiate Program

While the constitutional convention delegates were busy ensuring the continued

disenfranchisement of Virginia's Black populace, the 1902 General Assembly was busy

as well making substantive changes to VNCI's mission. That March, the General

Assembly passed legislation divesting VNCI of its collegiate program and replacing it

with manual and industrial training (Virginia, 1902a, pp. 397-400). Concomitant with this

transition came a name change, to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute (VNII).

Referring to the change that fall, Superintendent Southall wrote as follows:

> The most notable and significant event in the history of this school during the past
>
> year was the action of the General Assembly in changing its name from the
>
> Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute to the Virginia Normal and Industrial
>
> Institute, and in so amending its charter as to abolish the classical course to

substitute therefor a thorough course of manual and industrial training; and

instructors of ability, thorough training and ample experience have been selected

to conduct this department…This reform in the course of study is one for which I

have labored since my induction into the office of Superintendent of Public

Instruction…(p. 1v)

President Johnston's 1902 report was shorter than in years past. About the academic

program, he simply noted:

In view of the fact that our college course is about to be cut off and other

modifications made in the course of instruction, I deem it unnecessary to report

the courses followed heretofore excepting that of sewing. (p. 51)

In academic year 1902-1903, the school now known as VNII added cooking, physical

culture, clay modeling and Sloyd to its formal curriculum.[25] Over the next several years,

courses in agriculture, the care and feeding of livestock, and the making of dairy products

were added (Virginia Department of Education, 1903 & VNII Catalogue, 1902-1903).

Despite an increased appropriation from the state in 1908 back up to $20,000 per year,

and the ongoing diversification revenue sources, by 1913 President Johnston's expressed

vision for VNII was to become a high school (Faculty Minutes, September 1913).

Although VNII did not become a high school, it certainly continued to struggle.

Virginia's 1916-1917 Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction provides

an unfortunate if telling indicator of racial disparity amongst Virginia's institutions of

higher education during this period. Consider the following two excerpts, the first from

---

[25] Sloyd, or Slojd, involved teaching students to build small wooden models as a supposed introduction to carpentry.

the annual report of the University of Virginia, and the second from the annual report of VNII:

> The general physical condition of the University [of Virginia] is perhaps better than at any previous time in its history…People at home enjoy more convenient and luxurious appointments than ever before in history and demand an approach to these advantages when they travel or go to college. (Virginia Department of Education, 1917, p. 472)
>
> …
>
> Probably never before in its history has the [Virginia Normal and Industrial I]nstitute had so many unexpected difficulties to meet as it has this last year. Prices of food supplies and fuel in most instances doubled and in many instances more than doubled during the year…On several occasions to meet a pressing need we were forced to buy fuel in the open market. Our limited resources were thus drawn upon at points never thought when the budget for 1916-17 was submitted…
>
> The mental anxiety and nervous strain were more depressing than the immediate inconvenience suffered...We never knew one day what the next would bring forth. On a few occasions there was an uncertainty as to whether we could get enough fuel to keep the buildings comfortable and a sufficient amount of food supplies to feed the pupils. Under these uncertain conditions the responsibility for the feeding, warming and protection of nine hundred and nineteen young people at times grew into a depressing anxiety. (Virginia Department of Education, 1917, p. 576)

Further, that same year, with just over 900 students, VNII reported just under $100,000 in

income (p. 583). UVA reported over three times that much with just over 1,000 students

(p. 482). While UVA and VNII were two very different types of institutions, by design

and state mandate, the discrepancy in resources for two state supported schools is still

stark.[26]

By the early 1900s, the political power that the Black community wielded in

1881, which lead directly to the founding of VNCI, had disappeared under the weight of

voter suppression efforts. An active and empowered Black electorate had pushed for

VNCI, and once that electorate was eliminated, the Black school struggled for legitimacy

within a white state. In less than 20 years, what had started as a nascent publicly

supported Black school with aspirations to be on par with the likes of the University of

Virginia and to serve and uplift the Black community had been "stripped of its rigorous

academic offerings" and "left with rudimentary academic instruction to supplement a

curriculum bloated with industrial and agricultural courses" (Burks, 2002, p. 110).

Although VNII maintained a Black faculty and a Black administration, a white and at

times hostile State Board of Education controlled the school's formal mission and state

allocated financial resources. As described above, this situation resulted in a precarious

financial situation, as well as modified mission and associated curricula.

While the lack of state support and active suppression of rigorous academic

programs certainly had an adverse impact on VNII and the community that it served, it is

important to note as well that white control did not mean the complete erasure of Black

agency nor of a Black academic identity. Reflecting on the changed circumstances of the

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[26] UVA was listed as one of 16 "standard colleges," a differentiation made by the state for the first time that year, whereas VNII was not.

institute, then Professor J. M. Gandy reasserted the importance of "college training" and his confidence that Virginia Union, Howard, Fisk and Atlanta would "welcome all the young men and young women who may go from Virginia" (Gandy, n.d., p. 3). Further, still as yet declining to use the new name of the institute, he put forward a new vision for the school as "a sociological center" that would "study the social needs of the Negro from a purely scientific view point [sic] with the expressed intention of using the information to reconstruct the social order…" and be an "uplifting influence" (Gandy, n.d., pp. 3-4).[27] Gandy's clearly articulated vision was one of public service in which teachers from the institute would do research and community outreach on "hygienic methods of living" and "improved methods of farming" and construction and continue to be "a thorough fitting school" for Black teachers (Gandy, n.d., p. 4).

Although legislators and appointed officials restricted state support to normal and industrial education, the Black community that made up VNII continued to engage in extra-curricular academically focused activities, such as reading circles, literary societies and academically focused public lectures, as evidenced in both school catalogues and annual reports over the years. Moreover, VNII clearly played a role beyond what the white state envisioned in that many students and faculty used it as just one stop on a longer academic journey leading to undergraduate and graduate degrees, albeit from other institutions (for more on this see Toppin, 1992; and Burkes, 2002).

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[27] These quotes come from an essay that Gandy apparently wrote at the time of the transition and then transcribed at a later date for inclusion in his papers. At the beginning of the essay from which this is taken, Gandy notes the change in name and mission, then goes on to continue to refer to the institution as "Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute" throughout the essay.

4.3 Inequality, Precarity and Contest: From Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute to Virginia State University, 1922-2020

Writing in 1984, Calvin Miller, a professor of political science at the institution that had become Virginia State University (VSU) just five years prior, described the circumstances under which VSU found itself as follows:

> …VSU's very existence is being challenged as it struggles to overcome the historical past of blatant discrimination and under-funding…
>
> We cannot sneer at nor ignore the empirical fact of its Black clientele, because in a modern pluralistic society, it has every right to grow and prosper as a viable institution of higher education and as a most cherished resource to the Black community. (Miller, 1984)

Indeed, although the state had added collegiate level work back into VNII's curriculum in 1922, and although the institution had continued to grow and change over the many intervening years, the general precarity and financial uncertainty that characterized VNII's early existence persisted and continues to persist to this very day.

For the first half of the 20th century, the Black community's vision was largely subsumed by the vision of Virginia's white elite, and this vision kept the school's mission and legitimacy as a state enterprise focused on preparing Black people to fill specific and limited types of roles as future workers in support of a segregated system of education and in alignment with the broader racialized social system. The mid-century transformation of VNII into what we now know as Virginia State University was driven in large part by a series of contests associated with the state and civil society that similarly transformed the racialized social system present in Virginia and the United

States more broadly. This is not to say that racial stratification disappeared or lessened, but rather the structures upholding that stratification changed. For Virginia State specifically, the contests that most directly impacted the institution were due in large part to the work of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and a subset of individuals within the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). This final section will provide a brief historical overview of those contests and their outcomes, as well as the continued relative precarity of VSU.

Table 4.2

An Abbreviated Timeline of Mission & Governance Related Changes

Year	Change
1882	Virginia Normal and Collegiate Instituted (VNCI) founded
1883	VNCI opens
1902	VNCI renamed VNII, divested of collegiate program
1920	VA moves Morrill funds from Hampton to VNII
1922	Collegiate program restored for teachers only
1929	Name changed to Virginia State College for Negros (VSCN)
1930	New charter established for VSCN
	- BoV dissolved, VSCN placed under direct Board of Education control
	- Extension work transferred from Hampton to VSCN
1937	VSCN adds graduate studies
1940	Negro Graduate Aid Fund established, administered by Virginia State on behalf of the state
1944	Acquires Norfolk division
1946?	Name changed to Virginia State College (VSC) (dropping the "for Negroes")

1951	VSC Restructures Academic Programs
1956	Begins offering degree granting programs at Norfolk
1957	For the first time, SACS offers full accreditation to predominantly Black institutions; VSC is one of 18 Black schools (out of 63 that applied) to achieve full accreditation
1964	VSC's BoV restored
1979	VSC changed to Virginia State University; Norfolk division separated

4.3.1 Contest and Legitimacy: Filling the Void

Sociologist Melissa Wooten (2015), discussing the pre-*Brown v. Board of Education* role and legitimacy of Black colleges*,* has argued that public Black colleges filled a particular niche in southern states:

> Racial segregation ensured the demand for Black educators remained high. In 1900 alone, there were approximately 27,000 Black teachers for the more than two million Black elementary and school students in the former slaveholding states. Segregation precluded white teachers from filling this void. The supply of teachers for Black children had to come from other Black people. (p. 118)

She continues, noting that although private Black institutions also helped to fill this void, normal education dominated the curriculum and degree attainment at public Black institutions in particular (Wooten, 2015, pp. 115-116).

Indeed, this appears to be true for VNII. Leaders at the school were clearly aware of this designated role, of VNII as a normal school for Black people in Virginia, and how it legitimized the institutions continued existence. During the early 1920s then-president John M. Gandy lobbied for the reinstatement of collegiate level work by playing upon racial fears and positioning VNII as being uniquely situated to provide Virginia's burgeoning Black schools with teachers. In his annual report that year, he started out by

first noting the number of students VNII was graduating who then go on to leave the commonwealth of Virginia in order to further their education:

> When these young people leave the State to be educated under other influences, they are forming other connections, getting new notions which are frequently adverse to the ideas and customs of Virginia…they return disgruntled and out of sympathy with the customs and laws they left behind…(Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, 1922)

Gandy then goes on to note that due to new state regulations, high school teachers must have an undergraduate degree, and further, given the lack of such a program at VNII, Black high school teachers must necessarily come from out of state.

> …from what sources do the high school teachers for the [Black high] schools mentioned above come? Many of them come from the North and the West. They were trained under conditions different from ours and whether we know it or not they are not at all times the most desirable element in the community. They frequently create trouble in the teaching force, are open in denouncing the customs of the State, and engender at times bad feelings between the races. (Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, 1922)

Gandy finishes by reassuring the Board that, should a collegiate program be reinstated, VNII would *not* do "a whit less of agriculture, of home economics, of mechanics, and of teacher training…To make ourselves absolutely clear, we are asking for a teacher's college not a college of the Arts and Sciences" (Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute, 1922).

Part of what is especially interesting here about Gandy's argument is his rejection

of or distancing from any suggestion of an arts and sciences mission. Regardless of the

sincerity of Gandy's arguments, his logic indicates a clear understanding that VNII's

legitimacy as an institution offering collegiate programing to Black students rested at

least in part on its role upholding segregation and a racialized social system and keeping

"other influences" at bay. By 1930, the state of Virginia itself had more formally

acknowledged Virginia State's central role as "a teacher's college." In 1929 the State

changed the name of the school to Virginia State College for Negroes, and in 1930

established a new charter, dissolving the BoV and placing the school under the direct

administration of the State Board Education (Toppin, 1992, pp. 77-83). Similarly, when

the State allowed Virginia State to add graduate studies and established the Negro

Graduate Aid Fund, both initiatives were rooted in efforts to maintain a segregated

system of higher education in Virginia by meeting the separate but equal principle

established in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) in response to contests arising in civil society.

As described in a presidentially commissioned report in 1939 entitled *Special*

Problems of Negro Education, the 1937 establishment of a "limited program of graduate

work" at Virginia State resulted from "legal pressure for the admittance" of Black

students to graduate programs at the University of Virginia and "the law school at the

University of Maryland" (Wilkerson, 1939, p. 66).[28] In fact, the Maryland case, *Murray*

v. Pearson (1936), was the NAACP's first successful test case using the equal protection

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[28] Unfortunately, Wilkerson does not offer a citation or expand on his reference to the University of Virginia specifically. However, it seems likely that this is a reference to the actions of Alice Jackson, who, in 1935 applied for admission to the University of Virginia's graduate school but did not in fact pursue legal action (see Echols, 1948, p. 31 and Sky Lark, 2017). Echols makes the claim, based on evidence from a Works Progress Administration Virginia Writers Project report in 1940, that the Stephens-Dovell Bill passed by the Virginia Legislature in 1936 was directly linked to Alice Jackson's efforts to be admitted to the University of Virginia in 1935 (1948, p. 31).

clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution to dismantle the "separate but equal" doctrine established in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896). The strategy that drove this case would eventually result in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954).

As numerous scholars have noted, from the inception of the NAACP in 1908 through the 1920s and 1930s, the organization itself and its legal strategy as executed by the NAACP's Legal and Education Defense Fund (LDF), evolved (Bates, 1997; Goluboff, 2004; Meier & Bracey, 1993; Ware, 2000). During the 1930s, LDF began to focus their legal strategy on state actors and on education specifically:
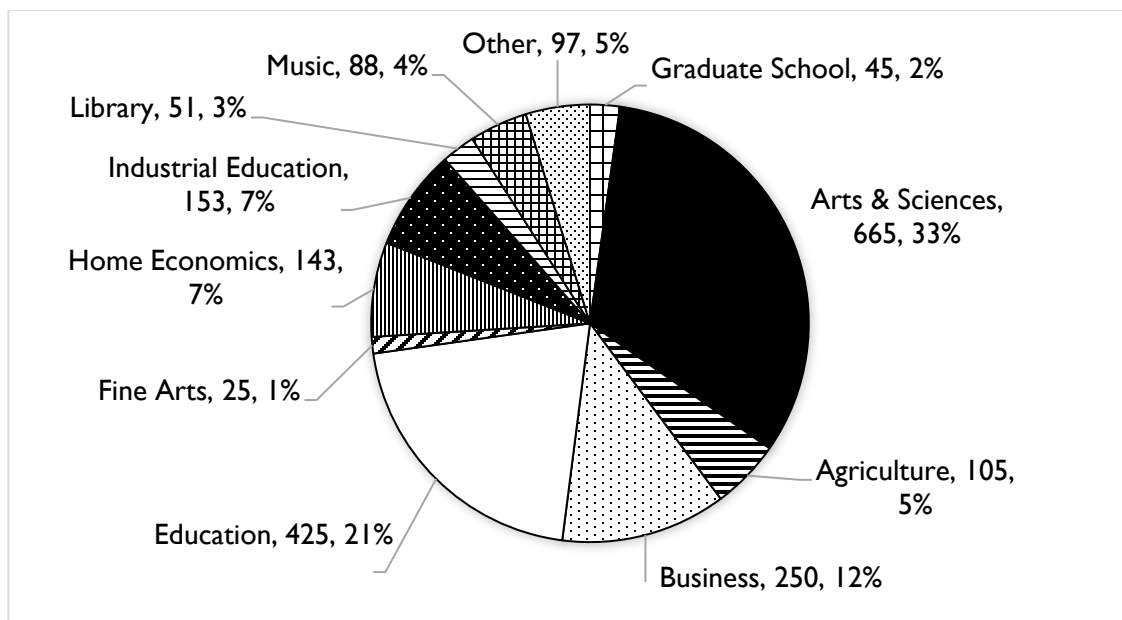
> A two-pronged strategy was involved: directly attacking the exclusion of blacks from the professional and graduate schools at state universities and indirectly attacking segregation in the primary and secondary grades with litigation calling for full equalization of salaries, length of school term, and physical facilities in the public schools. The rationale for this indirect approach was to make segregated public schooling so expensive that the choice would be desegregation or economic ruin. The plan adopted was to begin with the border states, then move into the upper South, and finally challenge the Deep South. (Meier & Bracey, 1993, p. 15)

Eventually, this strategy would play out across the south in *Brown v. Brown of Education* and its aftermath. For Virginia State though, the NAACP's efforts began to have an impact much sooner. As described in more detail below, during the 1930s and 1940s, Virginia State's academic focus evolved dramatically. Given the general unwillingness of those in power to provide any substantive support to Virginia State on the level that would have been required to duplicate every single graduate program

offered at a white institution in Virginia, the "limited program of graduate work" at

Virginia State was clearly unequal. In 1936 the state had established the Negro Graduate

Aid Fund. Through this initiative Black students who might otherwise seek graduate

degrees at white in-state institutions could apply to Virginia State for funds to seek the

same degree outside of Virginia (Toppin, 1992, p. 119). In 1940 the legislature delegated

administration of the fund to Virginia State (Toppin, 1992, p. 119).

4.3.2 Persistently Unequal

Over the years, maintaining a segregated educational system that relegated Black

people to specific and limited types of roles as future workers became more problematic

at least in part due to the NAACP's efforts. As such, despite Gandy's disavowal of arts

and sciences, by 1948 arts and sciences was the most popular academic program at

Virginia State with 33% (n=665) of the institution's students enrolled (see Figure 4.3,

below). From 1916-17, Virginia State transformed from an institution in which the

majority of students were taking high school and lower level courses to a college offering

a diverse array of academic programs, including graduate-level work (Virginia

Department of Education, 1917; Virginia Department of Education, 1948).

Figure 4.3

Virginia State College Student Enrollment by Course of Study, 1948

Other, 97, 5%
Music, 88, 4%
Graduate School, 45, 2%
Library, 51, 3%
Industrial Education, 153, 7%
Arts & Sciences, 665, 33%
Home Economics, 143, 7%
Fine Arts, 25, 1%
Agriculture, 105, 5%
Education, 425, 21%
Business, 250, 12%

Note: Source data comes from the Virginia Department of Education, 1948

Yet, even as the focus of academic programs at Virginia State changed and even as the commonwealth of Virginia made increasingly large investments in higher education, the overall inequities inherent in Virginia's state supported system of higher education persisted. By 1948 Virginia State's revenue was 8.5 times what it had been in 1920 in constant dollars, and yet it was not catching up with white peer institutions (see Figure 4.3 above). Virginia was not unique in this regard. Wilkerson (1939) found that across the 17 states included in his study, on average, Black people composed roughly 25% of the population 18 to 21 years of age, yet only made up 6% of the enrollments in higher education (p. 64). With Virginia's Black population at 27% and enrollments at 8%, the educational disparities faced by Virginia's Black community appear slightly less acute compared to states like Georgia, at 40% and 5% respectively, and Mississippi, at

52% and 3% respectively (Wilkerson, 1939, p. 64). Wilkerson noted that despite

increasing investments in higher education by the federal government, little to none of the

funds allocated were making their way to Black institutions and Black students. For

example, Wilkerson found that in 1936, for every federal Morrill fund dollar allocated to

a white student in Virginia, only 46 cents were allocated to a Black student (1939, p. 83).

A thesis conducted by a UVA graduate student, James Echols, almost ten years later has

remarkably similar findings; namely that Virginia appeared to only be "superficially

following the 'separate, but equal' theory" and further "that none of the state-supported

or private Negro educational institutions in Virginia are on an equal basis with white

schools" (Echols, 1948, p. 29). For the seven-year period from 1940 through 1947, for

every 13 white students receiving state-supported higher education, only one Black

student received similar support. Echols writes further, that

> There are three other important aspects of the situation which must be considered.
> One is that the Negro students, in addition to receiving higher education at the
> discriminatory ratio mentioned above, do not have the same opportunity for
> selection of courses. Secondly, although next to no graduate study is available to
> Negroes in the state schools, that which is offered is of limited scope. Third, the
> teachers at Virginia State College, while they are fully qualified, are not sufficient
> in number and do not receive a level of salary consistent with similar state
> supported white schools. (Echols, 1948, p. 53)

Virginia State's faculty members earned one-third to half as much in salary as their peers

at white institutions (Echols, 1948, p. 65). This may be one reason why Virginia State

dealt with a 30% rate of faculty turnover during the early part of the 20th century (Toppin, 1992, p. 83).

While Virginia State's revenues increased and academic programs became more rigorous, enrollments did not expand substantially after 1930. Enrollments went from 795 in 1920, with the majority of those students in high school or below, to 1,869 in 1930, to 1,092 in 1940, to 2,047 in 1948. The increase in both revenues and enrollments from 1940 to 1948 appears largely due to the 1944 addition of what has since become Norfolk State University (Norfolk State University, n.d.; Virginia Department of Education, 1948). Despite that addition, by 1946, with the end of World War II, the concomitant return of veterans, and the educational benefits of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, Virginia State University was in high demand, reportedly turning away almost 1,000 applicants that fall (Toppin, 1992, p. 117). Echols noted similarly high rates of declination in 1947 as well (1948, p. 62).

4.3.3 A Critical Moment: *Brown v. Board of Education*

The period spanning the 1950s through the 1970s in the United States have often been characterized by pundits and scholars alike as a time of remarkable social and political unrest and transformation. Some scholars have even gone so far as to liken it to Reconstruction (Marable, 1984; Woodward, 1974). Although I will not touch on the civil rights movement as a whole with a high level of specificity, the increase in visible social and political action, as well as the state sanctioned and extra-judicial violence with which those actions were met, is important context for the specific events discussed below even though relatively few of those highly visible contests occurred in Virginia. It is also important to note that while many of the most visible events marking the "modern-day"

civil rights movement occurred within this specific timeframe, those events are part of a much longer and ongoing struggle in the United States.

Brown V. Board of Education and Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act

While many of the more familiar events that marked the civil rights movement occurred in the deep south, the contest in Virginia was less visible in large part because much of it occurred in courtrooms and at the ballot box. From the 1930s onward, states like Virginia and Maryland were targeted by the NAACP and as a result, the NAACP filed more lawsuits in Virginia than any other state. As such, it is not surprising that one of the suits bundled in the *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954, 1955) court cases originated in Virginia. Nor is it surprising that one of the "events" of the civil rights movement that Virginia is well known for is the Massive Resistance to school desegregation in the wake of those decisions (Bartley, 1999; Lassiter & Lewis 1998; Pratt, 1992). Just as Virginians undertook Massive Resistance to school desegregation at the secondary level, such resistance, and the conflict it engendered, was mirrored within higher education; and just as Black Virginians, the NAACP and other allies continued to fight for equal educational opportunities at the secondary level, so too did the fight continue at the postsecondary level.

Political Opportunism within Virginia. The historian Andrew Buni has described the political fallout from the Brown decision as follows:

The unifying issue needed to regroup the Democratic organization forces had been found: protection of the Old Dominion's schools against racial integration. It now had a genuine mission as all-out defender of public education segregated by race…(1967, p. 175)

The Democrat party in Virginia was thus revived by the same mission that had brought it into being in the first place, to "save Virginia for the white race" (Buni, 1967, p. 175). Indeed, starting in 1949, the Republican party had been gaining ground in Virginia (Buni, 1967; Folliard, 1957). Virginia's Democratic Party, controlled by what was known as the "Byrd machine" after powerful former Governor and U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd, saw in *Brown* a political opportunity to revive failing support. After the second *Brown* (1956) ruling, one "Byrd lieutenant in Virginia's General Assembly" was reported as saying, "This will keep us in the saddle for 25 years. Why, we'll even have organized labor with us" (Folliard, 1957).

In February of 1956, after the second Brown decision had been issued extending the application of the court's findings to higher education, U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd Sr. called for what became known as Massive Resistance. That summer, in a special session, the commonwealth's legislature passed a slate of Massive Resistance bills. The new laws included the creation of a state-wide Pupil Placement Board with the power to assign specific students to particular schools, tuition grants for students who opposed integrated schools, and, perhaps most notably, the ability to cut off state funds and close any public school attempting to integrate (Buni, 1967, pp. 178 & 184). This approach was not without its detractors, even within the Democratic Party. One anonymous Byrd Democrat, talking about Massive Resistance as an approach in the wake of the second *Brown* decision noted, "It might be good for politics, at least for this election, but it will be bad [for] history…" (Folliard, 1957).

Where once Virginia's Democrats stoked fears of northern invaders, and northern teachers specifically, now they focused on the NAACP (Buni, 1967; Dailey, 2000; Green,

2016; Rabinowtiz, 1978). In addition to the laws aimed specifically at protecting

segregation in schooling, the legislature also passed seven "anti-NAACP" acts intended

to "investigate, embarrass, curb or cripple the NAACP" in Virginia (Buni, 1967, p. 186).

Democrats portrayed the NAACP as "a rabble-rousing pawn of the federal government,

Communist infiltrated, financed through sinister sources with lawyers seeking high

financial reward or political gain" (Buni, 1967, p. 175). Noting that Black children would

have nowhere to go in the wake of the 1959 Prince Edward County school closures, Byrd

blamed the "ruthless action of the leaders of the NAACP" (Stern, 1959). Byrd said that if

only the NAACP had not pushed for school integration, the Prince Edward County school

board would not have closed their schools (Stern, 1959). Using rhetoric that was

remarkably similar to that used in the 1880s regarding "mixed schools" leading to "mixed

marriages," Byrd went on to warn his audience that the ultimate goal of the NAACP was

"annulment of state law as prohibiting mixed marriage" (Stern, 1959).

Despite the best efforts of the Democratic Party and whites across Virginia to shut

down the NAACP and maintain segregated schools, Massive Resistance, as a set of laws

enacted by the legislature, legally ended in Virginia in January of 1959 with the issuance

of two separate court decisions (Buni, 1967, p. 200). Yet, from 1959 through 1964,

Prince Edward County's schools remained closed and became a model for state-

supported private all white schools across the south. By 1964, when Virginia's tuition

grants to private schools were outlawed by the Supreme Court, only 5 percent of

Virginia's Black secondary students were attending integrated schools.

Lack of Federal Enforcement. *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) was not an

end in and of itself. Rather, what *Brown* did in asserting that segregation on the basis of

race denied Black people equal protection under the law was to establish a particular interpretation of the Constitution and, not inconsequentially, to expand the realm of the possible. Ten years later, Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act converted the principle established in *Brown* to national policy. Title VI provided that:

> No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Perhaps more importantly in relation to higher education, Title VI's implementing regulations noted that "in administering a program regarding which the recipient has previously discriminated…the recipient must take affirmative action to overcome the effects of prior discrimination" (34 C.F.R. 100.3 (6)(i)). Further, the government was given the authority, or rather was obligated, to withhold federal funds or file suit against non-compliant states and institutions.

Despite the federal government's power to withhold federal funds or file suit against non-compliant states and institutions and several drawn out lawsuits, the longer history of Title VI enforcement in higher education has been erratic. Almost as soon as the ink dried on the 1964 Civil Rights act, to the degree that any authentic political support had existed for the desegregation of schools, it began to wane. At the federal level, both the executive and the legislative branches actively undermined the new law. In the decade following passage, the house passed one amendment after another designed to restrain school integration (Commission on Civil Rights, 1970, p. 42; Orfield, 1978, pp. 239-255). Describing Nixon's presidency in 1971, Leon Panetta accused the

administration of trying to "roll back the basic Constitutional rights of minority citizens" and declining "to affirm that civil rights law was right" and "just" (p. ix).

Even after the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) was established within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), compliance efforts in relation to Title VI were decentralized with individual compliance officers embedded in various operating agencies (Commission on Civil Rights, 1970, pp. 6-7, 9-10). In 1967 HEW's main compliance activity consisted of attempting to require institutions of higher education to sign "Statements of Compliance" in order to remain eligible for federal funds (Commission on Civil Rights, 1970, pp. 7, & 18). When first instituted, these statements asked institutions to report "exact data" on "the nature and size" of various units, degrees offered, and student enrollments as well as more qualitative information on admissions practices and policies, "services, facilities, activities, and programs" (Commission on Civil Rights, 1970, p. 27). Just a year later, OCR had drastically simplified the form, reducing the overall ask and allowing institutions to provide "reasonably accurate" information as opposed to "exact" (Commission on Civil Rights, 1970, pp. 27-28). Describing the response to the simplified form in 1970, the Commission on Civil Rights wrote as follows:

> Despite the simplicity of the form, there was considerable opposition from college presidents and administrators of various institutions of higher education to filing the reports. Some, including those outside the South, resented what they considered an intrusion into their affairs and an interference with academic freedom. Some found questions on the race of students "repugnant."

In view of the furor which a relatively innocuous report form had engendered,

HEW did not wish to antagonize its recipients further... (p. 28)

Given the lack of support that OCR received from the Nixon administration and the near

constant congressional interference, there were clear disincentives to pushing too hard on

compliance (Panetta & Gall, 1971).

Despite lagging support, in 1968 OCR began to undertake state-level compliance

reviews within higher education. Between the middle of 1968 through the end of 1970

OCR undertook Title VI compliance reviews in 19 states that had previously mandated

segregation in higher education (Loomis, 1994, pp. 47-48; Panetta & Gall, 1971, pp. 147-

148). These reviews resulted in ten letters of findings issued to governors in the impacted

states, one of which was Virginia. Five states ignored HEW's request (*Adams v.

Richardson*, 1973; Egerton, 1974, p. 29; Loomis, 1994, p. 49). Five states, including

Virginia, submitted plans that HEW found unacceptable (*Adams v. Richardson*, 1973;

Egerton, 1974, p. 29; Loomis, 1994, p. 49). Yet no action was taken. Nixon fired Leon

Panetta in February of 1970, leaving desegregation enforcement efforts with little support

and in disarray (Loomis, 1994, p. 87; see also Panetta & Gall, 1971). When HEW failed

to follow up with enforcement proceedings, LDF filed suit (*Adams v. Richardson*, 1973).

With a court case pending, OCR took no action over the next two years.

Change and Contest in Virginia. Lack of enforcement and support at the federal

level did not mean lack of change at the state level. As many scholars have pointed out,

the civil rights movement was an inflection point after which there were changes to the

racial stratification of the entirety of the United States, not just Virginia. This is not to

make any assertion as to the degree to which Virginia was more or less racist, rather,

simply to point out that the social and political structures that stratified Virginia primarily by race were changing and those changes came to be reflected within higher education and had a direct impact on Virginia State.

In the mid-1960s, several seemingly disparate changes within Virginia's system of higher education began to call into question the legitimacy and viability of Virginia State's continued operation. In 1966, Virginia's General Assembly created the Virginia Community College System, mapping it on to a pre-existing technical college system and several of the existing branch campuses of four-year institutions (Diemer, 2019, p. 34). In 1967 the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) recommended that Virginia State's School of Agriculture be "merged," or rather absorbed, by Virginia Tech, as a means to eliminate the operation of a dual land grant structure (Loomis, 1994, p. 83). In November of 1969, both institutions' Boards of Visitors approved the merger (Loomis, 1994, p. 83). On the heels of this decision, in February of 1970, Virginia's General Assembly passed a bill excluding Richard Bland College (Bland), a predominantly white junior college located just nine miles from Virginia State, from having to undergo study by SCHEV prior to any escalation in status and approved a $158,000 appropriation to expand the school's curriculum (Loomis, 1994, p. 84; Moore, 1969). The legislation was sponsored by Petersburg Delegate Roy Smith and was intended to aid in the process of transforming Bland from a two-year predominantly white junior college under William and Mary to an independent four-year institution (McNeer, 1982). The move was made despite ongoing accusations of program duplication and calls for Bland to be brought under Virginia State (Moore, 1970b).

As students and faculty at Virginia State and members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights noted at the time, the commonwealth was establishing and/or otherwise bolstering institutions that would compete with Virginia State, rather than "promote attendance at the black institution" (Brickhouse, 1970). Further, the espoused rational for the merger of Virginia State's College of Agriculture with Virginia Tech's was at odds with the espoused rational for the escalation of Bland from two- to four-year status. Regarding the College of Agriculture, the argument put forward by SCHEV was focused on the elimination of a dual system of higher education. Regarding Bland, the argument put forward by supporters *for duplication* was "equalization of opportunity for white students" given the status of Virginia State as a Black school (W. Roy Smith, quoted by McNeer, 1982, p. 65). Although contradictory, these rationales make sense given what was then an ongoing post-civil rights era realignment of the state and civil society.

Consider the following quote from a state official in Virginia, expressing incredulity in dealing with OCR:

> "The fact is, [the federal government] wanted to have it both ways. [They] wanted us to remove all vestiges of segregation and maintain the primary vestige of segregation, which is the traditionally Black institutions, and that is profoundly illogical." (Loomis, p. 88)

For this individual, it was not the historically white institutions nor the larger higher education system as a whole that constituted "the primary vestige" of Jim Crow segregation; rather, it was the Black institution alone. Within such a "race-neutral" or "colorblind" frame, predominantly and historically white institutions are normative, while Black institutions no longer belong. The assumption that desegregation would lead

to the elimination of HBCUs is predicated on the obfuscation of the racialized nature of white institutions.

At the end of the day neither the merger of Virginia State's College of Agriculture nor the escalation of Bland to four-year status came to pass. Virginia State students and faculty members clearly perceived both possible actions as a threat to Virginia State's continued legitimacy and, from December of 1969 through the fall of 1970, took concerted action to prevent either eventuality from coming to pass. From December 1969 through February 1970, faculty members and students participated in a series of protests, primarily aimed at Virginia State's administration. In addition to calling for the reversal of the School of Agriculture decision and the absorption of Bland under Virginia State (as an alternative to elevating Bland to a four-year school on its own or in association with William and Mary), faculty members and students also called for the appointment of Black people to SCHEV, as well as faculty and student representation on Virginia State's governing board. Faculty members and students alike boycotted classes, marched on campus and from Petersburg to the Capital building in Richmond, and burned an effigy of Virginia State's president in protest (Moore, 1969, 1970a, 1970c). Virginia State administrators had at first taken a hardline approach to the protests, threatening to expel students and firing two faculty members for participation. However, in early February 1970 tensions eased as those same administrators attempted some efforts at conciliation. The administration reinstated the faculty and agreed to participate in a series of "bi-partisan" talks with the protesters (Moore, 1970c, February 6). By the end of March, Virginia State's president had agreed to step down.

At the same time, there were relatively few actions that Virginia State administrators could take. That July, with the aid of the NAACP's LDF, faculty members and students brought their fight to the courts, filing suit in U.S. District Court to enjoin the escalation of Bland to four-year status (Boissean, 1970). The case, *Norris v. State Council of Higher Education* (1971), took almost an entire year to settle. In May of 1971 the court found that "a racially identifiable dual system of higher education exists in Virginia" and enjoined the William and Mary Board of Visitors from escalating Bland to four-year status (*Norris v. State Council of Higher Education*). Despite recommendations by the Virginia Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and the State's own desegregation plan, Bland has since remained a two-year branch campus of the College of William and Mary, an anomaly of the Virginia higher education system.

As noted above, concurrent with *Norris v. State Council of Higher Education* (1971), another LDF case, *Adams v. Richardson* (1973), was also underway. In October of 1970 the NAACP had filed suit against HEW, asking a federal district court to make HEW enforce Title VI by withholding funds from public schools that failed to desegregate, including colleges and universities (*Adams v. Richardson*, 1973; Loomis, 1994, p. 87). In February of 1973, District Judge John Pratt found that Title VI "requires" HEW "to secure compliance by voluntary means" when possible, and that voluntary compliance may take some time. To that end HEW has "discretion but such discretion is not unlimited." Further, "where a substantial period of time has elapsed, during which period attempts toward voluntary compliance have been either not attempted or have been unsuccessful or have been rejected, [HEW's] limited discretion is ended and they have the duty to effectuate the provisions" of Title VI either through the termination of

funds "or by any other means authorized by law, such as reference to the Department of Justice."

By May, in direct response to the *Adams* finding, OCR issued a letter to the governor of Virginia requesting a new desegregation plan (Loomis, 1994, p. 87). The letter called for Virginia to broaden, enhance, and differentiate Virginia State's mission "from those of the other institutions in a way not apparently contemplated by [its'] present role and scope" (May 21, 1973 letter from Peter Holmes to Linwood Holton, quoted in Loomis, 1994, p. 87). Virginia submitted a new plan by early June only to have OCR come back with requested revisions (Loomis, 1994, p. 89). This was just the beginning of a prolonged back and forth between Virginia, HEW, the NAACP, and the courts. Discussing one of the better plans submitted by Virginia, one internal OCR memorandum noted: "The lack of specificity is a major deficiency…The majority of stated commitments have no starting or completion dates and fail to identify persons responsible" (OCR Staff Evaluation, March 1974; as quoted in Loomis, 1994, p. 89). The NAACP similarly found Virginia's plan inadequate and filed a motion for further relief. The back and forth was eventually punctuated by HEW initiating enforcement proceedings against the state of Virginia for failing to desegregate institutions of higher education in December of 1977, over 13 years after the passage of Civil Rights Act and over 20 years after *Brown v. Board of Education.*

Taking office in January of 1978, Virginia's newly elected governor, John Dalton, was publicly critical of "federal encroachment" and insisted on Virginia's "right to operate its own system of higher education without interference from the federal government" (quoted in the *Washington Post*, 12 February 1978). With the loss of federal

funding on the line, and only after a November breakdown in negotiations in which HEW re-started enforcement proceedings, Dalton's team finalized a new five-year desegregation plan with HEW by the end of the year. The lack of seriousness with which Dalton actually took the commonwealth's obligations as articulated in the plan and any associated intent to make good on those obligations were clear from the outset. Commenting publicly upon HEW's acceptance of the plan, Dalton said, "It means that our colleges and universities can go about their jobs without substantial federal interference" (The Virginia Pilot, January 16, 1979). Given Dalton's comments and Virginia's history, it is perhaps unsurprising that the 1978 desegregation plan's almost singular accomplishment was the escalation of Virginia State from college to university and the separation and establishment of the Norfolk branch as a university (Norfolk State University, n.d.). Assessing the 1978 Plan in 1988, then-Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Legree Daniels found that most of Virginia's commitments remained unmet. Despite a stated commitment to provide both Norfolk State and Virginia State with the "quality of facilities, programs, degree offerings, student assistance and other resources which are at least comparable to those at HWIs with similar missions, inequalities persisted (The Virginia Plan, 1978, p. 34; Loomis, 1994, p. 112). Promises to implement and support "high-demand" programs at Virginia State either never materialized, were declined by SCHEV for approval, or were insufficiently supported to meet accreditation standards (Loomis, 1994, p. 112). Although Bland was never escalated to a four-year status, in 1988 virtually all courses offered by Bland continued to duplicate offerings at Virginia State University (p. 112). In the 10 years that followed the 1978 agreement, disparities in access to higher education increased state-wide.

Although the dire picture painted by Gandy in the 1916-1917 annual report, discussed in section 4.2.4 above, eventually gave way to what one might consider brighter days, Virginia State's current precarity is rooted in a longer history of inequitable funding, continued conflict around VSU's mission, as well as the legitimacy of its very existence. The place of "a viable institution of higher education" for Virginia's Black community has always been precarious given the racialized social context that was Virginia. This is not to say that Harris's vision, and that of the Black community that brought VNCI into being, of a school that would facilitate social mobility and democratic equality, disappeared altogether. Rather, Miller's comment above, claiming space for VSU as a Black institution "to grow and prosper as a viable institution of higher education and as a most cherished resource to the black community" is a testament to the resilience of that vision and Black Virginians' struggles to make it a reality.

5. DISCUSSION

One of the most noteworthy things about Virginia State's history is that it emerged at a time when Black Virginians wielded power, to the extent that they could, in an instrumental way and thus secured certain types of benefits and resources from the state. The creation of resources such as Virginia State reflected the vision of Black Virginians and threatened to mitigate if not eliminate the race-based caste system that white elites sought to preserve. Subsequently, as Black Virginian's power was eroded, as they were delegitimized as state actors, their ability to secure such resources diminished. The transformation that Virginia State subsequently underwent is important to consider carefully here, especially in relation our understanding of how power operates in higher education. Virginia State substantively transformed *from* a Black institution intended to bring about more equal opportunities and rights *to* a Black institution which was more narrowly focused on preparing Black people to fill specific and limited roles as workers. However, the historical record demonstrates that this transformation was never totalizing. While the *official* mission and role of the school changed, the ambitions of students and community members did not. Virginia State students, faculty members, and administrators, as well as the broader Black community in Petersburg and Virginia continued to strive and push for a more liberatory education, one focused on racial uplift and full democratic equality. They did not want the change in the formal mission of the school, the imposed scarcity of resources, nor the limits to self-governance. Nor were any of these changes in the best interests of the black community that Virginia State was

supposed to serve. In the same way that one can discern the exercise of power in the original establishment of Virginia State, one can witness the exercise of power by a white elite in this subsequent transformation.

5.1 An Uncertain Future

Today, out of the 18 public four-year institutions of higher education in the commonwealth, Virginia State University is one of the smallest and most precariously situated. As noted in the introduction, VSU is what scholars of higher education have classified as a "subsidy-reliant" institution (Taylor & Cantwell, 2019, p. 17). For these types of institutions, high rates of admission (and thus a limited ability to recruit more students), low spending per student, and a dependence on non-tuition sources for over 80% of its expenses makes VSU uniquely vulnerable to changes in state funding (Taylor & Cantwell, 2019, p. 17). In the fall of 2019 VSU enrolled just over 4,000 full time students, an almost 20% decline from 2010 (SCHEV, 2020). With an admissions rate hovering in the mid-90s, VSU is virtually an open access institution (SCHEV, 2020). In September of 2020, Kevin Davenport, VSU's vice president for finance & administration and chief financial officer, reported an expected 15% to 20% decrease in full time enrollment and $18 million in lost revenue due to the coronavirus pandemic (VSU, 2020, p. 3). Although VSU appears as though it will survive this year in the black, the institution's future relies, as it has through time, on the continued goodwill of the commonwealth, and more specifically on the General Assembly.

Of course, VSU is not the only HBCU facing a degree of financial precarity. VSU's situation is likely familiar to anyone who has been paying attention to HBCUs for any length of time. Given the degree to which the United States continues to be a

racialized social system, in which social and material rewards are stratified by race, it is perhaps not surprising that Black institutions continue to face an uncertain future. From a high of over 120, today there are only 99 accredited HBCUs, over 50 percent of which have experienced steadily declining or flat enrollments and/or revenues over the past 20 years (Corson, 2018). The year 2018 was a particularly rough year for HBCUs, with Concordia College, a small Lutheran HBCU in Alabama, shuttered and Bennett College in North Carolina losing accreditation (Seltzer, 2018; Suggs, 2018;). For both schools, lack of revenue was the driving issue in closing and loss of accreditation respectively (Seltzer, 2018; Suggs, 2018). VSU, Concordia, and Bennett are far from alone.

Even though these institutions continue to be vulnerable, many of them also function as the "opportunity engines" that Taylor and Cantwell posit "subsidy- reliant" institutions to be (2019). As the primary means through which Black people could acquire a high school or collegiate level education during the first half of the 20th century, HBCUs undoubtedly contributed to building a Black middle class (Gasman, Lundy-Wagner, Ransom & Bowman III, 2010). Further, as noted in the introduction, while HBCU retention and graduation rates are well below the national average, there is strong evidence to suggest that HBCUs have better-than-expected student outcomes given the challenges they face and their often limited resources (Allen, 1992; Kim, 2002; Kim & Conrad, 2006; Sibulkin & Butler, 2011). Despite the role that HBCUs and similarly situated institutions have played and continue to play in the United States—providing students with a path towards higher lifetime earnings, for example—their very existence, their participation in this larger project that we call higher education, continues to be questioned (Brown, 1999, 2001; Lee, 2010; Stefkovich & Leas, 1994). From Riesman

and Jenck's 1967 *Harvard Educational Review* article calling HBCUs "academic disaster areas" (p. 26) to more recent efforts to consolidate HBCUs in Georgia and Mississippi (Goodman, 2010; Stirgus, 2019) debate over the continued existence of HBCUs is well-trod ground (Gasman, 2006).

5.2 Reframing the Problem

How does one understand the precarity, the continued lack of legitimacy that HBCUs have endured? Most scholars of higher education have attempted to understand HBCUs, both in terms of their successes as well as their challenges, by documenting broad trends or attempting to find a connection between individual or institutional characteristics with specific outcomes. As explored in the literature review herein, studies thus abound on "the student experience," with sparser coverage on "the faculty experience" and philanthropic difficulties and strategies. Additionally, while there is some work on the impact of policies and laws, it is often absent any explicit theoretical frame and neglects broader socio-political contexts.

In an attempt to shed light on the ongoing precarity, continued lack of legitimacy, and other challenges that HBCUs face, this case study has taken an altogether different tack. Following the lead of scholars of higher education who have focused on the role of the state in higher education (Ordorika, 2003; Pusser, 2004, 2006, 2008; Rhoads & Torres, 2006; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Spring, 1998; Wirt & Kirst, 1997); and in line with scholars of Black education more broadly (Aiello, 2012; Anderson, 1988; Du Bois, 2001; Watkins, 2001; Wolters, 1975), the work herein uses an explicitly critical political conceptual frame to better inform our understanding of Virginia State University specifically and HBCUs as well as other under-resourced

institutions more broadly. As discussed in more depth below, the findings from this research were largely in alignment with findings from previous research pertaining to the role of the state in higher education. Specifically, this study found that a focus on political contest in an evolving state and civil society, with particular attention to the exercise of power in that contest, helped explicate the ongoing precarity that Virginia State University has faced, as well how it has transformed over time.

In contrast to the current scholarship on the state and higher education, in which race as a structural concept is largely absent, race and racism are found to be intimately connected to the use of power and ongoing contests over the legitimacy of VSU. Racism as a structural concept is fundamental to understanding VSU. Further, although one cannot and should not generalize from a single case, the importance of race to my findings would suggest that race and racism is also important to understanding HBCUs more broadly, and, I argue, to understanding systems of higher education as well.

5.3 Alignment with Previous Scholarship

5.3.1 Universities as Political Institutions

Fundamental to the work of scholars such as Simon Marginson, Imanol Ordorika, and Brian Pusser is an effort to challenge the perception that universities are "apolitical and autonomous institutions" (Ordorika & Lloyd, 2015, p. 130). Rather, these scholars have emphasized and provided evidence on the varying relationship of higher education to the state *and* civil society (Marginson, 2006, 2007; Ordorika, 2003; Pusser, 2004, 2006, 2014). In this model universities react and adapt to, as well as influence, enable, and bolster the state. In addition, as places where the development and perpetuation of ideas is central and real resources and opportunities are allocated, schools are particularly

important and attractive sites of and instruments in political contest. The findings

contained herein are consistent with the work of these scholars in myriad ways. Over the

last 130-plus years, Virginia State has variously adapted to, influenced, and enabled a

changing state and civil society; it has also been both a site of and an instrument in

political contests.

In fact, of primary importance to the founding of Virginia State University was

the need for the state to establish legitimacy in the wake of a contentious election. This

moment was made possible through longer term contest and pressure from segments of

the civil society positioning the provision of education as a key source of legitimacy for

the state in the wake of the Civil War. The need for the state to remain legitimate, and

the provision of education in that project, has also played a role in the persistent

challenges VSU has since faced. For example, starting in 1883—from the moment the

institution opened its doors—forces in the civil society, which were reflected in the

forcible and violent expulsion of Black people as state actors and as a part of the

electorate, resulted in changes in the state and changes in the state's approach to

institution. Over time, VSU was forced to adapt to a subordinate political status in

alignment with the broader subordinate political status occupied by Black people in

Virginia. VSU had been brought into existence as a Black institution intended to bring

about more equal opportunities as well as equal political and civil rights for Black people.

As forces in the civil society shifted what a legitimate state was supposed to be and do,

the nascent policies supporting the education of Black people shifted as well. VSU's

purpose as a legitimate project of the state changed, culminating in the total elimination

of the collegiate program. VSU became an institution that was at least formally focused on preparing Black people to fill specific and limited types of roles as future workers.

This study also indicates that VSU played a role in enabling and bolstering the legitimacy of the state, even as control of the state changed over time. This is particularly clear at VSU's founding. After the election of 1879, Readjusters knew that in order to maintain the allegiance of the Black electorate, to garner votes and continue to govern as a legitimate political party, they had to make good on their campaign promises. In 1881, after taking control of the entire state apparatus in Virginia, Readjuster's support of the establishment of Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute as a Black institution was one relatively important action among many that solidified the legitimacy of their hold on the commonwealth, at least amongst one key constituency.

Further, as noted above, as the commonwealth changed from a democracy to a racialized plutocracy run by and for small group of elites at the turn of the century and Black people were excised from the broader electorate, VSU's official purpose as a state project changed as well. In Jim Crow Virginia, the institution, rather than serving as an unprecedented educational project, became instead a constrained and redefined institution in service of legitimizing the state. As a Black institution VSU was an important part of the state's larger project of maintaining racial segregation. In election after election, the Conservative and then the Democratic Party used race, and specifically fear of Black people and fear of integrated schools, as a lever to motivate a white electorate. What both Slaughter and Pusser observe in their own work in terms of "contending groups intent on political mobilization" using education, and colleges and universities specifically, as instruments in a broader struggles "for the control of political and economic benefits" is

true as well for Virginia and VSU (Pusser, 2004, p. 213; Pusser, 2014; Slaughter, 1988, p. 245). Conservatives positioning themselves as the party of Jim Crow put forth a two-pronged strategy: maintaining segregated schools and a society in which Black people were relegated to second class citizenship while providing vocational training for Blacks in higher education as a source of legitimacy for Jim Crow. Numerous critical scholars and educators have noted that schools, including colleges and universities, can and do function to reproduce relations of power and prestige (Carnoy & Levin, 1985; Du Bois, 2001; Freire, 1973, 1996; hooks, 1994; Ordorika, 2003; Pusser, 2004; Slaughter 1988). In this case, Virginia State University, as a Black school, was one aspect of maintaining Virginia's system of inequality and racial inequality specifically. Over the next several decades, educating Black teachers for Black schools, reestablishing the collegiate program, and adding graduate studies were changes that helped to bolster the commonwealth as a white state, giving the appearance of meeting the separate but equal principle established in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) while maintaining segregation. This is not to say that VSU's role maintaining racial inequality was either uncontested or all encompassing. In fact, and discussed in more detail below, the changes that Virginia State underwent, the very initiatives and activities that helped to bolster and maintain a white state were products of contest and sometimes compromise as pressure from the civil society and the state came to bear on education in Virginia.

5.3.2 Contest Drives Change

Consistent with the work of Ordorika (2003) and Pusser (2004), political conflict and contest, broadly conceived, has played a key role in bringing about change at VSU in both big and small ways. There was no natural evolution or adaptation but rather changes

to VSU, especially in terms of governance and resource allocation, were a consequence of competing demands over ideology. Political contest and the outcomes of that contest within Virginia led to VSU's establishment as a Black school focused on education for social mobility and democratic equality. Black people in Virginia were instrumental in bringing Virginia State into being through their unrelenting pursuit of educational opportunities and determined participation in political processes, in the face of often violent opposition. Continued contest in the state and civil society over time lead to shifts in the balance of power. Initially, this led to such significant changes as the elimination of both the collegiate program and the institution's BoV, and a narrowing of Virginia State's formal mission. In turn, political contest and pressure within the commonwealth, bolstered by the national civil rights movement, eventually lead to the reinstatement of both the collegiate program and the institution's BoV. In Virginia State's retention of an agricultural college, one can also see how conflict and pressure at the local level, through direct action on the part of VSU faculty members and students, and the Black community in Petersburg, and at the state and federal level, through the courts, worked in tandem to *prevent* change, to maintain the status quo.

Although smaller in scale, the balancing act that VSU's presidents and other administrators engaged in as a result of these contests and the ways in which constituencies in the civil society gained and held power over the state as a result is evident in annual reports, catalogues, and advertisements, as well as the curricular and extra-curricular offerings at VSU. It is in this material in particular where one sees evidence of competing demands over ideology and resource allocation, i.e., over the purpose of the institution and how resources would or should be allocated in support of

that purpose. Although legislators and appointed officials restricted state support to normal and industrial education for decades, Virginia State's faculty, students, and administrators never relented. They continued to engage in academically focused activities, such as reading circles, literary and debate societies and academically focused public lectures, as evidenced in both school catalogues and annual reports over the years. Thus, although the white state may have forced VSU to close the collegiate program, Harris's vision for the institution as a Black institution uplifting Black Virginians did not disappear. Rather, two conflicting visions, or institutional identities, persisted.

In the article "Forces in Tension: The State, Civil Society and Market in the Future of the University," Pusser contends that just as the state and civil society shape universities, universities also shape the state *as well as* civil society (2014). Clearly this is true as well for Virginia State. Although this research has focused more on state and civil society effects on Virginia State as an institution, Virginia State also shaped the state and civil society. At the most obvious level in relation to the state, Virginia State University helped and continues to help legitimize the state. In addition, through the provision of education, especially during an era in which educational opportunities were severely limited for Black people; as well as through Virginia State's regular normal school and its summer program for teachers, Virginia State contributed countless highly educated Black teachers to Black schools over the last 130 years and thus had an impact on the education of Black Virginians as a whole. Similarly, while in the latter half of the 20th century it is certainly true that political contests "over equity, resource allocation, opportunity and social justice" played out in debates over policies and practices at Virginia State before or

as they emerged "in the wider political economy" (Pusser, 2014, p. 12), it is not as clear that this was the case prior to 1950.

5.3.3 The Operation and Use of Power

At the end of University Rankings in Critical Perspective, Pusser and Marginson argue that the "convergence of ranking metrics makes little sense, *unless* contextualized within broader structures of power" (2013, p. 560). Similarly, the trajectory of Virginia State University, the transition from a focus on racial uplift to a focus on reinforcing inequality, the continued precarity of the institution, makes little sense *unless* contextualized within broader structures of power, and specifically within a racialized inequality regime. For this study in particular, identifying and getting closer to some understanding of how power operated was important to understanding why Virginia State evolved in the manner that it did. Taking a case-based historical approach also helps highlight the many ways in which power manifests and indeed, the role that power plays "in creating structures that institutionalize processes of authority and that tend to further privilege elites" (Pusser & Marginson, 2013, p. 550). However, in contrast to previous work, this study also makes clear that within the U.S. context–a racialized social system – power cannot be considered absent a discussion of race.

Virginia State University was born out of and evolved in relation to ongoing contest within the state and civil society. As noted directly above and in section 4.1, the entities involved in those contests exercised power in a variety of ways. In my findings I tried to highlight both active and overt uses of power, such as those that surrounded elections in the 1870s and 1880s, as well as those instances in which oppression became systemic, structural, and more covert in nature. As Pusser and Marginson note, "Higher

education systems and institutions are intentionally organized…to produce particular outcomes" (2013, p. 552). From 1883 through the early part of the 20th century, legislators in Virginia intentionally attempted to re-structure VNCI so as to institutionalize processes of authority that further privileged a white elite. The enormous power of the white elite in Virginia through the 1970s and into the 1980s is made especially clear in the ongoing "negotiation" with HEW and the abject lack of substantive action in response to civil society pressure. The racial stratification that characterized Virginia throughout the period studied herein never disappeared nor lessened. Rather, the structures upholding that stratification changed.5.3.4 Higher Education, Race & Racism

As one might expect, and was part of the intent of this work, focusing on an HBCU like Virginia State University brought race and racism front and center as a key variable and area of investigation. Race and racism were found to be fundamental to understanding VSU and how it changed over time. Political contest, the evolution of the state, VSU's adaptations and how those adaptions would be interpreted with regard to the legitimacy of the institution as well as the legitimacy of the state–all of these were found to be structured by the existent if evolving racialized inequality regime in Virginia and the United States. One can see this in part from the cycle of political contest and subsequent changes in governance and mission as described above. At the same time, this can also be seen in the consistency and predictably stable precarity of VSU's existence. As a Black institution, as a racialized state project within a larger social structural system of inequality, VSU's precarity and relatively fragile legitimacy is unsurprising. This is not a design flaw. Rather, HBCUs are precarious, their mission and their very existence is contested, because they serve the non-dominant race within a racialized social system.

Within a racialized social system, the dominant race will use the many resources that are available to structure and restructure society in ways that best serve their interests. Further, as Bonilla-Silva notes, "Both the meaning and the position assigned to races" within these structures will be an ongoing area of contest (2001, p. 41). In contrast with these findings, within the current scholarship on the state and higher education race as a structural concept is largely absent and thus undertheorized.

5.4 Directions for Future Research

This study contributes to an understanding of the role of the state and civil society in shaping structures and processes in higher education by using explicitly political conceptual frames that incorporate a structural understanding of race. Further, although narrowly delineated, this research contributes to our understanding of the ways and the degree to which HBCUs have been both political and politicized institutions and how racism as a regime, as a social structural system of inequality, has influenced HBCUs and in turn higher education more generally. Broadly, future higher education research should focus on better understanding racism as a structural concept in relation to the state, the civil society, and the organization of institutions of higher education.

The impact of race and racism on higher education, and the impact of higher education on race and racism, has been broadly undertheorized and is largely absent from the literature on higher education and the state. For example, although Slaughter and Rhoades argue that academic capitalism is rooted in the integration of universities with the industrial economy that emerged in the last quarter of the 19th century, they fail to connect the seismic economic changes occurring during that time period to the end of chattel slavery (2004, p. 14). Just as individuals built wealth through the enslavement of

Black people, so too did institutions of higher education (Wilder, 2014). Is it simply

coincidental that neoliberal disinvestment in the state and in higher education emerged in

tandem with desegregation or, as Heather McGhee argues, are these two phenomena

more intimately related (2021)? Given that HBCUs are perceived as a vestige of *de jure*

segregation but white institutions are not, it would be helpful to better understand and

better explicate how primarily white institutions benefited from and are implicated in

both current and historical systems of inequality. How have predominantly white

institutions bolstered and legitimized the state? What sort of civil society have those

institutions contributed to? To whom or to what have they provided, and do they continue

to provide legitimacy?

Future research should also continue to focus on what Ordorika and Lloyd called

the "dynamics of educational reform" or perhaps more simply a theory of change (2015,

p. 145). Although the work herein affirms the general thesis that political contest between

the state and civil society leads to change, more research on how "competing demands

for the reproduction and production of a particular ideology or skills on the one hand, and

struggles for social transformation and equality on the other" evolve within higher

education would be helpful (Ordorika and Lloyd, 2015, p. 145). Specifically, are there

circumstances in which one group is generally more or less successful? How does the

conflict over these various demands play out across different types of institutions, and

what role does race and/or other areas of social polarization and inequality play in that

conflict?

Third, in the introduction to *Universities and the Public Sphere*, Pusser et al.

suggest that by enhancing our understanding of higher education and its "role in

knowledge creation and State Building" we might make visible, and perhaps enhance,

universities' potential "to serve [as] an essential site for analysis and critique of the State"

and the generation of essential public goods (2012. p. 3). Conceptually, this idea, that

schools broadly and institutions of higher education specifically can serve as sites of

analysis and critique of the state is reflected in various ways through the work of a

number of scholars (Carnoy & Levin, 1985; Du Bois, 2001; Freire, 1973; Freire, 1996;

hooks, 1994; Ordorika, 2003; Pusser, 2004; Pusser & Marginson, 2013; Slaughter, 1988).

More research is needed that focuses on enhancing our understanding of how and when

higher education can and does critique the state, in both big and small ways. Given the

work of scholars like Williamson-Lott (2008, 2018), Rogers (2012), and Ordorika

(2021), all of whom focus on the emergence of social and political movements from

institutions of higher education, it would also be helpful to better understand how race

and/or other areas of social polarization and inequality factor into the potential for

critiques of the state to emerge and/or be suppressed.

5.5 Conclusion

In 1908 W.E.B. Du Bois spoke at Fisk University, a private Black school.

Attempting to give context to the speech some 30-plus years later, he described a

situation at Fisk which bears a notable resemblance to what occurred at VSU at the turn

of the century. What was happening at Fisk was a "surrender of college training to the

current industrial fad…" (Du Bois, 2001, p. 35). Du Bois described this speech, a

response to the situation, as "striving for the survival of the Negro college in a day of

starvation and ridicule" (2001, p. 35). Within the speech itself, Du Bois' critique is quite

harsh. He argues that although the "vocational training of children" is laudatory, placing

such training in the College department at Fisk is "like using a surgeon's knife for chopping wood" (2001, p. 46). Reflecting on the speech, Du Bois noted that he was "attacking a system and a tendency" (p. 48). Almost 40 years later, discussing the future of Black colleges, Du Bois again points to systemic or structural issues, and more importantly to the need for independence in order to free Black institutions from subservience "to the dominant wealth of the country" and from "the control of politics in a state now directed for the most part by prejudiced persons guided by a definite ideal of racial discrimination" (2001, p.188).

Du Bois, insightful and prescient in his observations, was not alone. Twenty years after Du Bois, Kenneth B. Clark, the professor and psychologist most well-known for his and Mamie Clark's doll study (which was used in *Brown v. Board of Education*), makes largely the same argument in response to a 1967 article by Christopher Jencks and David Riesman in which they called Black colleges "academic disaster areas." Overwhelmingly negative, Jenck's and Riesman's article fed into an ongoing debate about the quality, efficacy, and very existence of Black schools. Addressing the controversial article and yet declining to respond to Jencks and Riesman on their terms, Clark used his talk, entitled Higher Education for Negroes: Challenges and Prospects, to make the case for taking a more structural view of the problem. Clark thus opens with the following salvo:

> One, I believe, can understand the problems and the prospects of higher education
> for Negroes in America only in a rather complex and, at times, confusing context
> - a context which includes an awareness of the nature of the past; a context
> including an awareness of …the products of Negro colleges during this past
> century; and a context which includes an awareness and tough-minded appraisal

of the present role and function of Negro colleges. And I add to that - the present

symbolic significance of Negro colleges…[and] in terms of the nature, the

organization, the adequacy, the function, the goals and the effects of higher

education in America as a whole. (Clark, 1967, pp.197-198)

Clark goes on to layout both the success of Black schools, as well as their

challenges. Chief among these challenges he suggests is the degree to which they had

become "testaments of society's commitment to excluding Negroes from any meaningful

role in the society as a whole…" (Clark, 1967, p.198). In this respect, he argues that they

had come to reflect "the contamination and moral erosion and emptiness of white

colleges and universities in an America that presented itself before the world as a

democratic society" (Clark, 1967, p. 198). Clark also argues that in spite of this, in spite

of the ever "increasing severity" of the problems that Black schools face, in spite of the

stark "absence of any genuine concern" for Black education "on the part of prestigious,

affluent white colleges and universities"; Black schools, and specifically the faculty that

have made up those schools have made enormous contributions to both generations of

Black students, as well as to the Broader nation by seeding the Civil Rights movement

(Clark, 1967, p. 198). As he goes on, Clark pushes his audience to understand the

precarity of Blacks schools as a choice made by a racist society; and to reassess how one

values educational institutions. Clark questions the value of elite schools, marked as they

are by student competition "to obtain superior status and economic advantage over

others" (Clark, 1967, p. 200).

For both Du Bois and Clark, absent a non-racist society, the solution to the

problems that HBCUs face is independence. For both, the problem with HBCUs is not

the schools. The problem is the racist context in which these schools are embedded.

Although the precise causal relationship is difficult to capture empirically, this study has

hopefully contributed to a better understanding of this problem. The context of a

racialized inequality regime in Virginia and the United States had a profound impact on

Virginia State University and provides a salient explanation for the consistent precarity of

VSU's existence. As a racialized state project within a larger social structural system of

inequality, HBCUs are precarious because they serve the non-dominant race within a

racialized social system.

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Appendix A. Code Book

Code	
Sub-code	**Description**
1) Agencies*	Formal institutions, organizations or associations
2) Agents*	Individuals "who have a specialized responsibility for the circulation and development of culture and ideology" whether they "align themselves with the existing dispositions of social and intellectual forces or align themselves with the emerging popular forces and seek to elaborate new currents of ideas" (Hall, 1986, pp.18-19).
3) Amplification	enlarging, increasing, adding to
4) Challenge(s)	Specifically in relation to Virginia State; unequal contest(s) wherein power differentials virtually guarantee that the outcome of the contest will affect the community that Virginia State serves (Black students, Black Virginians) in a manner contrary to that communities interests.
5) Change	a process, act or instance of something becoming different than it was; requires two points in time

6) Civil Society*	A network of various associations and institutions which include churches, some schools, museums, cultural or social associations and organizations, and the family (Schwarzmantel, 2014, p.203; Hall, 1986, p.18). "…the arena of uncoerced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values. In theory, its institutional forms are distinct from those of the state, family and market, though in practice, the boundaries between state, civil societ, family and market are often complex, blurred and negotiated." (Centre for Civil Society, 2011, quoted in Pusser, 2012, p.37).
7) Contest*	Conflict, competition or opposition (over ideology, resources, power, etc.); manifest and visible
8) Coalescence*	Joining or merging together
9) Critical Moment	Points in time where an identifiable change occurred within the state or civil society that then led to challenges for Virginia State.
10) Elites	People who are powerful relative to others, & who have a disproportionate amount of resources (material, cultural, social, political) relative to others

11) Ideology	Values, beliefs, assumptions, theories; used to justify or structure a particular approach, system, policy, structure; Althusser: "the imagined existence (or idea) of things as it relates to the real conditions of existence"
12) Legitimacy*	"the normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed. It is a subjective quality, relational between actor and institution, and defined by the actor's perception of the institution. The actor's perception may come from the substance of the rule or from the procedure or source by which it was constituted. Such a perception affects behavior because it is internalized by the actor and helps to define how the actor sees its interests." (Hurd, 1999, p.381) The acceptance of authority, willingness or recognition that such authority must be obeyed; according to Weber, three possible bases: 1) tradition, 2) charisma or faith in leaders, or 3) legal, trust in legality, or the rationality of the rule of law
13) Location: Federal	Event or activity that occurs at the federal level, that is not specific to Virginia
14) Location: State (Virginia)	Event or activity that occurs at the state level, that is specific to Virginia

15) Location: Local (municipality within Virginia)	Event or activity that occurs within a specific municipality in Virginia
16) Marginalization	A process, act or instance in which people are excluded from certain benefits or resources (social, political, material, cultural)
17) Mobilization	Planning, preparing and organizing for coordinated action, typically in relation to contest
18) Non-decision making*	"a political space in which contest does not manifest because the issues have not reached the decision making arena" (from Pusser, 2015, p.70, explaining Bachrach and Baratz)
19) Policy	Can be EITHER a course of action, system of principles or written laws, protocols etc. implemented by the state
20) Power*	"A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests." (1974, p.30).
a) Active*	Overt and visible actions and behaviors, may involve the use of force or coercion
b) Passive*	Instances in which oppression may have become systemic and is "mobilized, recreated and reinforced in ways that

	are [not necessarily] consciously chosen" (Lukes, 1974 p.25)
	May include "persons and groups who direct their energy to shaping or reinforcing predominant norms, precedents, myths, institutions, and procedures that undergird and characterize the political process." (Bachrach & Baratz, 1975, pp.900-901)
21) Racism	A system "in which economic, political, social, and ideological levels are partially structured by the placement of actors in racial categories or races" (Bonilla-Silva, 2001, p. 37). *Racism is evident whenever resources (broadly defined) are structured by the placement of actors & institutions in racial categories; always involves relations of power (& oppression)*
22) Stasis	Inactivity, status quo, the absence of change
23) The State*	"Political institutions, laws, rules and regulations, judicial systems, and formal systems of power, including law enforcement and military organizations, as well as a variety of other formal organizations that serve to shape collective activity and protect individual rights" (Pusser & Marginson, 2012, p.91-92)

24) State Authority*	Instances in which the state, as defined herein, exercise power, as defined herein "Research on the State and Higher Education identifies three key areas of State authority over higher education. The first is…subsidies. The second is" regulatory (Pusser, 2008, p.112) The State "shapes the university through three fundamental functions…:provision, subsidy and regulation" (Pusser, 2014, p.12-13) Always implicates relations of power
i) Monetary*	A form of state authority; The provision of funding for whatever purpose and through whatever means, whether to subsidize the cost of tuition or to conduct research
ii) Regulatory*	A form of state authority; Any regulatory activity, whether directly through the passage of a law, or indirectly through a specific policy or practice
iii) Appointments*	A form of state authority; positions to which elected officials may appoint the individual of their choosing
25) Subalturn	People and groups that are marginalized and/or minoritized, and generally have less structural and formal power and/or resources relative to others

Appendix B. Process Tracing Tests Examples

The following is modeled after process tracing tests as established and explained by Van Evera (1997), Bennett (2010), Collier (2011) & Mahoney (2012). The tests below pertain only to the primary findings.

Causal Puzzle

To explain the creation of Virginia State University as well as how and why it evolved over time.

Area 1: Contest and the Creation of Virginia State University

Tests 1.1

Finding: The creation of Virginia State University was a direct outcome of the state and civil society contests that marked the decades immediately following the Civil War.

Evidence:	Interpretation:
A. Existence of contest, key areas included the role of the state in providing education, the role of Black people in society and politics	A. The existence of contest is consistent with the finding, but does not in and of itself demonstrate anything; same for specific areas of contest (Passing/Straw-in the-Wind)
B. Black people positioned the state provision of education as a key area of political and social mobilization	B. The fact that Black people position the state provision of education as a key area of mobilization lends weight to a potential connection, in that it
C. Conservative and Republican parties split (largely due to contests in the civil society), emergence of a third	indicates that this was an area that was

party (Readjusters) dependent on the Black electorate for legitimacy

important to the Black electorate, one that they were vocal and organized around; Black civil society exerted pressure on the state and on civil society organizations (political parties) in this area (Passing/hoop)

C. The splits in the Conservative and Republican parties and the emergence of the Readjusters created a political environment in which the Black community could wield power; in which pressure from Black civil society could take root. The Readjusters needed to take the interests of the Black community seriously; this was a necessary precursor to the establishment of VSU as a Black institution focused on racial uplift (Passing/Smoking-gun)

Tests 1.2

Finding: The creation of Virginia State University was a direct outcome of the 1881 election in Virginia.

Evidence:	Interpretation:
A. 1881 election tipped the balance of power, giving Readjusters control of the state;	A. Without the Readjuster coalition majority in the legislature, the bill establishing VNCI would have been unlikely to pass (additional evidence: neither conservatives nor republicans made education a part of their platform); in addition, the election also put in place a supportive governor & superintendent of education; otherwise the bill would have potentially been vetoed (additional evidence: although a bill such as the one establishing VSU had never come before the legislature before, other education bills had failed) (Passing/Smoking-Gun)
B. Readjusters understood their legitimacy as the ruling party to be fragile, dependent on Black support;	
C. Readjusters understood the state provision of education to be an important issue for Black people, and a potential source of legitimacy for a Readjuster state	
	B. Readjuster's understanding that their legitimacy as a ruling party depended on Black support helps explain why they supported the establishment of VSU (and similarly radical initiatives that were important to the Black

community) (Passing/Straw-in-the-Wind)

C. Readjuster's understanding of the importance of education to the Black community helps explain why they supported the establishment of VSU (Passing/Straw-in-the-Wind)

Area 2: Critical Moments, Contest, Challenge and Change

Tests 2.1

Finding: Contests associated with the state and civil society continued to influence VSU's development over time.

Evidence:	Interpretation:
A. The existence of ongoing contest	A. Necessary but not sufficient (Passing/Straw-in-the-Wind)
B. Contest in the period 1883 through 1902 (establishment of a new constitution)	B. The contest that marked the period 1883 into the 20th century led to reduced Black voter turnout and reduced the power of Black civil society, and eventually the elimination of Black people as legitimate state actors; necessary to changing mission,
- Democrats embrace racism	
- Black people expunged from any position of legitimate authority or power within the State	

C. For democrats, maintaining segregated schools and a society in which Black people were relegated to second class citizenship was a source of legitimacy

D. By 1891, the legislature had changed the governance structure of VNCI, replaced Black members of the Board of Visitors with white members, and cut VNCI's annual appropriations from $20,000 to $15,000

E. Concomitant with this (above) came changes in institutional leadership, mission, and the curriculum

- 1902, the General Assembly divested VNCI of the collegiate program; replaced it with manual and industrial training

reducing resources etc. of VNCI (as long as Black people were legitimate state actors, their interests as articulated by them would need to be served) (Passing/Straw-in-the-Wind)

C. Democrats connecting the legitimacy of a Democratic controlled state to segregation, and second class citizenship for Black people created the space in which reducing support for VNCI was possible/necessary (pressure from white civil society) (Passing/Straw-in-the-Wind)

D. New democratic controlled state make actual changes to VNCI (they took control, and not only were they under-pressure from their own constituents, based on the racist ideology they had espoused, to make changes, they acted on those interests) (Passing/Smoking-gun)

Area 3: The Operation and the Use of Power

Tests 3.1

Finding: The entities involved in those contests exercised power in a variety of ways (active/over, systemic, structural, covert), in alignment with ideological frames.

Power: instances in which "A exercises power over B when A affects B in a manner contrary to B's interests." (Lukes, 1974, p.30).

Evidence:	Interpretation:
A. A Democrat controlled state transformed VSU *from* a Black institution intended to bring about more equal opportunities and rights *to* a Black institution which was more narrowly focused on preparing Black people to fill specific and limited types of roles as future workers	A. Necessary, but not sufficient; it is possible that such changes could have been in the interest of the Black Community (Passing/Straw-in-the-Wind)
- By 1891, the legislature had changed the governance structure of VNCI, replaced Black members of the Board of Visitors with white members, and cut VNCI's annual appropriations from $20,000 to $15,000	B. The longer term evidence of the Black community's expressed interest in state supported education; and specifically education as a tool of racial uplift, indicates that at a minimum, the power of conservative elites in Virginia at the time of VSU's founding was diminished (Passing/Straw-in-the-Wind)
	C. Actual changes, changes clearly imposed by a particular constituency

- Concomitant with this (above) came changes in institutional leadership, mission, and the curriculum

- 1902, the General Assembly divested VNCI of the collegiate program; replaced it with manual and industrial training

B. VSU as it was originally established, as a Black institution intended to bring about more equal opportunities and rights, was consistent with Black Virginians longer term efforts and expressed interests.

C. VSU as it was transformed to a Black institution which was more narrowly focused on preparing Black people to fill specific and limited types of roles as future workers, with very limited resources, was contrary to the interests of the Black community at VSU as well as Black Virginians more broadly

(Democrat controlled state), in opposition to the interests of another constituency (Black Virginians broadly; those at VSU specifically) (Passing/Smoking-Gun)

Appendix C. Alfred Harris Speech in Defense of the Creation of VNCI

[A]s to the first objection which the gentleman raises, I do not care to discuss the possible effect of any future decisions of the courts. As to the second objection raised by the gentleman, I wonder that his own inconsistency does not strike him as a little peculiar, for he says that "he approves of the clause which makes this a school for the exclusive education of colored persons," and yet he desires to mix the races to the extent of putting white teachers in colored schools, when nothing is to be gained thereby; for a white person who does not associate with or at all mingle with the colored people cannot possibly have any interest in the intellectual advancement of the colored race further than simply in a routine manner. He does work simply to draw his salary. He mingles not with the families whose children he is to instruct, and therefore does not and cannot know their wants or the means which would most readily make them zealous in the pursuit of knowledge. I cannot see why he desires to do this, especially when we have a large number of men of our own race who are in every way well qualified to perform the duties required in an institution of learning of the highest and most advanced course of instruction —men who live and associate with our people, who know our wants and capabilities, and who would be interested in the advancement of our children from love of race and pride in their own work.

Neither, Mr. Speaker, do we want a white Board of Visitors, for this would be a confession of our weakness to manage our own seminary of learning. And this admission we do not feel called upon to make, for we feel that we can successfully manage a first-class institution of learning, and such we intend to make this. The gentleman says he doubts the ability of the race to furnish sufficient talent to fill the requirements of this school. I know that the gentleman has such doubts, and the reasons are obvious, because he does not associate with my people, and

really needs an introduction to the Negro of his own State. Had he such an introduction he would conclude that the Negro, with an opportunity, could and would stand shoulder to shoulder with his white brother in all that goes to make a full, complete and good man. The Negro is doing it at Harvard, at Yale, and in all the first institutions of the country. ... I do not want this bill amended. I do not want it loaded down and choked up so that it will not effect (sic) the object in view. I want to tell the gentleman that while we have provided here for a Normal department, we have also provided for the higher and professional education of our people; for be it known that we do not desire to simply become a race of teachers; we have ambition for the different learned professions, for business, and some of us want the classical and scientific instruction which the college will give. I know that with such an opportunity as this institution will give we can demonstrate to that class of gentlemen in Virginia who do not believe that we can comprehend the higher training, that we are their intellectual equals; and will ease the fears of those who yet think that it will not comport with the dignity of old aristocratic families to give the Negro a fair show. I want a place where all our blacks, girls and boys, may go and drink from the fountain of knowledge until their ambition is satiated, and then step into the world prepared as good and upright citizens to meet its responsibilities, and battle for a place among men upon their merit — therefore, I hope that the amendment will be rejected.(Richmond Daily Whig, February 15, 1882)

Appendix D. Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute Act of Incorporation

An ACT to incorporate the Normal and Collegiate Institute, and provide for the support of the same.

Approved March 6, 1882.

1. Be it enacted by the general assembly of Virginia, That the governor of Virginia shall, on or before the first day of March, eighteen hundred and eighty-two, appoint a commission of five persons, who shall forthwith proceed to select a suitable site on the south side of the James river for the establishment of institution of learning, to be used exclusively for the education of colored persons, under and in pursuance of the conditions and regulations prescribed.

2. The said commission shall proceed, as soon as practicable, to select such a site, and report said selection to the board of education, composed of the governor, attorney-general, and superintendent of public instruction, for its approval, so that the same may be approved and purchased by said board before the fifteenth day of March, eighteen and eighty-two.

3. After purchase of said site by the said board of education, the board of of (sic) visitors provided shall proceed at once construct or repair, upon said site, a building or buildings on plans admitting of enlargement to be used for the purposes In the construction or repair of said building or the said board of visitors shall exercise their best discretion, and have full to act in the premises, without further authority, so that the sum of money expended in the purchase of said site, and in the construction or repair of said building or buildings, and in , fitting up and putting in order the same for opening the school, shall not exceed the sum of one hundred thousand dollars.

4. The said school shall be as Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. It shall be under the government and control of seven visitors, six of whom shall be well-qualified colored men, who shall be appointed by the governor, with the consent of the senate: provided that the

provisions of section two of chapter eleven, Code of eighteen hundred and seventy-three, shall not apply to the visitors appointed to this institution. The governor shall fix a day for the first meeting of said visitors, and notify thereof, and thereafter said visitors shall have two stated meetings in each year at the institution aforesaid to-wit : on the first Tuesday in June and November, and occasional meetings at such other times as shall appoint, or on a special call by the chairman of said board of which meetings shall be at the institute.

5. A majority of the members of the aforesaid board of visitors shall constitute a quorum the transaction of business, and on the death or resignation of a member, or failure to act for one year, or on his removal out of this state, the board of education of the state, with the consent of the senate, shall appoint a successor.

6. The said visitors, or so many of as being a majority, shall appoint a rector, of their own body, to preside at their meetings, in the absence of the superintendent of public instruction, and a secretary to record, attest and preserve their proceedings. They shall, examine into the state of the property, real and personal ; shall make and keep an inventory of the same, specifying every item it consists ; shall make annual report to the board of education, to be laid before general assembly, with such suggestions or recommendations as, in their judgment, would be promotive of the objects of institute. In said report they shall also embrace a full account of disbursements, all funds on hand, and a general statement of the condition of said institute.

7. In the said institute there shall be a normal department, in which shall be taught such branches as are usually taught in the best normal schools in the country said branches to be prescribed by the visitors to said institute provided that such normal course of instruction shall not be longer three years.

8. There shall be connected with said institute, a college, and such professional departments as the board of visitors may think expedient and proper, for the higher education of colored persons. In the college department shall be taught the classics, the higher branches of mathematics, and such other branches as are taught in colleges, which branches shall be prescribed by the board of visitors to said institute.

9. The superintendent of public instruction for this state shall be a member of said board of visitors, and ex-officio chairman. The said visitors shall be charged with repair of buildings, and care of the grounds and appurtenances, and with the interest of the schools generally. They shall appoint and remove professors and necessary agents, two-thirds of the whole number voting for appointment or removal; shall prescribe their duties in conformity with the law; shall establish rules for the government and discipline of students, not contrary to laws of this state; shall regulate tuition fees; shall prescribe the duties and control the proceedings of all officers and employees, with respect to buildings, lands, appurtenances, and other property and interests of the institute ; shall draw such money as may be appropriated, or otherwise contributed for the support of the same, and disburse through their chosen disbursing agent ; and, in general, shall direct and do all things which, not being inconsistent with the laws of this state, shall to them seem most promotive of purposes of said institute, which several functions they be free to exercise in form of by-laws, rules, resolutions, orders, instructions, or otherwise, as they shall deem proper.

10. The said superintendent of public and the visitors of said school shall be a body corporate, under the name and style of the board of visitors of the Virginia normal and collegiate institute, with the right as such to use a seal. They may plead and be in all courts of justice in all cases concerning the institute, which may be subject of legal cognizance and jurisdiction, which

pleas shall not abate by the termination of office, but shall stand revived in the name of their successors ; and they shall be capable in law and in trust, the institute, of receiving subscriptions and donations, real and personal, as well from bodies corporate, or persons associated, as from individuals.

11. The said visitors shall, at all times, to such laws as the legislature may, from time to time, think proper to enact for their government; and the said institute shall, in all things, and at all times, be subject to the control of the legislature. The visitors above provided shall be ap pointed or before the first day of April, eighteen hundred and eighty-two, and every fourth year thereafter.

12. The number of professors or teachers in the institute, all of whom shall be colored, shall be fixed by the visitors ; the salary of no one of them shall exceed the sum of fifteen hundred per annum, by con sent of the said board of education, given in writing to the visitors.

13. The board of visitors shall designate one of their number to be treasurer, and shall fix the amount of his bond at not less than fifteen thousand dollars. The said bond shall be made payable to the of Virginia, shall have good and sufficient sureties, conditioned for the proper and paying over of all money and other things com mitted to his custody, which bond being approved by the state board of education, and entered on the journal of the board of shall be transmitted to the auditor of public accounts, and remain on file in his office. The pay of the treasurer shall in no case exceed one hundred and fifty dollars a year the first three years.

14. The board of visitors shall prescribe the terms upon which students, other than state may be admitted ; the nature of their services and the duration thereof, which shall not be less, in any case, than two years, and in the case of more four years. They shall admit as state students, free of charge, for tuition, as soon as practicable, upon evidence of good moral character, young

men, who shall be not less than sixteen nor more years of age, one of whom shall be selected from each senatorial district, and ten from the state at large, to be chosen by the board of visitors; and when a vacancy has occurred, or is likely to occur, due notice of the time and place of making the shall be given by the secretary of the board of visitors. If, after such notice, no suitable person shall apply from any district, the vacancy may be supplied from the state at large: provided that the students so admitted free of charge shall first enter into a written contract and agreement with the board of visitors to teach or engage in educational work two years. This shall apply only to state students, and should any student fail to the terms of his contract, he may be relieved from the same by the payment of one-half of his tuition while at the institute.

15. And be enacted, That out of the funds due the commonwealth of Virginia from the sale of the Atlantic, Mississippi and railroad, as ratified and confirmed by senate bill number fifty-six, of session eighteen hundred and eighty-one-two, the sum of one hundred thousand dollars shall be retained by the treasurer of the commonwealth to the credit of the state board of education, to be paid out by said treasurer, on the orders or warrants of said board of visitors, in the execution of this act; and within six months after the board of visitors shall have declared the institution ready to receive students, and annually thereafter, there shall be paid by the auditor of public accounts, on order of the said state board of education, to the treasurer elected by the board of visitors, the sum of twenty thousand dollars, as annuities to the other state institutions of learning are now paid.

16. The board of visitors shall examine into progress of students in each year, and shall give to those who excel in any branch of learning such honorary testimonials of approbation as they may deem proper. Such reason able expenses as the visitors may incur in the discharge of

their duties shall be paid out of the funds of the institute: provided the sum paid to any one visitor in any one year shall not exceed fifty dollars.

17. Any person may deposit in the treasury of the state, or bequeath money, stocks, or bonds to be deposited, or grant, devise, or bequeath property, real or personal, to be sold, and the proceeds which shall be invested as the donor may indicate, or the board of may see proper, for the benefit of the institute; and in such case the interest or dividend accruing on such deposits shall be paid to the treasurer of the institute, on the order of the state board of education, to be used for the purpose thereof, unless some particular appropriation shall have been designated by donor or testator, in which case such particular use or appropriation shall be respected.

18. This act shall be in force from its passage.