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Examining the Relationship Between School Policing Behaviors and the Depressive Symptoms Experienced by Black Students

Collin Perryman

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EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL POLICING BEHAVIORS AND
THE DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS EXPERIENCED BY BLACK STUDENTS

By

Collin Perryman

Bachelor of Science
Arizona State University, 2011

Master of Family and Human Development
Utah State University, 2013

Master of Education
Arizona State University, 2017

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Education Administration

College of Education

University of South Carolina

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Accepted by:

Spencer Platt, Major Professor

Doyle Stevick, Committee Member

Toby Jenkins, Committee Member

Monique Brown, Committee Member

Henry Tran, Committee Member

Tracey L. Weldon, Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

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DEDICATION

Though I have many angels, this dissertation is dedicated to my mom who has been my rock throughout this process. Thank you, Mom; thank you for being there for me every step of the way!

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ABSTRACT

The school policing literature has two major themes: (a) the negative safety outcomes of school safety (Gottfredson et al., 2020) and (b) the central role that school police play in placing Black students into the school-to-prison-nexus (Morris, 2016; Turner & Beneke, 2020). The study of school police roles, how school police interact with educators, and the safety effects of school police presence is important. Just as important is knowing the mental health effects of physical and nonphysical school policing behaviors on Black students. This dissertation sought to fill this gap in part by studying the relationship between school police behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students by using Wave 15 data from the Fragile Families & Child Wellbeing Study. Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 were (H1a) that physical school policing behaviors would lead to depressive symptoms in Black students, and (H2a) that nonphysical school policing behaviors would lead to depressive symptoms in Black students. Though notable relationships were found with these two hypotheses, there was not enough evidence to provide statistically significant results that supported Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b. Additionally, these results did not provide statistically significant results that aligned with racial battle fatigue theory (Smith et al., 2016), because the results were statistically nonsignificant. In my discussion section, I speak to parents and educators. I also speak about the results in terms of educational histories and white fear. Finally, I conclude by discussing the results in terms of the Spring Valley High School policing assault in 2015.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Themes in the school policing literature are the roles of school police and conflicts and cooperation with school officials. Within these themes, research has focused on student safety and student pushout, which predominantly affect Black students and their interactions with the juvenile legal system and the school-to-prison-nexus. Though it is important for parents, educators, researchers, and policymakers to know the social and educational outcomes of school policing, it is just as important to know the mental health effects of school policing on Black students. This dissertation helped fill this gap regarding the mental health effects of school policing on Black students. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to explain the potential relationship between school policing behaviors and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. The research questions (RQs) of this dissertation are (RQ1) to what extent do Black students experiences of “physical” school police behaviors relate to their depressive symptoms, and (RQ2) to what extent do Black students experiences of “nonphysical” school police behaviors relate to their depressive symptoms?

Background

School policing adversely affects the well-being of Black students. The Associated Press (2016) reported that in 2015 a school police officer at Spring Valley High School in Columbia, South Carolina, physically assaulted a Black female student,

Shakara, by flipping her from out of her chair to the floor and then dragged her across the classroom because she refused to give up her cell phone that was not on her person. The former sheriff's deputy, Ben Fields, received no charges, and Shakara received criminal charges (which were dropped after a year of legal battles). Though negative experiences with school police, students, and community members persist, research evidence is scant on how these behaviors affect students' psychological well-being.

Shakara, the student at Spring Valley High School, who was physically assaulted by the school police officer at Spring Valley High School, in Columbia, South Carolina. What do the insightful, statistically nonsignificant results of this dissertation mean when applying it to the Spring Valley high over-policing experience? Though the findings of this dissertation were statistically nonsignificant, they may prove insightful to start a discussion, here, about the psychological implications for Shakara, Niya, the students who witnessed the abuse, and thousands of other Black students who sustain similar assaults and traumas. I will first mention some things that Shakara and Niya, and their peers said and did because Shakara was attacked. To do this, I will reference the film documentary, *On These Grounds* (2021). The physical and mental health outcomes of this assault were (a) physical, (b) social, and (c) psychological. Further, these three outcomes co-occur with each other, and I will discuss this, too. When the school police officer approached Shakara, she stated that she physically braced herself to withstand that assault from the officer. Niya spoke up to defend Shakara, and was arrested, put in an adult prison, and had criminal charges against her for about a year. Some of the other students in the classroom put their heads down to avoid eye contact to block out the horrible experience. In terms of the physical outcomes of this abusive incident, Shakara sustained a small

fracture in her wrist because she was thrown to the ground by the school police officer. This physical pain from the fracture will always be a reminder, or psychological trigger, for Shakara.

Regarding the physical outcomes of the attack, both Shakara and Niya withdrew from high school. Shakara dropped out and completed her GED four years later, and Niya switched to a new high school the very next day. Quitting high school or changing high schools for negative reasons can stymie students' educational, social, and economic trajectories. This could look like a lack of education and degree attainment, job placement or advancement, or creating social connections.

The psychological outcomes for Shakara, Niya, and the other students is devastating and multi-faceted. To avoid speculation on my part, I will only discuss what was shown or discussed in the documentary. Before she was attacked, Shakara was having personal and family problems and did not sleep well, which created psychological stress for her. Because of it, she tried to seek help from her resource teacher before school and before her math test. Her emotional state was not visible, but it should not have to be visible in order to access educational and psychological help. She felt misunderstood. Just before the officer brought her down, she had to psychologically brace herself for that physical, and in turn psychological, trauma. She had to go into a psychologically defensive mentality to protect herself from harm. The other students had to brace and protect themselves from harm and stress, too, by covering or lowering their heads to their desks psychologically and physically. Some students even had to physically move their desk to protect themselves from physical harm. When Niya defended Shakara and defied authority, that left her in a psychologically stressful state. Both Shakara and Niya had

criminal charges pressed against them for about a year, before the *EveryBlackGirl* organization fought to get the charges dropped. (For your information, the officer was not charged in any way.) If a child carries the burden for a year that they are a criminal and will go to prison then that creates a heavy psychological burden which leads to low self-esteem, self-efficacy, identity problems or behavior problems.

In her own words, Shakara reported that after she was assaulted, she would wake up feeling depressed. At one point, she tried to take her own precious life by putting a belt around her neck. Luckily the ambulance came, and her life was saved. Indeed, the assault led to psychological trauma. She lives in the aftermath of the abuse, because she expressed behaviors like rumination, being on guard, or being on alert. For example, in order for her to complete her GED, Shakara had to attend a school. But, she requested to not have her back towards the door of the classroom. This can be a behavior problem or coping mechanism for people who have experienced PTSD or military personnel who live with combat fatigue. Finally, Shakara expressed that she gets frustrated years after she was assaulted; behavior and emotional problems like this can be common after one has experienced trauma. Though it is important to mention that where educational environments that cause racism-related stress for Black students, like the assault against Shakara, it is also important to highlight the agency and joy of Black youths, like Shakara, as well. I will discuss this next.

Scholars have found that school police presence has not decreased crime and violence (Gottfredson et al., 2020) and has created arduous academic environments where Black students have increased odds of being disciplined (Peguero et al., 2015). These outcomes have been more pronounced for Black students than their White

counterparts (Peguero et al., 2015; Skiba & Peterson, 2003). Consequently, students have negative perceptions and fear school police (e.g., Theriot, 2016; Theriot & Orme, 2016), which is linked to the history of policing in Black communities (e.g., Balto, 2019; Hurst et al., 2018). However, with the numerous adverse interactions with school police, it is surprising that not many studies have regarded the relationship between school policing and mental health conditions experienced by Black students. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation is to in part seeks to explain the potential relationship between school policing behaviors and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students.

This story of Shakara being assaulted by Fields is a severe case of what happens to Black students in the United States. Extremes cases like this assault are not as common as other, less severe school police contacts. Extreme physical force is less frequent than minor school police contact. Overall, the epidemic of school policing on Black students is relatively small, so there is not much attention given to the issue. However, there are still large amounts of Black students that are contacted and adversely affected by school police. Cases like the assault on Shakara can appears to be isolated and separate from the fabric of racial inequalities found in school discipline and school policing. However, extreme assaults on students like Shakara and the racially disproportionate minor contacts from school police on Black students is apart of the same system. This means that the extreme school police contacts and the minor school police contacts are related, and the major contacts are an outcome of, a culture that is complicit to the disproportionality or Black students being policed. These forms of contemporary school police enforcement on Black students are apart of a long history of social control and police enforcement on Black communities in the United States, dating back to the time of Frederick Douglass. In

his time, Douglass and other Black people were prohibited from learning to read and White people caught teaching Black people to read, and the Black learners themselves, were arrested. In the 1900s, the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision desegregated U.S. schools; however, once this happened the rate of policing Black students increased. Therefore, whether it be assaulting Black students, like Shakara, or stopping and searching their bags at school, Black students have been negatively affected by school policing for decades. Due to this long history of policing Black youths, there is a need to understand how school policing affects the depressive symptoms of Black students and this dissertation will seek to surface and study this issue.

The Definition and Roles of School Police

Different types of school police officers include (a) licensed, privately-hired security guards, (b) sworn police officers or sheriff deputies employed by local law enforcement agencies contracted to local schools (Department of Justice, 1999; Ruddell & May, 2013), and (c) sworn officers employed by schools or school districts (Coon & Travis, 2012; Mckenna & Pollock, 2014). Further, school police can be sworn peace officers (Raymond, 2010) as well as nonsworn and private security officers, who are often employed by commercial or retail companies (Loyens, 2009; Watkins & Maume, 2012). Some officers are on school campuses 1 day a week, while others are present more frequently. This lack of frequency makes it difficult for students to become familiar and feel safe around school police and presents procedural challenges because officers are not apprised of the current flow of school business, culture, and discipline. This variety creates difficulty in accounting for regulating their training, roles, purposes, operations, discretion, or adjudication and enforcement of the law. School police engage students for

many reasons and in many ways, however, this dissertation study will focus on police behaviors that are actions done by school police on students—such as frisking, searching, harsh language, racial epithets, threats of physical force, or use of physical on students. Thus, this dissertation uses the term school policing “behaviors,” instead of “interactions” or “interaction;” “behaviors” to signify the actions done by school police officers in the current dissertation study

School police have multiple roles, but their primary role is law enforcement. The National Association of School Resource Officers has created a triad model to describe their roles: law enforcement officer, counselor, and educator (B. Brown, 2006; Burke, 2001). There is conflict in how educators and school police perceive the law enforcement, mentoring, and teaching roles of school police (Coon & Travis, 2012). There has been role conflict between school officials and school police regarding the expectations of punitive actions from school police, with school officials reporting that school police discipline more than they mentor students (Coon & Travis, 2012). Specifically, school police are motivated by mentor roles, but school police spend most of their time enforcing the law and discipline policies and mentoring or teaching to a lesser extent (Coon & Travis, 2012; Lambert & McGinty, 2002; Theriot, 2009). Therefore, because school police are primarily enforcing school discipline, there are greater chances that their presence increases reports of crime and violence and increases in student push-out and interaction with the juvenile legal system (Gottfredson et al., 2020). Despite adverse effects of school policing, officers persist in U.S. schools.

Increasing Rates of School Police

Significant increases in school policing occurred in the mid-1990s (Addington, 2009). During the mid-1990s, there were more than 2,000 school police officers throughout the United States. (Brady & Balmer, 2007; Coon & Travis, 2012). Between 1997 and 2007, police officers and sheriff deputies increased by 6,700 individuals (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018; James & Mccallion, 2013). In the late-1990s, a survey of students confirmed the increased percentage of school police officers in schools: 54% of students, aged 12–18, reported having the presence of school police on their campuses, and by the year 2007, that percentage increased to 70% (Robers et al., 2013; Stinson & Watkins, 2014). Mckenna and Pollock (2014) stated that school police presence has risen to 17,000 since the 1950s. Due to this increase, it was estimated there would be over 20,000 school police officers in the United States by 2015 (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018; Merkwae, 2015). The 2013–2014 academic school year employed 43,000 full-time school police and 36,000 part-time school police; 63% of middle schools and 64% of high schools had at least one school police officer on their campuses (Higgins et al., 2019; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). Those schools represented 43% of all schools, which is a significant increase from the 1996–1997 school year when 10% of all schools employed at least one school police officer for their respective campuses (Fisher & Devlin, 2019; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017).

Historical Timeline of School Policing

The first documented U.S. public schools to employ school police were in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1939 (B. Brown, 2006). These police were known and hired as special investigators, which lasted for more than a decade; then, these Indiana officers

were known as the “supervisor of special watchman” in 1952 (B. Brown, 2006, p. 592). In 1970, these officers became annexed into a law enforcement agency, the Indiana School Police (Coy, 2004). Moreover, the Los Angeles School Police Department created a security section in 1948. It later became an independent law enforcement agency with more than 300 sworn police officers, whose roles range from school police officers to special response officers (B. Brown, 2006). However, the Indianapolis and Los Angeles police units enforced only minor student infractions (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018).

In the 1950s and 1960s, Flint, Michigan, instituted school policing in 1953, though this was not a publicized project (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Additionally, public attention about school policing did not occur until the school policing program in Fresno, California started in 1968 (Bracey, 2015). The Fresno program was created to promote amenable public relations between police and students, to stimulate a positive public image of the police (West & Fries, 1995). Soon thereafter, Fresno schools employed juvenile detectives assigned to high schools to investigate criminal activity on school campuses, which meant these Juvenile Bureau detectives took punitive action against students (Hamilton, 1996).

In the 1980s and 1990s, increases in the number of school police officers were attributed to juvenile crime and gang violence (Beger, 2002; Girouard, 2001). In response, it was common to employ numerous deterrents like security technology and criminal justice personnel (i.e., school police) in urban cities like Los Angeles, New York, and Chicago (Crews & Counts, 1997; Vera Institute of Justice, 1999). As a result, school discipline policies became punitive, which included zero-tolerance policies that used exclusionary actions (e.g., suspension and expulsion) for minor student problems,

and using school police and security technology (Hirschfield, 2008). Zero-tolerance discipline policies are “mandated predetermined consequences or punishment for specific offenses” (U.S. Department of Education, 1999, p. 127). Public schools in the United States saw increases in zero-tolerance policies throughout the 1990s, and by 1993, these discipline policies were commonplace. Because of zero-tolerance policies, it was common to adjudicate exclusionary school discipline (e.g., suspension or expulsion) for minor student offenses, which were once reserved for extreme problems (Peguero et al., 2015; Simson, 2014; Skiba et al., 2009). Before discipline policies of the 1990s, the high-level school discipline was reserved only for egregious cases like drug or gun possession, gun violence, or physical violence (Peguero et al., 2015; Simson, 2014). But, even in those extreme cases, the use of exclusionary discipline was a last resort (Skiba et al., 2009). In the zero-tolerance era, educators targeted minor infractions with little regard for circumstances, contexts, or consequences of offenses (Simson, 2014); the punishments were more severe than the misbehaviors perceived as ‘crimes’. Since the 1990s, exclusionary school discipline practices have become the norm for punishing minor offenses (Simson, 2014). As a result, zero-tolerance policies encourage punishing minor offenses like disobedience and other nonviolent, benign student misbehaviors (Skiba et al., 2009).

In tandem with harsh, exclusionary school discipline, school police have been notable actors in enforcing these discipline policies of the zero-tolerance era (Aull, 2012; J. Nance, 2016). As a result, school discipline was adjudicated by school police instead of teachers and administrators, which meant students were arrested and referred to the juvenile legal system due to the punitive mandates of school police. This harsh punitive

venture of employing school police continued through, and well beyond, the 1900s because of school shootings.

In the mid-to-late-1990s, increases in school police presence were due to school shootings (Addington, 2009). Despite other, less popular school shootings at that time, the most publicized school shooting occurred on April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School—a predominately white suburban high school in Littleton, Colorado (Addington, 2009). Other school shootings after the mid-1990s were Red Lake High School in 2005, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) in 2007, Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012, and Douglas High School most recently in February of 2018. School policing in the 21st century carried over many laws from previous decades.

Indeed, school policing in this era was primarily used to protect students because of school shootings that occurred in predominantly White communities due to “get tough” zero-tolerance legislation at the federal and the state levels. The increase in U.S. school policing programs was a significant part of a larger social control trend that received financial support from the federal government (Gottfredson et al., 2020; James & McCallion, 2013; Na & Gottfredson, 2013) and continues today by both state and federal funding.

Government Support for School Policing

Federal support for school police presence came from federal legislation. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton passed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which was the impetus for the Community Oriented Policing Services, or the COPS Act (Eklund et al., 2018). The COPS Act, in concert with the U.S. Department of Justice, was the force and primary funder of school policing programs across the United

States. The Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 criminalized the misbehavior of students of color in ways that mirror the legal system (Hirschfield, 2008; Kupchik, 2010; Morris & Perry, 2016; Welch & Payne, 2012). With the popularity of the three-strikes program and the war on drugs program, zero-tolerance school discipline policies became the popular, new standard that propelled increases in the incarceration of students of color (Alexander, 2010; Bottiani et al., 2016; Neal & Rick, 2014). Due to these programs and other school shootings in white suburban schools, the number of school police in U.S public schools significantly increased (B. Brown, 2006). Despite volumes of financial and other forms of support for school policing, little is known about the student effects of school policing, especially for Black students.

Racial Battle Fatigue Theory

This dissertation used racial battle fatigue (RBF) theoretical framework to understand the relationship between school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. RBF is the psychological and physiological response experienced by Black students traversing educational institutions replete with racism (Smith, 2010). Some of the resulting psychological symptoms include: depression, frustration, shock, anger, disappointment, resentment, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, fear; physiological symptoms express themselves as headaches, teeth grinding, chest pain, shortness of breath, high blood pressure, muscle aches, indigestion, constipation, diarrhea, increased perspiration, fatigue, insomnia, frequent illness (Smith, 2010; Smith et al., 2016). Likewise, Black students who cope with being stopped by school police may experience symptomatic expressions of RBF, such as depressive symptoms (Smith, 2010; Smith et al., 2016).

Positionality

I identify as a White man. Like many White households, race was only discussed with the white gaze of racism, such that we saw racism “happening” to people of color. I am a first-generation college graduate; I took classes in the sociology of race, but experiences like racism were still distant. I knew about racism growing up and learning about it in school, but I still did not deeply learn about racism until my Black mentor taught me in graduate school.

Historically, elite White people have exploited poor White people for the former’s gain. As a result, poor White people are encouraged to oppress Black people, with the false promise that poor White people can become wealthy like their elite White counterparts. Because I am a poor ethnic White person, I am susceptible to this same false promise: researching in the historically white academy that perpetuates the oppressions experienced by Black communities with whom I serve and work with. This tension must be acknowledged. It is important to check my whiteness because I use secondary data analysis, which further removes me from the Black communities with whom I research. Therefore, I stay committed to, and engaged with, Black communities by engaging with Black educators, associations, juvenile justice advocates, community organizations, or health practitioners to give them resources to fight against racist educational and health laws and policies that affect Black students and communities. Hence, I strive to ensure that I change the dominant narrative about Black people through my research.

Based on my positionality, I note a couple of key points. Because I am White and removed, and may overlook certain theoretical angles or follow historically white

conventions in my approach to interpreting results. In short, there are things about studying experiences of Black people that I may not see in my research. Because of my distant positionality, and especially using secondary data, I must avail myself to interpretations from Black mentors, colleagues, and friends. If White scholars do not approach our research, like this dissertation, in ways that include being aware of our positionality, we are committing anti-Black racism.

Purpose, Rationale, and Research Questions

The purpose of this dissertation is to explain the potential relationship between physical and nonphysical school policing behaviors and depressive symptoms experienced by 15-year-old Black students. There are theoretical and empirical rationales for studying the relationship between school policing and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. In understanding this relationship, Hurst and colleagues (2018) theorized that school policing affects the mental health of Black students because Black communities are policed at higher rates than their White counterparts, and Black communities experience RBF, depressive symptoms, psychological distress, anxiety at higher rates than White people. Additionally, school policing forces Black students to interact with the school-to-prison-nexus (STPN); thus, tracking Black students toward adverse racial inequities compared to their White counterparts (Peguero et al., 2015). Likewise, and in terms of rationale for this dissertation research, Walsemann and colleagues (2011a, 2011b) found racial inequities in educational environments were associated with depressive symptoms in Black students (Walsemann, Bell, & Goosby, 2011; Walsemann, Bell, & Maitra, 2011). In this dissertation, I examined the relationship

between school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. Therefore, this study's research questions were:

(RQ1) to what extent do Black students' experiences of "physical" school police behaviors relate to their depressive symptoms, and (RQ2) to what extent do Black students experiences of "nonphysical" school police behaviors relate to their depressive symptoms?

To explore the mental health experienced by Black students of this dissertation's research questions, I used the Year 15 Wave data of 15-year-old Black students from the Fragile Families and Childs Wellbeing Study (FFCWS) which included 4,898 respondents. The FFCWS used 77 large U.S. cities with populations of over 200,000 people (Reichman et al., 2001; Waldfogel et al., 2010). Data were collected from 4,700 births (3,600 nonmarital and 1,100) in 75 different hospitals in various U.S. cities (Reichman et al., 2001). Secondary, population-based survey data that was collected included yes or no questions about (a) school police officers frisking students, (b) school police officers searching bags and clothes of students, (c) school police using harsh or insulting language toward students, (d) school police using racial slurs toward students, (e) school police threaten physical force toward students, and (f) school police using physical force on students. These questions comprised the school police behaviors.

To measure the school police behaviors, I combine the above yes/no, binary variables. In cross-sectional analyses, the totaled variable (i.e., school police behaviors) that I created was regressed onto depressive symptoms, measured with the CES-D. Secondly, the totaled variable was interacted with the gender of Black students, and then, regressed onto depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. To understand the

physicality of school policing behaviors, I created two police behavior variables: physical and nonphysical school policing behaviors. The first independent variables included frisking, searching, harsh language, racial epithets, threats of physical force, and use of physical force. The nonphysical independent variable included all of these variables except threats of physical force and use of physical force.

Outline of the Dissertation

Chapter 2, I reviewed the outcomes of school policing, which surround two major themes: school safety of Black students and tracking Black students into the juvenile legal system (which places them on the STPN). Next, I highlight the absence of research on the mental health outcomes experienced by Black students being policed in the school policing literature. Therefore, I argue that studying outcomes like depressive symptoms as an effect of school policing is necessary because this paucity continues to erase the mental health challenges and needs experienced by Black people. Finally, in Chapter 2, I discuss the RBF and minority stress theoretical frameworks, and the psychological and physiological effects of RBF, such as coping with racism in educational environments. Educational environments perpetuate a psychological and physiological responses to coping with racism-related stress, such as depressive symptoms (Smith, 2010; Smith et al., 2016). I couch this dissertation study in the benefits of all-Black samples to justify the use of an all-Black sample in this dissertation, and therefore, I have restricted this dissertation to an all-Black sample. A restricted sample of Black students of the FFCWS allows me to center Black students' experiences as much as possible using a secondary data set.

Chapter 3, I defined the methods for this empirical dissertation study. The quantitative methods for this dissertation are ordinal logistic regression. As such, this study is hypothesis-testing and subsequently hypothesis-generating; meaning I used statistical testing to first examine to then understand and advance new, critical thought through quantitative research. I used the Year 15 wave of the FFCWS data set. Because of the distance of my positionality and the limitations of secondary quantitative data, I carefully constructed my methodology to capture the experiences of Black students.

Chapter 4 gave the results of the descriptive demographic analysis, the results of bivariate associations analysis, and the results of the ordinal logistic regression analyses for both sets of hypotheses. The ordinal logistic regression analyses includes two sets of models. The first set of ordinal logistic regression analyses found that physical school policing behaviors increases depressive symptoms of Black students, but this relationship was found statistically nonsignificant. The interaction term (physical school policing behaviors x gender) had similar findings such the interaction term increases depressive symptoms in female students, but again, this this result was statistically nonsignificant. Secondly, the second set of ordinal logistic regression analyses found that nonphysical school policing behaviors increases depressive symptoms of Black students, but this relationship was found statistically nonsignificant. The interaction term (nonphysical school policing behaviors x gender) had similar findings such the interaction term increases depressive symptoms in female students, but again, this this result was statistically nonsignificant.

Chapter 5, I discussed the purpose and findings of this dissertation study. Then I discussed the findings in relation to what parents and teachers can do to advocate for

Black student in order to keep students off the STPN. After that, I discussed the findings in terms of RBF, followed by the limitations and strengths of this dissertation study. Finally, in the directions section, I wrote about what methodological avenues researchers could take to advance the research in this dissertation, then I wrote how researchers could couch the findings of this dissertation in terms of the racist history of education and social control in the United States, as well as the dissertation findings in terms of the empirical research on white fear. I concluded by briefly summarizing this dissertation, followed by some thoughts on the atrocious school policing behaviors at Spring Valley High School in Columbia, South Carolina in 2015.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social control in education is the laws, rhetoric, and police enforcement as seen through major histories that date back to events like Frederick Douglass learning to read to his liberation, the Brown v. Board Decision, and the current “Zero-Tolerance” school discipline and policing. Contemporary social control in education is seen through increases in school police presence increases reports of crime and violence in schools as well as pushes students out of their learning environments and into the “school-to-prison pipeline,” which affects Black student at disproportionate rates (Gottfredson et al., 2020). However, the mental health effects of school police presence on Black students have been largely overlooked, which is surprising because racial inequities toward Black students led to them experiencing Racial Battle Fatigue (RBF; Smith, 2010). RBF is the cumulative mental health outcome of “racially hostile” educational environments and can be exhibited as depressive symptoms (Smith et al., 2007, p. 555). Through the theoretical framework of RBF, I hypothesized that school police behaviors—both physical and non-physical combined behaviors—were related to the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students.

History of Social Control of Black Students in the United States

Social Control of Black Students During the 19th Century

Mr. Frederick Douglass liberated himself through self-education, literacy, and reading. Douglass was reminded that white social control was robust in the 1820s, when the man, Auld, that enslaved Douglass warned his wife, Mrs. Auld, against teaching enslaved Black people to read. Douglass recorded these words: “If you give a [Black person] an inch, he will take an ell. A [Black person] should know nothing but to obey his master—to do as he is told to do. Learning would spoil the [Black person] in the world. Now,” said he, “if you teach that [Black person] (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him” (Douglass, 1845). Douglass progressed to his liberation, in part, because he taught himself how to read, and has become one of the greatest orators of all time. Speaking of usurping his enslaver’s power by learning to read, he said “[f]rom that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom” (Douglass, 1845).

Since the earliest years of Black literacy and liberation in the U.S., White people have intentionally oppressed Black people from obtaining education by various forms of social control. Three prongs of social control that White people commonly employed in the 19th century were racist and oppressive (1) laws and policies, (2) rhetoric and strategic communication, and (3) law enforcement against their Black counterparts. This purpose of this white control strategy was to segregate White and Black people. For example, in Douglass’ time, it was illegal to teach enslaved people to read and write (Morris, 2013). White people would spread rumors about Black people portraying them as violent, uncivilized, and ungrateful and therefore unfit for education and self-government

(Anderson, 1988; Morris, 2013), and therefore, law enforcement officials would ensure that Black people adhered to the racist laws (Anderson, 1988; Morris, 2013; Douglass, 1845).

Social control of Black literacy and education in the 1800s includes examples from both the North and the South. The state of Connecticut had a few converging and diverging legal forces regarding the education of Black people. Connecticut had “Black laws” that prevented Black people from obtaining education, even though this state professed educational opportunities for all people (Morris, 2013). Eventually, liberal White Christian societies, like the African Improvement Society (AIS), attempted to educate Black people in the New Haven. These societies wished to educate Black African Americans only to send them back to the continent of Africa to convert more people in the African diaspora to white notions of Christianity (Morris, 2013). Black Americans were aware of this colonizing scheme and some chose to be educated because it was the only means, given the current legal and social constraints of the North, or resist this educational model. Whether it was progressive White people or White people who were against Black education, both these groups’ motivations were that they perceive Black people as less than a full (read: White) person. The former group wanted to give the Christian morals and the latter did not think they were remotely capable; both believed that their Black counterparts were amoral and dangerous. White liberals enforced educational policy where AIS-educated Black people had to leave the U.S. and go to Africa, the latter implemented harsher enforcement tactics altogether. Both groups forcibly tracked Black people out of public life.

There were similar challenges at that time for Black people in Connecticut trying to attain a higher education. White northerners had problems with Black people attaining this level of education, because they feared their college degrees would have less credibility and feared that Black people would take jobs usually allotted for White people. To create fear in White people, there was zero-sum type rhetoric that spread amongst them.

As Baltimore, Maryland experienced emancipation, freed Black people were able to receive more education as never before. This education was on the backdrop a racialized structure of Baltimore's labor market, shaped by previous enslavement. This economic environment (which shifted from capitalist enslavement to capitalist industrialization and specialization) was conducive to the literacy of freed Black people, because White employers wanted newly educated Black people to exploit an educated labor force (Morris, 2013). This means to say that on the backdrop of enslavement, White people condoned educating Black people for the economic purposes of White people—terribly similar to the previous system of training enslaved people for the benefit of the plantation. This education campaign and method also found success because it did not challenge the current racial hierarchy (Morris, 2013).

Boston, Massachusetts is known to be the birthplace of American public education, however, this school system did not initially plan to educate the Black community. Though in the 1800s, Black people fought to obtain schools for themselves. Many White people saw Black people as unworthy of education because the latter was portrayed as having disorderly behavior which would contribute to low property values. This false communication was perpetuated because White people feared for losing their

property rights (Morris, 2013). In the Southeastern U.S. during the 1800s, white oppression had similar goals for the Black community, even to ensure Black people received no education or the two racial groups were educated in segregated spaces.

After emancipation, there were differing opinions on the education of the Black community. Legally, emancipation made Black people equal to White people, but divisive rhetoric scripted a different story. Once the law of the land ensured this freedom and American citizenship, debates centered on two types of education for Black people: a traditional liberal arts education or an industrial education. In the instance of Samuel Chapman Armstrong, the mentor of Booker T. Washington, was a proponent in favor of industrial education and actually founded the Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute (or, Hampton school). There were three types of industrial education: schools of applied science and technology which trained engineers or chemists, school that trained industrial workers, and the third type of industrial education including manual labor to supplement traditional curriculums. The third type is what the Hampton school used which was similar to labors conducted by enslaved Africans a short time before, to supposedly teach morals and industry (Anderson, 1988). “[This] class of schools consisted of those in which manual instruction was introduced, mainly as a supplement to the traditional academic curriculum, to promote good habits of industry, thrift, and morality” (Anderson, 1988, p. 35)

To encourage his ideas about maintaining the current racial order through industrial education, Armstrong also founded a newspaper, the *Southern Workman*. Though this publication was sold under the guise of politically neutral or moderate,

Armstrong ensured racially bias information about Black people. The curriculum that the Hampton school used was also laced with racist ideology.

Thomas Jess Jones, an instructor of social studies at Hampton Institute and later director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, described the purpose and function of social studies in the Hampton curriculum. Jones explained that Armstrong and his co-workers gave “a very important place” to such subjects as “political economy, civil government, moral science and general history.” These subjects were aimed primarily at teaching Hampton’s students the “right” idea of citizenship, the duties of laborers, and the history of race development. History, for instance, was designed as a study of the “evolution of race” and was aimed at giving the pupils “a new notion of race development.” (Anderson, 1988, p. 51)

Indeed, industrial education encouraged, and was fueled by, Christian morals to control Black students at the Hampton Institute, as Armstrong discouraged “over-educated” Black people would become, nor remain, “civilized” (Anderson, 1988).

Though enforcement done by police and others, it took on unusual forms: educators as enforcers. Mr. Booker T. Washington, an alumnus of the Hampton Institute, was the night school principal where he not only students to work hard to they could move up to the day school. This tracking simultaneously tracked high performers into the day school where they learned trades comparable to what enslaved Black people did in previous years, or tracked out low performers by keeping them as farm hands of the school (Anderson, 1988). Indeed, Washington and other educators enforced the law, built on a racist status quo where Black people were removed from spaces that White people

dominated, by tracking high achievers and low achievers to their economic and social disenfranchisement.

Further, on May 18, 1896, the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision of the U.S. Supreme Court decided the infamous “separate but equal” doctrine, meaning that both White and Black people were entitled to the same quality of prosperities, properties, amenities, and educational opportunities. Though equality was the law of the land, the practice of this law was never fulfilled because it increased the racial disparities in the U.S.

The *Plessy* decision came as a result of a light-complexioned [B]lack man, Homer Plessy’s attempt to ride in a whites-only train car. The Supreme Court ruled against Plessy saying that as long as the accommodations were “equal” their separateness did not reflect discrimination. For fifty-eight years, this remained the law of the land. The *Brown* decision reversed this principle, but did reverse the actual experiences of [B]lack and [B]rown people in the nation. One of the places we see the intransigent nature of segregation in our schools. (Ladson-Billings, 2007, pp. 1286-1287)

The outcome of the *Plessy* decision set fertile ground for the Jim Crow laws which mostly lasted until the *Brown* decision in 1954. In the interim time, White people controlled the dominant rhetoric against Black people to justify the racist laws and enforcement strategies. Indeed, these prongs of social control continued the segregation of Black and White communities which disenfranchised and oppressed Black people. Though the separate but equal doctrine was abolished, social control of Black people took new life in other ways, and there will be more on this forthwith.

Social Control of Black Students During the 20th Century

The three prongs of social control (i.e., law, rhetoric, and enforcement) were also prevalent in the 1900s, though the tactics to enact the control showed in different ways. The tactics in 1900s were more covert than the social control tactics of the previous century. Examples of what occurred will follow. In this century, racist law, rhetoric, and enforcement towards segregation are seen through two main tracking tactics disproportionately used against the Black community: school policing and school discipline.

Social Control in the 1930s

The first documented public schools in the U.S. to employ school police were in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1939 (B. Brown, 2006). These police were not necessarily considered “school resource officers” (SROs) but they were known and hired as “special investigators” which lasted for more than a decade; finally these Indiana officers were known as the “supervisor of special watchman” in 1952 (B. Brown, 2006). In 1970, these sworn, uniformed personnel became exclusively annexed into its own law enforcement agency, the “Indiana School Police” (Coy, 2004).

Social Control in the 1940s

The Los Angeles School Police Department created a “security section” in 1948 but later became its own independent law enforcement agency, which has more than 300 sworn police officers whose roles range from school police officers to special response officers (B. Brown, 2006). For historical context Policing agencies played a significant role in the sprawling and the suburbanizing politically moderate state of California. After World War II, veterans had access to their G.I. Bills which gave them special funding and

low-interest home loans rates. Even though these benefits were also available to Black veterans, they were effectively blocked from using the benefits like school tuition assistance and home loans compared to their White counterparts. Disenfranchising Black families their right to purchase homes in suburban neighborhoods made the suburbs predominantly white. In order to maintain their privilege and supremacy, White people launched campaigns vilifying Black people which discouraged home sales to them. To enforce this social order, White people employed police officers to enforce this “de jure,” democratic segregation.

Social Control in the 1950s

Flint, Michigan instituted the school policing in 1953, though this was not a publicized project (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Also, at that time, were many legal pushes to racially desegregate public schools. Though the nation’s schools were legally desegregated in in 1954, with the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, there were many regional and national cases to desegregate before this decision (for review, see Devlin, 2018) of this organized movement for racial justice and equity. The *Brown* decision disbanded the 1896 *Plessy* Supreme Court decision; the U.S. went from “separate but equal” to desegregates public schools with “all deliberate speed.” Strategic communication filled our country’s popular press and state legislatures to discourage enacting the overrule of the *Plessy* decision. These rhetorical and legal efforts were so successful that it was not until the 1970s that states like Virginia and South Carolina finally desegregated their public schools. Indeed, segregation was the crux of the matter of socially controlling the U.S. to ensure that White and Black people remain apart in the public forum. When White people failed to keep the nation’s schools

racially segregated, they employed law enforcement in schools and neighborhoods where there were Black students, like Flint, Michigan. The late Professor Derrick Bell astutely points out failures in the outcomes of the *Brown* decision (see Bell, 2004) and the history of over-policing the Black communities appears to be a significant contributor.

Social Control in the 1960s

The school policing project finally found its way into the public's eye when it was implemented in Fresno, CA in 1968 (Bracey, 2015). The Fresno program was largely created to promote amenable public relations between police and students, to promote positive public image of the police (West & Fries, 1995). Further, this non-punitive policing program did not engage in or intervene with criminal activity amongst the schools in which sworn police officers were assigned (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Public optics policing campaigns, however, did not last long within Fresno schools as officially sworn juvenile detectives were assigned to high schools in this community to investigate criminal activity on school campuses, which meant that if students were involved in criminal activity punitive action was taken by these Juvenile Bureau detectives (Hamilton, 1996). Other schools popular cities that enlisted school police in the 1960s were in Miami, Florida (Lambert & McGinty, 2002; Mckenna & Pollock, 2014; Stinson & Watkins, 2014).

To arrive at this police state and point of social control, there were pieces of legislation in the 1960s that contributed. That said, the Civil Rights Movement as well as the Black Power Movement instilled fear into White people which enabled White politicians, both liberal and conservative to pass law that seated police in the nation's public schools. Also, the sixties were a time where many public school districts are still

desegregating or fighting against desegregation. For example, the “Omnibus Crime Act of 1968,” signed by the late U.S. President Richard Nixon – and later revised and updated in 1998 by President Bill Clinton (Theriot & Orme, 2016) – stymied the progress of the *Brown* decision (Theriot & Orme, 2016). Prior to Nixon’s legislation, liberal President Lyndon Johnson (once President John F. Kennedy’s vice president) passed legislation for the “War on Crime.” These laws allotted monies for law enforcement in our nation’s schools; regardless if there was punitive ability of the officers or not, it created a police state a place that is historically a place of learning. However, there should not be a surprise, because American education is a place of social control as the historiography clearly teaches.

The public relations initiatives were due to the time period: the Civil Rights movement, which was disrupting the racial order. Due to the violent depictions of Black people as rioters and looters, sworn police officers were used to maintain and enforce the current racist laws which were replete with racial inequities like school funding. Some officers were assigned to enforce law and policy in public schools.

Social Control in the 1970s

The 1970s is a unique time in terms of social control in the U.S., because it is the first time two tactics were employed in the 20th Century: school policing and school discipline. Charlotte, North Carolina became a site of national attention regarding school policing in the 1970s. In 1971, school police were placed on K-12 campuses with a program called “Officer Friendly.” This program was charged with reducing racial tensions and promoting positive public relations and image towards the greater Charlotte community (Coon & Travis, 2012). It is important to note here that the state of North

Carolina racially desegregated public therein in the 1971-1972 school year, which created civil uproar and white fear among White people in opposition to the Supreme Court decision given decades before. Black children were finally allowed to attend desegregated public schools and largely White officials assigned school police to enforce and track Black children. Akin to the school policing project, the 1970s is when U.S. schools used exclusionary school discipline to punish students for what educators, and now school police, perceived as “misbehavior.” Though school discipline, like suspension, was reserved for egregious behavior, it was still a significant move for the time to use punitive measures against students in hopes to improve their educational and social outcomes. Additionally, in terms of the carceral state of the U.S., President Nixon began the War on Drugs in 1971, which disproportionately placed police officers in Black communities—above and beyond the law enforcement officers already placed in Black communities due to the Johnson agenda. At this point, then, the nation was attending to two wars on domestic soil: the War on Crime and now the War on Drugs, both of which mainly targeted Black communities.

Again, the American narrative teaches that as Black people gain more civil rights, White people follow with acts of racist enforcement to maintain supremacy. Referring to the Charlotte example, Black students were finally allowed to attend desegregated public schools and White officials assigned police in schools to enforce and track Black children.

Social Control in the 1980s

Under the carceral state of President Reagan’s War on Drug in full force, punitive actions against the Black community were far too common. Though Nixon started this

punitive action in 1971, it is attributed as Regan's brainchild because he did more with it; with his "limited government" model initially (in 1986), Reagan and Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act which appropriated \$1.7 billion to the War on Drugs, and significant amounts of those funds went to the school policing project. Since then, his initiatives have led to current spending approximately of \$51 billion of current annual spending. Both school policing and school discipline were influenced by Reagan's police state. Professor Michelle Alexander explained in her seminal book, *The New Jim Crow*, that the War on Drugs fueled the racist enforcement of law against Black and Brown communities. She explains:

Most people assume the War on Drug was launched in response to the crisis caused by crack cocaine in inner-city neighborhoods. This holds that the racial disparities in drug convictions and sentences, as well as the rapid explosion of the prison population, reflect nothing more than the government's zealous—but benign—efforts to address rampant drug crime in poor minority neighborhoods. This views, while understandable, given the sensational media coverage of crack in the 1980s and 1990s, is simply wrong.

While it is true that the publicity surrounding crack cocaine led to dramatic increases in funding for the drug war (as well as to sentencing policies that greatly exacerbated racial disparities in incarceration rates), there is no cocaine. President Ronald Reagan officially announced the current drug war in 1982, before crack became an issue in the media or a crisis in poor black neighborhoods of Los Angeles and later emerged in cities across the country. The Regan administration hired staff to publicize the emergence of crack cocaine in the 1985 as part of a

strategic effort to build public and legislative support for the war. The media campaign was an extraordinary success. Almost overnight, the media was saturated with images of black “crack whores,” “crack dealers,” and “crack babies”—images that seemed to confirm the worst negative racial about impoverished inner-city residents. The media bonanza surrounding the “new demon drug” helped to catapult the War on Drugs from an ambitious federal policy to an actual war. (Alexander, 2010, p. 5)

The War on Drugs is the longest ongoing war in U.S. history and was foundational to community policing initiatives. Indeed, federal legislation endorsed policing in schools with the “Drug Free Schools and Communities Act,” which initiated the “D.A.R.E.” program and was associated with the “Broken Windows” project (Brady et al., 2007; Coon & Travis, 2012) in New York City, New York and the “War on Drugs.” Through the guise of community outreach, the police state was able to increase in “urban”/“inner-city” schools of which had predominantly students of color. The increases in the 1980s (and the 1990s) was due to perceptions that schools were places of violence of students of color in urban schools and communities (Addington, 2009; Anyon et al., 2014; Skiba & Losen, 2016). As a result, the constructed-need to control educational environments increased, and the way educators and policymakers enacted social control with “zero-tolerance” discipline policies of the 1990s and more on this to come. The legacy of the dual attack of policing and discipline continued into the 1990s and is the current apparatus of the carceral state in chorus with the social control of the educational enterprise.

Social Control in the 1990s

Though the school policing project is attributed to concerns of school violence and gang violence throughout the 1980 and 1990s (Beger, 2002; Girouard, 2001), it took on a new birth in the mid- to late-1990s because of the emergence of mass school shootings in suburban White communities. Though there were other, less popular school shootings at that time, the most publicized was the mass school shooting at Columbine High School, a predominately White suburban high school in Littleton, Colorado on April 20, 1999 (Addington, 2009). While the Columbine shooting, and other violence-related experiences, are mainly noted for the large increases in school policing in the 1990s, there was a series of publicly-known school shootings in the 1990s that predate as well as postdate Columbine (Addington, 2009).

The popular rhetoric of the police state of the 1990s was commanded by President Bill Clinton's talk of "getting tough" on crime. For example, Clinton passed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 which was the impetus for the "Community Oriented Policing Services," or the "COPS" Act (Eklund et al., 2018). The COPS Act, in concert with the U.S. Department of Justice, was the impetus and the primary funder of school resource officer programs across the U.S. Moreover, the "Omnibus Crime Act of 1968," signed by the late U.S. President Nixon was revised, update, and bolstered by Clinton in 1998 (Theriot & Orme, 2016), which stymied positive effects of the *Brown* decision of 1954 (Theriot & Orme, 2016). Notably, these punitive laws, that maintain the carceral state in public schools, continued with President George W. Bush and President Barack Obama.

The Gun Free Schools Act of 1994, which criminalized misbehaviors of student of color in ways that mirror the justice system (Hirschfield, 2008; Kupchik, 2010; Morris & Perry, 2016; Welch & Payne, 2012). Together with the popularity of the “three-strikes” rhetoric and the “war on drugs” rhetoric, zero-tolerance school discipline policies became the popular, new standard that propelled increases in incarceration of people of color (Alexander, 2010; Bottiani et al., 2016; Neal & Rick, 2014). Due to this and other school shootings in White suburban school, there was a significant increase in the number of school police in public schools in the U.S.; we know that prior to the 1990s there were marginally less school police (B. Brown, 2006).

The legislation throughout the 1990s (which continued from the late 1980s), was the substance and motivation for the notorious “Zero-Tolerance” criminal policies that were adapted to the educational enterprise where it became common to adjudicate exclusionary school discipline for minor offenses of students, which were once reserved for the gravest problems (Peguero et al., 2015; Simson, 2014; Skiba et al., 2009). Before the fear-induced zero-tolerance discipline policies of the 1990s, the high-level school discipline was reserved only egregious cases like drug or gun possession, gun violence, or physical violence (Peguero et al., 2015; Simson, 2014), but even in those extreme incidents exclusionary adjudication of punitive discipline policies were a last resort (Skiba et al., 2009). But, because of that fear-filled era, zero-tolerance era, educators, educators targeted minor infractions with little, or no, regard for circumstances or consequences of the offense (Simson, 2014); the punishments were more severe than the crimes. Since the 1990s, exclusionary school discipline practices have become normal practice for punishing minor offenses (Simson, 2014). As a result, these low-reaching

zero-tolerance policies have even been canonized into school policy to include disobedience and other non-violent, benign student misbehaviors (Skiba et al., 2009).

The students of color who have been suffering from low-reaching zero-tolerance policies are not violent, but need support for family problems, detachment from school, or learning disabilities (Simson, 2014). Indeed, these non-violent students are being criminalized and excluded from their social and educational communities (George, 2015; Morris & Perry, 2016). Notably, zero-tolerance and exclusionary discipline policies have failed to find empirical support; schools that are complicit to these policies have failed at making their schools safer when employing school discipline (George, 2015; Skiba et al., 2009).

Social Control of Black Students During the 21st Century

In terms of the current century of social control, there has also been school shooting after the mid-1990s, such as Red Lake High School in 2005, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech) in 2007, Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012, and at Douglas High School most recently in February of 2018. The suspension rates for students of color has doubled since the 1970s; currently, where 7% of all U.S. students will receive an out-of-school suspension at least once during a school year (George, 2015; Losen & Gillespie, 2012; Morris & Perry, 2016). Using 2010 data, Losen and Gillespie (2012) found this means that 3 million students in the U.S. were suspended. A more recent estimate, reports that 3.5 million students were disciplined in this way (U.S. Department of Education Office on Civil Rights, 2014).

In this era of school policing, Bush was complicit to the laws previously passed Clinton and Obama took swift punitive action by dispensing funding for school policing

in 2012 and 2013 after the Sandy Hook mass shooting in December 2012. The only U.S. president to dispense more funds than Obama for the school policing project was Clinton; these two left-leaning, moderate presidents have dispensed the most funds for school policing. While some of these presidents are more guilty than others, they all have worked under the colorblind apparatus of whiteness (and in turn “white control strategies” and enforcement like school policing) to adjudicate criminal and educational policy that historically criminalize, disenfranchise, and oppress the Black community.

Synthesis of the History of Social Control of Black Students

In order to sustain white supremacy, the historically white educational enterprise has oppressed Black people for over 200 years by (1) creating law, (2) communicating divisive and racist rhetoric, and (3) enforcing racially arbitrary laws. In the 1800s, Douglass was not allowed to learn how to read, and educating Black people for economic gain and instill Christian morals. In the 1900s, to segregate Black and White people in public spaces, the latter used multiple strategies which built up to, and was a consequence of, the *Brown* decision. Mid-way through the 20th century and especially in the latter part school policing and school discipline were used as modern, democratic enforcement tools to track and segregate Black and White children, and in turn, U.S. society.

“Zero-Tolerance” Educational Discipline Policies

Social control still exists today; laws, rhetoric, and enforcement tactics are currently used to disenfranchise, oppress, and push out Black students. Namely, “zero-tolerance” policies of the 1980s and 1990s have led to Black students being pushed out of school via school policing and school discipline. The U.S. department of Education (1999) defines zero tolerance policies as “mandated predetermined consequences or

punishment for specific offences.” The term, zero tolerance, was appropriated from the criminal justice system that called for swift and harsh punishment, usually suspension or expulsion, for students who broke the rules for the first time (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). This discipline practice often leads to increases in student arrests (Brown 2003, 2005).

Around the same time zero tolerance was established in the 1990s, aggressive forms of street policing, as I discussed above, gained popularity. Thus, it was not surprising that we have witnessed a dramatic growth in school policing programs through the 1990s and 2000s, which, in particular, target students of color (see Advancement Project, 2010; Nolan, 2011). School-based policing became the common sense solution to violence and disorder in schools as it had on the streets. (Nolan, 2015, p. 898).

With the advent of Nixon’s and Reagan’s War on Drugs, violent crimes between 1975 and 1989, violent crimes increased by 80% nationwide (Levitt & Dubner, 2005) which had an influence on the educational enterprise (Price, 2009). In 1988, schools noticed the increase in crime, so school districts in California, New York, and Kentucky adopted zero tolerance discipline policies requiring expulsion for fighting, drugs, and experiences with gangs (Skiba, 2000). This trend increased throughout the 1990s. By 1993, zero tolerance discipline policies were implemented across the U.S. In turn, as a part of his “tough on crime” rhetoric, Clinton signed the Guns-Free School Act, which automatically mandated expulsion for one year for gun-related offenses, as well as requiring students to be referred to the juvenile justice system (Price, 2009; Scully, 2016).

If schools wanted to remain federally funded, it was required to implement this federal law into school discipline policies (Price, 2009; Scully, 2016). “[T]he Gun-Free

Schools Act of 1994 requires states to pass laws that compel schools to expel students for at least one year for bringing a firearm on school grounds”(Nance, 2016, p. 932).

Notably, many schools took this federal law further than needed by using exclusionary school discipline for behaviors and offences that were not gun related.

Most states, however, took an even tougher stance. Rather than require expulsion for weapons only, many state laws allowed school districts to expel students for possession of drugs and alcohol, fighting, making threats, violating dress codes, engaging in disruptive and insubordinate behavior, and using profanity.” (Scully, 2016, p. 968).

Nance (2016, p. 933) concurs:

Many states and schools have adopted laws and policies modeled after the Gun-Free Schools Act by creating strict rules that impose predetermined consequences for certain acts, such as suspension or expulsion, irrespective of the surrounding circumstances. These laws and policies have extended well beyond bringing a firearm to school. States and localities have applied zero tolerance to a multitude of offenses, including possession of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco; fighting; dress-code violations; truancy; and tardiness.

Both scholars and advocacy groups have firmly spoken against the over-use of zero tolerance policies, stirred from Clinton’s “get tough” Act of 1994 (APA Task Force, 2008; Nance, 2016).

The Guns Free Act was adapted from the War on Drugs and Broken Windows (J. P. Nance, 2016), which are two programs that over-criminalized Black communities. Furthermore, the Act required predetermined consequences (i.e., suspension), which were

severe and punitive. The consequences were administered regardless of gravity of behavior, circumstances, and/or context (APA Task Force, 2008; Kim, 2010; Nance, 2016).

To date, there is no evidence that zero tolerance policies are effective in making school safer (Gottfredson et al., 2020; J. P. Nance, 2016). In fact, the presence of school police increases violence on school campuses (Gottfredson et al., 2020) and pushes out Black students (Morris, 2016). Zero tolerance discipline policies have laid fertile ground for the over-involvement and increasing rates of school police. Given the historical lens previously shared in this document, we still see the three prongs of social control in education in full effect today: law (Guns-Free School Act), rhetoric (“get tough on crime”), and enforcement (increasing rates of school police in the 20th and 21st centuries in U.S. public schools). And like yesteryear, the prong of police enforcement is currently harming Black children at the expense of bolstering a police state driven by the irrational fears that White people have of losing their race-based privileges. Hereto therefore, this dissertation will only focus on school policing.

Focusing on the School Policing Project in the United States

This trifecta of social control in educational spaces is used to maintain to racial order when Black people are oppressed and disenfranchised from quality education. There is much to dive into in the past 200+ years of how the educational enterprise perpetuates white supremacy and racial oppression of Black people, and to study all three parts of social control in education is not feasible. Therefore, this dissertation will focus on the school policing project in the U.S. which started in the late 1930s. Specifically, this paper will focus on the empirical relationship between school policing and the depressive

symptoms of Black students using data from the Fragile Families Study which began in 1998 and is ongoing at Princeton and Columbia Universities.

Intended and Unintended Outcomes of School Policing

The primary reason for school policing is student safety—decreasing crime and violence on school campuses (Gottfredson et al., 2020). (1) School districts have hired school police officers within school settings to improve student safety; school police presence was meant to decrease crime and violence in schools (Crouch & Williams, 1995; Kipper, 1996). (2) Also, the goal of their presence is to detect weapons and drugs and act as a general deterrent to student misbehavior and violence (S. J. Brown et al., 2020). However, there is contradictory evidence about the effectiveness of school policing on school and student safety. The increased presence of school police has not lessened the crime or violence in U.S. schools (Gottfredson et al., 2020).

On the one hand, a study based in the Southeast, found that school police presence is associated with less reports of school violence and crime; school violence reports were significantly lower when uniformed school police were present (Jennings et al., 2011). On the other hand, an increased presence of school police has not lessened the reports of crime or violence in U.S. schools (Gottfredson et al., 2020). Na and Gottfredson (2013) found increases in school police were linked to a 29% higher rate of crimes involving weapons and drugs than schools that did not increase their school police presence.

These contradictory findings are attributed to lack of methodological scientific rigor in the research on school policing (Devlin & Gottfredson, 2018; Petrosino et al., 2018). Previous researchers used post-test only design (Johnson, 1999; May et al., 2004; Theriot, 2016), pre-post design that lacked a nonschool police comparison group (Brady

et al., 2007; Jennings et al., 2011), and nonequivalence when comparing schools with school police and comparison schools (A. Jackson, 2002; Theriot, 2009). Next, I review these two effects of school policing—student safety (Gottfredson et al., 2020; Na & Gottfredson, 2013) and student pushout from their educational environments and in contact with the juvenile legal system (Morris, 2016).

Student Safety

Positive Safety Outcomes of School Policing

Researchers have found the presence of school police had a positive effect on student safety, such that increases in the presence of school police led to decreases in crime and violence on school campuses (e.g., Jennings et al., 2011; Johnson, 1999; May et al., 2004). Johnson (1999) conducted one of the first studies seeking to understand the safety effects of school police. This descriptive study had two time points, which compared the number of school police and major offenses from the first school year to the second school year. Because this study was descriptive, it only compared the numbers of police presence and offenses side-by-side but did not enlist any causal or associative statistical modeling. Specifically, Johnson (1999) found “the total number of intermediate and major offenses in high schools and middle schools decreased from 3,267 in 1994–95 (before the school resource officers were permanently assigned to city schools) to 2,710 in 1995–96 (after the school resource officers were permanently assigned to city schools)” (p. 173). This study set a benchmark for studying the association between the presence of school police—or the increased presence of school police—and their effect on student and school safety. Despite Johnson’s statistical rigor that leaves current

research in want, other studies began using linear regression models (e.g., Jennings et al., 2011).

In another study in the early stages of this line of research, Jennings and colleagues (2011) used linear regression in their cross-sectional study on the relationship between implementing security guards and school resource officers into schools on student and school safety. Jennings and colleagues (2011) defined the violence dependent variable, “serious violence,” as a “summative measure indicating the number of incidents of rape, sexual battery, robber (strong-armed and armed), aggravated assault (with a weapon), and threats of aggravated assault” (p. 115). Jennings et al. (2011) defined the “violence measure” as the above “variables in addition to the number of physical assaults and fights and threats of assault without a weapon” (p. 115). There were significantly lower school violence situations when regressing these dependent variables on the number of uniformed resource officers ($\beta = -0.292$, $SE = 0.112$, $p < 0.01$).

Likewise, May et al. (2004) found similar results when surveying school administrators about their perceptions about school police effectiveness. Using a sample of Southeastern school administrators, May and colleagues (2004) sampled them with a battery of questions: “Respondents were given a list of problematic behaviors and asked to indicate whether the behaviors had increased, decreased, or stayed the same since the [school policing] program began” (p. 87). May et al. found school principals perceived the presence of school police had the greatest positive effect on mitigating fighting; 62% of principals stated that fighting decreased since school policing began in their schools. Similarly, 46.9% of the sample of the principals reported that cannabis situations decreased, 45.5% said that theft decreased, 33.7% stated that knife possession decreased,

and 30.1% reported that bomb threats decreased. In all, May and colleagues found a positive effect when employing school policing programs. Still, these results should be used with caution. According to May et al. (2004),

The results presented . . . indicate that half of the principals never meet with the [school police] supervisor. This finding proved to be particularly troubling . . . as the only variable that significantly impacts the principal's perceptions on the effectiveness of the [school police] at their school was the frequency with which the respondent met with the [school police officer's] law enforcement supervisor. . . . Consequently, it is imperative that [school police], principals, and law enforcement supervisors meet regularly. (p. 91)

Administrators and school police in this study had poor communication, which could skew the principals' perceptions and reporting of school police activity and effectiveness (May et al., 2004). This analysis from May et al. is noteworthy because regular communication between school administrators and school police means that the surveys on school crime and violence reported by school principals are valid. This communication of crime does not guarantee stop violence from occurring, but it does increase response validity and accuracy when school administrators respond to surveys.

Previous Research on School Policing Effectiveness

Since 2010, the sophistication of research methods and design for testing the effects of school policing on crime, violence, or disorder in schools has dramatically improved. Before 2010, though studies found statistically significant results on the positive safety effects of school policing, research designs of yesteryear could not arrive at more exact knowledge regarding the effectiveness of school policing programs in the

United States (e.g., Na & Gottfredson, 2013). The research performed on the efficacy of school policing before 2010 was not rigorous enough to identify the actual effects and outcomes of placing school police in schools; results from this line of research summarize statistical variation due to selection effects and fluctuations in outcomes that co-occurred with putting police in schools (Gottfredson et al., 2020; Na & Gottfredson, 2013; Petrosino et al., 2012).

Negative Safety Outcomes of School Policing

The alternate theme in the literature is that the presence of school police does not increase safety in schools. To date, there is no conclusive evidence that rising rates of school policing programs are associated with safer educational environments, such that the reports of school crime is deterred or lessened (Hirschfield, 2018; Kupchik et al., 2015; Petrosino et al., 2012; Turner & Beneke, 2020).

For example, in a 3-year longitudinal study, Devlin and Gottfredson (2018) examined whether school police role approaches influenced the recording and reporting of school crime to enforcement of laws, comparing school crime outcomes with school police, without school police, and mixed approaches. To ensure selection bias of community crime rates in which school with these three policing treatments occurred, Devlin and Gottfredson (2018) controlled for “several factors are associated with school crime including community context, location, and neighborhood crime rates. . . . Community context control variables included school location and crime in the area in which the school [was] located” (p. 215). Specifically, Devlin and Gottfredson assessed two outcomes: school crimes recorded and school crimes reported to law enforcement reported by school administrators. Three types of crimes emerged as most consistently

recorded and reported to law enforcement: serious nonviolent crimes, property crimes, and serious/violent/weapon/drug crimes. These dependent variables were regressed onto the roles of school police in schools, which included a “law enforcement only” approach, a “mixed” approach, and a “no school police” approach (control group), controlling for preexisting conditions. The first approach means school police engage in law enforcement or patrol, and the second approach (“mixed”) was defined as school police who engage in mentoring or teaching. Regression analysis results showed schools with law enforcement only approaches had a 41% higher rate of recorded nonserious violent crimes, 48% higher rate of property crimes, and 75% higher rate of serious/weapon/drug crimes than schools without school police.

Furthermore, relative to “mixed” approach schools, “law enforcement only” approach schools recorded about 24% more serious/weapon/drug crimes. In the authors’ words, “[t]he findings partially support the hypothesis that [school police] presence increases crimes recorded and reported” (Devlin & Gottfredson, 2018, p. 219). Despite the intent of having school police on school campuses to reduce crime and violence, there is no added safety benefit to school police presence, even after controlling for factors associated with crime rates like school location.

Similarly, Na and Gottfredson’s (2013) longitudinal study found that as schools increased their school police presence, violent and nonviolent crime reporting also increased. Because this was a longitudinal study, these researchers could account for previous conditions and selection effects (Devlin & Gottfredson, 2018; Gottfredson et al., 2020; Na & Gottfredson, 2013). The primary predictor variable was the presence of school police, and the outcomes variables were the (a) number of crimes recorded by

school, (b) percentage of these crimes reported to law enforcement, and (c) percentage of crimes where the offending student was removed from school for more than 5 days (i.e., percentage of harsh discipline). The type of crime was defined as violent crime, which was serious and nonserious. Serious violent crimes included rape, sexual battery other than rape, robbery with or without a weapon, physical attack or fight with a weapon, and the threat of physical attack with a weapon. Nonserious violent crimes included those involving property, weapons, or drugs—all of which are subject to zero-tolerance discipline policies. Property crimes were theft and vandalism; weapon/drug crimes were possession of a firearm or explosive device, a knife or sharp object, and distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs or alcohol.

Na and Gottfredson (2013) reported that schools using school police during the 2005–2006 and 2007–2008 school years reported higher rates of each type of crime than schools without police. This statistically significant finding contrasts Johnson’s (1999) descriptive study findings. The regression analyses showed statistically significant results: increasing the presence of school police was positively related to increases in nonserious per capita weapon/drug crime ($b = 0.256$, $SE = 0.123$, $p < 0.05$). These scholars used the logarithmic transformation in the negative binomial regression model; therefore, the statistically significant coefficient of 0.256 indicates that schools with added school police have a 29% higher reporting rate of weapon or drug crimes than those schools that did not increase the presence of school police. Next, schools that increased the amount of school police were significantly related to having a 12.3% higher percentage of reporting nonserious violent crimes to law enforcement than schools that did not add school police. This finding is consistent with what Na and Gottfredson

hypothesized—crimes like physical attacks or fights without weapons and without threats of physical attacks without a weapon are facilitated by the increased presence of school police. Na and Gottfredson (2018) stated,

This study found no evidence suggesting that SRO or other sworn law-enforcement officers contribute to school safety. That is, for no crime type was an increase in the presence of police significantly related to decreased crime rates. The preponderance of evidence suggests that, to the contrary, more crimes involving weapons possession and drugs are recorded in schools that add police officers than in similar schools that do not. The analyses also showed that as schools increase their use of police officers, the percentage of crimes involving nonserious violent offenses that are reported to law enforcement increases. These findings are consistent with the conclusions from a previous qualitative research . . . which found that the presence of police officers helps to redefine disciplinary situations as criminal justice problems rather than social, psychological, or academic problems, and accordingly increases the likelihood that students are arrested at school [e.g., Kupchik, 2010]. (p. 642)

Na and Gottfredson's analysis, finding a positive relationship between increases in school police presence and crime, was due to how school police have been redefining disciplinary interactions and reporting misbehavior as crimes instead of having an educator define it as merely misbehavior as in yesteryear (Weisburst, 2019). Furthermore, these scholars' analysis means that increases in school police are not creating a safer space to report crimes. To be sure, students have not been emboldened to report more crimes because of increased school police presence, but increases in school police

presence have emboldened educators to report more crimes and school police to reframe and report minor behaviors as legal crimes. Thus, increased police presence has over-criminalized students' social, psychological, and academic behaviors and issues.

Using longitudinal data from the federal Community Oriented Police Services (COPS) grants, Weisburst (2019) conducted the first quasi-experimental estimate of funding for school police programs on student outcomes. Weisburst found the ratio of security spending to total school district spending increased by approximately 7%, from an average of 0.2% of total spending when a school district has said grant money. Grant-receiving schools increased school discipline among middle school students when treatment was present; specifically, grant recipients saw increases in school discipline with middle school students by 6% per year, but the rates did not change for high school students. This increase in middle school student discipline is due to school discipline being administered for low-level infractions or school conduct code violations, but not serious offenses, which suggests “that it is unlikely that additional investments in school [police] reduced serious offenses at school” (Weisburst, 2019, p. 351). These findings are consistent with Owens's (2017) findings that federal CIS grants increase the number of arrests on school grounds of students aged 14 or younger.

Likewise, using COPS grant data, Owens (2017), in seeking to understand the STPN, found that grants creating funding for school policing programs were associated with statistically significant increases in reports of violent, drug, and weapons crimes, as well as more arrests of children aged 7–14 in schools. Owens (2017) stated,

If [school police] promote trust between officers and young people and encourage them to report crimes that previously would have gone unreported and

unpunished, we would expect CIS grants to be associated with more officially reported crimes in and out of school, and also potentially more arrests associated with those crimes. (p. 28)

Increases in the amount of school police are associated with statistically significant increases in the number of official reports of said crimes (violence, drugs, weapons) occurring in schools, with effect sizes ranging from 12% to 25% per officer—2.1% and 4.3% increases in report of crimes associated with a 10% increase in school police. This finding speaks to the method by which school police handle offenses.

Gottfredson and colleagues' (2020) study complements Na and Gottfredson's (2013), Owens's (2017), and Weisburst's (2019) longitudinal studies by employing methods that collectively suggest the presence of school police led to increases in reports of crime on school campuses. Gottfredson and colleagues' (2020) study is the most state-of-the-art study in the school policing literature, examining the safety effects of school policing with the most definitive methods currently available. Indeed, the "study complements [the previous] rigorous studies by relating month-to-month variation in school-level disciplinary outcomes to the timing of the placement of CIS grant-related SROs in those same schools" (Gottfredson et al., 2020, p. 912).

Using data from public middle and high schools in California that increased school police presence (treatment schools) and data from matching schools that did not increase their level of school police staff (comparison schools), Gottfredson and colleagues (2020) sought to understand the relationship between increasing school police presence and school crime outcomes. The treatment and comparison schools served as intervention measures in this study. To understand the extent to which the interventions

were sensitive to how the intervention was implemented, Gottfredson and colleagues created two implementation variables for the treatment schools: school police approach and school police hours. The school police approach was the percentage of time school police spent in law enforcement and order maintenance activities (as opposed to mentoring or teaching). School police hours were measured by the level of effort associated with school police assigned to the subject school, or the school police “dose,” which translated into the number of school police hours per week per 100 students at the intervention point. Outcome variables were monthly school-level counts of disciplinary offenses and actions. Disciplinary offenses were recorded if they resulted in student removal from their regular instructional setting for 1 or more days. Disciplinary action variables were exclusionary actions taken toward students: removal of students from traditional instruction (e.g., out-of-school suspension and expulsion) for any duration of time, regardless of learning ability and needs status.

Findings from Gottfredson and colleagues (2020) were as they hypothesized. The main effects of the increases in school police were that the school policing intervention was statistically significantly linked with weapon-related and drug-related offenses for both follow-up time points (11 and 20 months after intervention); an effect size of the increases in school police presence was 2.1 times larger for the treatment schools (schools with increases in the amount of school police) than comparison schools (no increase in school police staff). Further, the mean number of offenses increased for treatment schools and decreased for comparison schools. In terms of disciplinary actions on students, the analysis found the interaction on exclusionary actions at the 11-month time point post-intervention of school police increases (GEE estimate = 1.72 [0.43, 3.02],

$p < 0.01$). Furthermore, other analyses showed that though both types of schools saw post-intervention increases in disciplinary actions, the effect size for the increase was 2.1 times larger for treatment schools than schools that did not intervene with school police. Finally, sensitivity to how school police handled interventions was measured by conducting a 2-way interaction of time by school police approach and school police dose. For these findings, both approach and dose effects were found at the 20-month follow-up. For students, statistically significant results were found such that school police were “severe” in how they handled disciplinary actions. Interactions on weapon-related offenses were statistically significant ($0.006, p < 0.05$), and the interaction on weapon-related offenses at the 11-month follow-up were $0.007 (p < 0.05)$. The positive coefficient results indicate that as school police intervention increases, so does the offense. In this case, school policing students increased in their offenses of weapons-related activities at both 11- and 20-month follow-up time points. Thus, in the words of Gottfredson et al. (2020), “we found that increased [school police] increased the number of drug- and weapon-related offenses and exclusionary disciplinary actions for treatment schools relative to comparison schools” (p. 905). Indeed, school police interventions are shown to increase reports of heavy crimes like weapons-related infractions over time.

Synthesis of School Policing Effectiveness on Safety

Overall, the presence of school police was linked to increases in reporting of criminal offenses occurring on campus, meaning increased school police-student contacts have been reshaping student behaviors problems into criminalized issues (i.e., Na & Gottfredson, 2018), and have not reduced the amount of crime reporting or increasing school safety. Early research on the safety effects of school police presence found they

enhance school safety by reducing various crimes occurring on school campuses. For example, one descriptive study found that significant offenses decreased from 3,267, in 1 year, to 2,710, in the second year (Johnson, 1999); another study found that uniformed school police officers were associated with lower levels of school violence and crime (Jennings et al., 2011). However, recent, more sophisticated research has found that studies pre-dating 2011 are rife with methodological shortcomings, such as selection effects and confounding (Gottfredson et al., 2020).

Recent studies have linked the increased presence of school police with increases in reporting major- and minor-level school crimes, suggesting that school police may not enhance school safety or mitigate crime and violence. For example, one longitudinal study found increases in the amount of “law enforcement only” officers had a 41% higher rate of recorded nonserious violent crimes, 48% higher rate of property crimes, and 75% higher rate of serious/weapon/drug crimes compared to schools without school police; likewise, schools that employed “law enforcement only” school police officers recorded about 24% more serious/weapon/drug crimes compared to schools that employed “mixed” school police officers (Na & Gottfredson, 2013). This finding confirms Gottfredson and colleagues’ (2020) most recent longitudinal study finding that increases in the presence of school police were linked to weapon-related and drug-related offenses at 11 and 20 months after the school police intervention began, for both follow-up time points. Therefore, as opposed to the safety intentions of school policing programs, these programs do not reduce school crime and do not add to school safety. Not only are school police ineffective deterrents of school crime and violence, but their increased presence has been found to contribute to pushing students out of school, acting as sentries, and into

the STPN. Research studies on the relationship between school policing and student pushout is discussed next.

Student Pushout

The other outcome of school police presence, in the wake of zero-tolerance policies, is student pushout and student interaction with the juvenile legal system. The U.S. Department of Education (1999) defined zero-tolerance policies as “mandated predetermined consequences or punishment for specific offenses” (p. 127). Zero-tolerance was appropriated from the criminal legal system that called for swift and harsh punishment, usually suspension or expulsion, for students who broke rules for the first time (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). This disciplinary practice has often led to increases in student arrests (Brown 2003, 2005).

Before zero-tolerance school discipline policies, school teachers and administrators (trained education professionals) were the primary sources of school discipline (Beger, 2002; Kupchik & Monahan, 2006), even for egregious cases. Unlike school police, these educators hold advanced degrees, credentials, knowledge of child development, and are accountable to local school boards (B. Brown, 2006). When educators handle student infractions, they perceive student offenses (Hirschfield, 2011; Theriot & Cuellar, 2016), usually leading to in-house punishments like detention (Beger, 2002; Kupchik & Monahan, 2006).

On the other hand, once zero-tolerance discipline policies were prevalent, school police became involved as the primary enforcers of these school discipline practices. Teachers and administrators welcomed this shift in disciplinary adjudication and wanted increased school police presence to continue by adding responsibility for maintenance-

level discipline issues in classrooms, hallways, or cafeterias (Coon & Travis, 2012; Johnson, 1999). Whereas educators have credentials, school police usually do not hold advanced degrees in education or child development, nor do they hold education credentials; they are often undergo training in law enforcement and are accountable to local law enforcement supervisors, like police chiefs or county sheriffs (B. Brown, 2006).

Hence, because the officers have little or no training in fields such as education and developmental psychology and because the officers may be evaluated by supervisors who have little knowledge of educational theory and practice, it is possible that the officers' discretionary actions (e.g., whether to arrest a student) will be based on criteria which do not include the students' educational attainment, an issue which has been raised by national policymakers. (B. Brown, 2006, p. 591).

Increasing the use of school police shifted the school discipline paradigm from student offense to crime control (Hirschfield, 2011). As a result, the increases in formal, harsher punishments from school police lead to involvement with, and tracking into, the juvenile legal system (Fisher & Hennessy, 2016; Kupchik & Ellis, 2008; Theriot & Cuellar, 2016). Furthermore, this severity of the punishment of highly interpretable behaviors is how school police increase discipline rates (Fisher & Hennessy, 2016; Na & Gottfredson, 2013; Theriot, 2009). Instead of considering child and adolescent misbehavior as horseplay by educators, school police framed these behaviors as disorderly conduct (Fisher & Hennessy, 2016). Indeed, this "outsourcing of discipline" (Weisburst, 2019, p. 340) from educators to school police results in school police using their authority to arrest students for criminal offenses, as well as participate in school discipline matters with

educators for code of conduct violations (Kupchik, 2010; Weisburst, 2019). In all, the presence and use of school police, in the wake of zero-tolerance school discipline policies, increased the likelihood of prosecuting students toward the STPN, rather than administering effective in-house punishment (Beger, 2002; Kupchik & Monahan, 2006). Not only are school police used to adjudicate zero-tolerance discipline, but school police also push students to interact with the juvenile legal system by being present when school administrators adjudicate school discipline.

Constitutionality of Student Pushout

It is common for school police to observe and participate when school administrators discipline students, leading to student arrests and interactions with the juvenile legal system. Under the U.S. Constitution, it is legal for school administrators and school police to collaborate in this way (Aull, 2012; J. P. Nance, 2016), even though the tactics are invasive and calculated (Aull, 2012). Specifically, when administrators interrogate students, school police can be present and gain knowledge to arrest or refer students to the juvenile legal system; it is illegal for school police to interrogate, search personal property without a search warrant, or not give a *Miranda* warning, but it is legal for school police to listen-in on administrator-run interrogations. Educators also interview students and use the information learned to arrest and prosecute the students. For example, Kolhman (2013) related a story of how school police collaborate with educators to circumvent students' human rights, leading to student interaction with the juvenile legal system. The interaction between the student, school police officer, and school administrator started with mild pleasantries then switched to events about the alleged crime. The student declared their innocence, but the principal used scare-tactic

interrogation leading to the student's confession while the school police officer was present. This experience led to convicting the student, and the appellate court held the conviction based on said written confession by the student. This experience for students is all too common under zero-tolerance school discipline across the United States. The U.S. Supreme Court has sustained these disciplinary actions, but why? Hereafter, I briefly explain the constitutional nature of the involvement of school police in zero-tolerance discipline procedures.

Based on how these amendments have been applied in recent and pertinent U.S. Supreme Court cases, school police are more protected under the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution than students when collaborating in disciplinary actions with school administrators—specifically, the reasonableness of searches clause—was applied to the educational setting in the 1985 *New Jersey v. T.L.O.* U.S. Supreme Court case. Kim (2012) explained that a school principal searched the purse of a student accused of smoking; smoking was against school rules but broke no criminal law. While searching the purse, the school principal found items implicating the student of drug dealing. The principal turned the items over to the school police and used them as evidence against the student in subsequent delinquency proceedings with the juvenile legal system. The Court's decision maintained that school officials may search students' belongings without a search warrant or probable cause that would be required if a school police officer (who was employed by a police department and not a school district) wished to search student belongings; however, the Court said that finding it illegal for school officials would negatively compromise the crucial value in the informality of the student-teaching relationship. This decision upheld the Court's previous decisions, which

held that students do not have the constitutional rights as adults or youths in nonschool settings (e.g., see *Goss v. Lopez*, 1975, the first U.S. Supreme Court decision regarding school discipline). The *T.L.O.* decision made it legal for school police to stand alongside school administrators conducting student searches without a search warrant or cause and being the law enforcement actors allowed to arrest students toward being prosecuted to the full extent of the law. Hence, school police are constitutionally allowed to stand as sentries that push students into the STPN.

The Fifth and Sixth Amendments protect people against self-incrimination and the right to counsel (respectively). Second, the Fifth and Sixth Amendments were applied to the educational setting, such that the constitutional requirement for law enforcement officials to give the *Miranda* warning when. Police officers must verbally state the *Miranda* warning to people in official police custody (see U.S. Supreme Court case *Miranda v. Arizona*, 1966).

In *Miranda v. Arizona*, the Supreme Court held that prosecutors may not use statements obtained during custodial interrogation unless they can demonstrate that law enforcement agents informed defendants of their Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination before those statements are made. (Aull, 2012, p. 198)

The *J.D.B. v. North Carolina* (2011) U.S. Supreme Court case fine-tailored the application of the *Miranda* legal doctrine to the school policing context, with the decision based on the relevancy of age of the student in terms of custody and the circumstances. Specifically, the age of students being interrogated by law enforcement officials became important. Green (2013) recounted the main points of the case, by stating the main purpose of the *J.D.B.* case was to establish if a reasonable person would perceive

restrictions of their freedom; would J.D.B., the youth-age student, reasonably feel their freedoms were being taken from them by school police?

This means that the totality-of-circumstances test is a global consideration of several factors that potentially amount to a custodial determination. If it is determined that the child is in custody, then that child's constitutional Fifth Amendment rights must be protected through the administration of *Miranda* rights. (Green, 2013, p. 155)

Furthermore, a police officer does not administer Miranda rights in general circumstances unless the child suspect is officially in custody and arrested by the officers. But,

the schoolhouse interrogation setting is, therefore, contrary to establishing a knowing and voluntary confession that is incident to the in custody determination and invocation of Miranda rights. That is, once the child suspect is questioned under the unique circumstances that operate together in the schoolhouse setting, timing is key in the reading of Miranda rights before incriminating statements are made. Child suspects might mistakenly believe that if they comply with the school rules and cooperate during the interrogation, then they will be able to return to class without further incident. On the contrary, child suspects may be read their Miranda rights and be asked to knowingly and voluntarily sign a written waiver form. (Green, 2013, p. 165)

However, these student rights do not apply to school contexts. A school principal can interrogate a student without issuing any type of *Miranda* warnings—even while school police are present (J. P. Nance, 2016). The *Miranda* doctrine has been applied to the school context in two ways: educators are not obligated like officers to maintain

people's Miranda rights; knowing information pertaining to school safety overrides an individual student's rights for the greater good of the educational community. This legal application sustains the punitive methods of school police because they employ the information obtained from school administrators to make arrests, which in turn pushes students to interact with the juvenile legal system toward the STPN. The involvement of school police then is indirect in their methods of inquiry. Yet, they are directly involved in administering zero-tolerance punitive repercussions by making arrests and referrals to the juvenile legal system.

Synthesis on Student Pushout

With intentions to lower crime and violence in schools, zero-tolerance school discipline policies have increased crime by increasing school police presence (Gottfredson et al., 2020). Similarly, this discipline campaign increased school police presence, which increased school crime. Still, the presence of school police also provided a new punitive framework to discipline students, going from the frame of student misbehavior to criminal behaviors (Theriot & Cuellar, 2016). This framework transition bypassed students' civil and human rights that created interaction with the juvenile legal system and a secure position in the STPN. Specifically, increased school police presence also increased the likelihood of collaborating with school administrators' disciplinary actions; administrators legally interrogate students, and school police arrest students (Aull, 2012; Green, 2013; J. P. Nance, 2016). Though these consequences were unintended, it is fortuitous for students because scholars are being critical of the negative backlash of making school police the sentries in zero-tolerance disciplinary actions. However, though research on the well-being of students increases, it is surprising this line

of research (i.e., effects of school policing) has seldom turned to the student health outcomes of school policing, particularly the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students due to school policing.

Salient in this body is a conclusive critique of school police plays an integral part in placing children into the STPN, because of concerns for the well-being of Black students. However, in the vein of Black student well-being, no researchers have empirically studied the relationship between school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. This dissertation seeks to fill the school policing-student depressive symptoms gap and grow the body of research regarding the student health effects of school policing.

Omission of Black Student Depressive Symptoms

There is a paucity of research regarding the specific association between school policing behaviors and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. Current school policing research addresses the safety and punitive effects on Black students, but there is no research regarding the mental health effects of school policing on Black students. Specifically, researchers have found that increased school police presence leads to increases in reports of crime on school campuses (Devlin & Gottfredson, 2018; Gottfredson et al., 2020; Na & Gottfredson, 2013; Weisburst, 2019), and school police presence increases the likelihood of students interacting with the juvenile legal system (Aull, 2012; Green, 2013; J. P. Nance, 2016); however, there is a dearth of work regarding the effect that school policing has on the depressive symptoms of students, and Black students in particular. Therefore, this dissertation examined the relationship

between school police behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students.

Even though there is no specific research on the relationship between school policing behaviors and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students, there is aligning scholarship that sets precedence for this dissertation research. First, the school policing-depressive symptoms relationship has been theorized (e.g., Hurst et al., 2018); second, empirical research on the police intrusion relating to people experiencing symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD; e.g., Geller et al., 2014); and finally, and more generally, anti-black educational, racial inequities relating specifically to the depressive symptoms experienced by Black adolescents (e.g., Walsemann, Bell, & Goosby, 2011; Walsemann, Bell, & Maitra, 2011). This compilation of scholarship allows me to triangulate, deduce, and hypothesize the relationship between school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students.

School Policing and Depressive Symptoms

Hurst and colleagues (2018) published a thought piece theoretically and empirically grounding the connection between school policing and the mental health outcomes experienced by Black students. These scholars introduce their discussion in the context of the mental health effects of policing and police brutality against Black people, the historic and ongoing nature of police brutality against Black communities, and Black communities' expressions of resistance. Hurst and colleagues continue by saying that resistance against policing and the police state is needed and healthy. Still, resistance can take a mental toll on Black students, and scant research has been conducted. The authors provide a brief history of policing, not school policing, dating back to forms of social

control and enforcement such as Jim Crow laws and increased police presence and increased police control for drug offenses. Police murdering innocent Black men and boys is a major part of that history (Hurst et al., 2018). Because of the history of egregious policing acts against Black communities, Hurst et al. discussed and posited potential psychological outcomes of state-sanctioned police violence such as fear or paranoia.

Hurst et al. (2018) posited other psychological consequences of policing, such as depressive symptoms as an expression of racial battle fatigue (RBF), which is relevant to this dissertation. Depression was mentioned in this review as a consequence of traditional policing, but as this edited chapter was not a research study, Hurst and colleagues could not make the empirical connection between school policing and depressive symptoms and only mentioned the higher rates of depressive symptoms that Black people have had compared to their White counterparts. However, Hurst et al. provide fellow scholars with a framework to pivot toward an empirical study, like this dissertation. In the same way, RBF is cited as a consequence of school and traditional policing. Again, because the chapter is a review, the authors did not provide empirical evidence linking school policing and RBF. Hurst et al.'s contribution paved a theoretical framework for this new catalog of research. These authors state their intention at the conclusion of their chapter: to spur empirical work regarding the relationship between school policing and the mental health outcomes experienced by Black people. To date, there is a scant amount of research that answers the 2018 call from Hurst and colleagues, which leaves this dissertation with minimal precedents to draw upon. To guide this dissertation's research on the relationship between school policing behaviors and depressive symptoms

experienced by Black students, I draw on a few related research articles that closely speak to Hurst and colleagues' work and this dissertation research questions.

Geller et al. (2014) empirically explored the relationship between traditional police intrusion (e.g., additive measure of experiences including being stopped, location of encounter, police conduct, frisking, harsh or racist language, threatening or use of physical force) and two domains of mental health (i.e., trauma-related stress and anxiety levels). Statistically significant results were found, such that “participants who reported more police contact also reported more trauma and anxiety symptoms, associations tied to how many stops they reported, the intrusiveness of the encounters, and their perceptions of police fairness” (Geller et al., 2014, p. 2321). Indeed, policing is significantly related to poor mental health. Regarding this dissertation, Geller and colleagues measure the effects of traditional policing in relation to symptoms of PTSD. Even though the Geller et al. study does not investigate school policing concerning depressive symptoms experienced by Black students, it provides solid general precedent from which I build this dissertation work. Regardless of these differences, this paper is similar enough to this dissertation that I build on Geller and colleagues' (2014) work such that both are empirical studies that research the relationship between policing behaviors (i.e., stopping people) and the mental health conditions experienced by Black people.

Other aligning empirical research that I consider in order to build on conceptually is regarding educational inequities and depressive symptoms. Walsemann, Bell, and Maitra (2011a) studied the relationship between racial composition and the depressive symptoms of adolescent-aged students. Compared to their White counterparts, Black students had increases in their levels of depressive symptoms as the percentage of White

students attending their school increased. However, as hypothesized, that interaction between Black students and the percentage of White students became statistically nonsignificant after controlling for discrimination and school attachment. These authors concluded that Black students who attended schools predominantly with non-White students would experience less discrimination and more school attachment, thus, reducing their risk for depressive symptoms. In the second research study, Walsemann, Bell, and Goosby (2011b) used longitudinal methods to investigate whether school racial composition in youth affected the depressive symptoms in adulthood. These authors found as the percentage of White students increased, the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students increased, where the effect remained over time. For context, this interaction model was not statistically significant for students who identified as Hispanic or Asian/Pacific Islander. However, the latter groups of students reported increased depressive symptoms if they attended predominantly non-white schools. All associations were statistically significantly mediated by discrimination and school attachment.

Walsemann, Bell, and Maitra (2011a) and Walsemann, Bell, and Goosby (2011b) build precedent for this dissertation such that both investigate the link between educational inequities and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. Likewise, this dissertation studied the relationship between school policing behaviors (an integral part of educational environments) and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. Both policing Black students in their schools and student racial composition are racial inequities that adversely affect Black students. Because these papers use racial inequities to predict depressive symptoms experienced by Black

students, the Walsemann and colleagues' articles (2011a, 2011b) apply to this dissertation.

Furthermore, another aspect that the school policing literature leaves unclear and is also related to depressive symptoms gender. Depressive symptoms are related to gender, male and female (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 1999). Women are more likely to encounter depressive symptoms because they experience chronic strain and harsh circumstances, lower self-efficacy, and engage less in coping strategies (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 1999). The results for depressive symptoms are similar for adolescent populations as well, such that female adolescents incur more depressive symptoms due to high stress and low support levels (Schraedley et al., 1999). In research regarding anti-black racism in schools, depressive symptoms did not vary by gender; specifically, racial composition with higher levels of White students, gender did not moderate the relationship between racial composition and depressive symptoms (Walsemann, Bell, & Goosby, 2011). Depressive symptoms and gender vary by circumstances, levels, types of stress, or coping. Research shows that mundane forms of stress affect one gender more than another, other research shows that the stress with certain school situations does not vary by gender. Therefore, the stress-incurred depressive symptoms by Black students due to how school police behave towards Black students is still unknown.

In sum, the mental health effects of school policing need to be researched, and various frameworks and linkages have been hypothesized. However, no empirical studies examine the effects of school policing behaviors on the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. Specifically, there is a dearth of quantitative research on the mental health effects of physical or nonphysical school police behavior combinations

that is mentioned in the qualitative RBF literature has discussed (Smith et al., 2016). For example, Smith et al. (2016) reported Black college students being physically handled, frisked, and searched by police. The FFCWS would be a good test the effects of the presence or absence of physical force in school policing behaviors, because it contains variables like frisking, searching, harsh language, racial epithets, but also threats of physical force and use of physical force by school police officers. This dissertation study sought to fill this gap by examining the association between a combination of school policing behaviors that included use of physical force and a combination of school policing behaviors that do not include use of physical force.

So, aligning evidence finds traditional policing leads to symptoms of PTSD and institutional racial inequalities lead to depressive symptoms, because racial injustice enacted by school policing or by school racial composition and discrimination stem from the same system of anti-Black racism, social control, and enforcement. Therefore, this dissertation answers the call of Hurst and colleagues (2018) and builds on previous research-based evidence by researching the relationship between school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. Therefore, I specifically studied the relationship between school police behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. According to W. Smith (e.g., 2010), this relationship is undergirded by and symptomatic of RBF, which I discuss next.

RBF Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework I use to study the relationship between school policing behaviors and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students is the theory of RBF, which is the psychological and physiological response to racism-related stress in people

of color caused by racially arduous educational environments (Smith, 2004, 2007, 2008a, 2008b, 2010). The first person to coin the term RBF (theoretical framework) as a concept was Dr. William Smith, “to better understand how the biopsychosocial approach is a valuable method for examining the impact of race-related stress to the biological, psychological, and social factors and their complex interactions in the health of People of Color” (Franklin et al., 2014, p. 322). In his 2004 piece, Smith introduced and expanded the current understanding of RBF such that he developed the RBF framework that couched various forms of racism within historical, sociological, and psychological academic fields, where Smith discussed the short- and long-term health outcomes of sustaining racism-related stress (Franklin et al., 2014).

The foundations and constructions of the RBF theoretical framework consist of building from the scientific literature on stress response to racism and its effects on health and coping strategies for racism (e.g., Brown et al., 2000; Clark et al., 1999; Feagin & McKinney, 2003; Pierce, 1974, 1975a, 1975b, 1995; Smith, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, Smith, 2010; Williams et al., 1997), as well as combat stress syndrome toward understanding the effects of a hostile environment (Pierce, 1975a, 1995, Shay 2002; Shay & Munroe, 1999; Smith, 2004; U.S. Department of the Army, 1994, Willie & Sanford, 1995), which is diagnosed for military personnel who suffer from mental, emotional, or physical ailments as a response to ongoing and extreme stress from, or risk of, harm. Combat stress syndrome and RBF are common psychological and physiological responses when someone lives and works under everyday conditions of heightened distress, especially when confronting peril or danger of violent environmental conditions, situations, and contexts, or if one perceives their life, dignity, or character are under constant threat

(Pierce, 1974, 1975a, 1975b, 1995; Shay, 2002, Shay & Monroe, 1999; U.S. Department of the Army, 1994). For combat soldiers, the result of being in an environment that requires them to be on constant guard because of imminent danger of life-threatening conditions. Likewise, “for African Americans, racial battle fatigue is the result of the constant physiological, psychological, cultural, and emotional coping with [racism] in less-than-ideal and racially hostile or unsupportive environments (campus or otherwise)” (Smith et al., 2007, p. 555). Black people experience these mundane, everyday environmental stressors as physiological, psychological, and emotional burdens (Feagin et al., 2001).

RBF is the psychological and physiological response experienced by Black people in historically white institutions replete with various forms of racism (Smith, 2010). RBF is due to increased levels of racism-related stress and can be expressed through one or a combination of the following health conditions: frustration, shock, anger, disappointment, resentment, anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness, fear, hypersensitivity, hypervigilance, irritability, academic disidentification, apathy, defensiveness, and depression (Smith, 2010; Smith et al., 2016). Furthermore, the resulting physiological symptoms are headaches, teeth grinding, chest pain, shortness of breath, high blood pressure, muscle aches, indigestion, constipation, diarrhea, increased perspiration, fatigue, insomnia, frequent illness (Smith, 2010). Behavioral responses include stereotype threat, impatience, and poor school performance (Franklin et al., 2014). To conclude, RBF theory undergirds the empirical relationship of school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students because RBF theory informs

research on how racist educational environments affect the health outcomes experienced by Black students.

RBF is a theory that observes the relationship between educational environments that are replete with racism and racism-related health outcomes of Black people. Further, RBF mostly examines mainly focuses on the institutional of that relationship, compared to other theories. Because of this focus, RBF naturally gives less focus to the institution-borne health outcomes of Black people (and other minoritized people). To augment this paucity, I draw on minority stress theory, which gives more focus on the health outcomes and conditions of Black people. Originally, this theory was used to examine the health experiences of sexual gender minorities, and has since been applied to other minoritized people like Black. This theory is good to consider in this dissertation, because I examined the institution-borne health outcomes of Black students rather than institutional factors. “The minority stress model shows that circumstances in the environment, especially related to stigma and prejudice, may bring about stressors that [minoritized people] people experience their entire lives” (Meyer, 2015, p. 45). Minority stress theory states that stressors include discrimination and stigma, which in turn, can lead to adverse health outcomes like, but not limited to, depression, anxiety, substance use disorders, and suicide (Meyer, 2015).

Taken together, RBF and minority stress theory provide a theoretical framework for this dissertation to examine both the school factors and depressive symptoms of the Black student respondents that I am examining from the FFCWS. I will be about to highlight not only the racial institutional inequities, but also the specific depressive

outcomes that are experienced by this national sample of Black students who attend schools in urban areas.

All-Black Research Methodologies

Methodological Introduction and Background

The late Du Bois (1899) conducted the first all-Black sociological study, called *The Philadelphia Negro*. The purpose of this study was to present the conditions of the forty thousand Black people in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This study lasted fifteen months to ascertain “geographic distribution of race, their occupation of daily life, their homes, their organizations, and, above all, their relation to their million [W]hite fellow-citizens” (Du Bois, 1899, p. 14). Further, the study design was to create public information for a guide for solutions to address problems of Black people in America. “It was therefore thought best to make as intensive study of condition in general observation and inquiry in other parts of the city” (Du Bois, 1899, p. 14). The methodology included investigators canvassing the Seventh Ward in Philadelphia, which is a historic center for Black people.

Six schedules were used among the nine thousand Negroes of this ward; a family schedule with the usual questions as to the number of members, their age and sex, their conjugal condition and birthplace, their ability to read and write, their occupation and earnings, etc.; an individual schedule with similar inquiries; a home schedule with questions as to the number of rooms, the rent, the lodgers, the conveniences, etc.; a street schedule to collect data as to the various small streets and alleys, and an institution schedule to collect data as to the various small streets and alleys, and an institution schedule for organizations used for house-

servants living at their places of employment. . . . This study of the central district of Negro settlement furnished a key to the situation in the city; in the other wards therefore a general survey was taken to note any striking differences of condition, to ascertain the general distribution of these people, and to collect information and statistics as to organizations, property, crime and punishment, political activity, and the like. (Du Bois, 1899, p. 14)

Secondly, the late Jackson created and led the first all-Black population health studies funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), called the National Survey of Black Americans. This cross-sectional, nationally representative population-based study fostered empirical work with the purpose of highlighting and serving Black communities in unprecedented ways. It was initially funded by the National Institute of Mental Health's Center for the Study of Minority Group Mental Health in 1977. The study was conducted from 1979 to 1980, where investigators interviewed 2,107 Black American adults. Respondents were interviewed again at eight, nine, and twelve years the initial survey administration. The original and follow-up surveys comprise the National Panel Survey of Black Americans, which was also funded by the National Institute of Mental Health at the NIH (1977).

Finally, in 2007, Neighbors and colleagues used this survey to identify use of services of mental health disorders experienced by Black people. With a modified World Mental Health version of the World Health Organization's Composite International Diagnostic Interview, these scholars found that

Overall, 10.1% of respondents used some form of mental health care services in the past year. Use of services was much higher among those who met criteria for a

12-month DSM-IV disorder (31.9%) than among those who did not (5.4%).

Forty-nine percent of respondents with serious mental illness used services, whereas 39.3% had contact with mental health care specialists. The youngest and oldest age groups were least likely to obtain any services. Among African Americans, women were more likely than men to use general medical care and services from any sector. Respondents with the most years of education showed the highest use of services. (p. 485).

These study methods benefited from all-Black samples, which lend to (a) highlighting the agency of Black people and (b) surfacing structure-borne issues in Black communities. Likewise, the methodology of my dissertation seeks to center Blackness in the same tradition as Du Bois, Jackson, and Neighbors, and therefore, this dissertation drew from the FFCWS. With this dissertation study, I restricted the sample to only Black students so I could surface issues that Black communities encounter because educational environments are replete with racist enforcement tactics like school policing.

In order to center blackness in a secondary data set, I will guide my readers through a sequence of theory-informed methodology to achieve semblances of previous rigorous all-Black studies, like the seminal works of Du Bois and Jackson. Critical race theory education scholars show how to center Blackness, and Black health scholars show the benefits of all-Black samples in quantitative studies. All these research precedents to inform the methodological choices in this dissertation chapter. This dissertation used a sub-sample of Black students enrolled in the FFCWS. Creating this sub-sample allowed me focus attention on the experiences of Black students, rather than drawing attention to comparison methodologies and deficit-based narratives thereof. In this dissertation I

examined the relationship between school police behaviors affecting the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. The methodological framework I employed comes from multiple disciplines, such as educational and health, with a critical race approach. This hybrid methodology will account for the racially hostile experiences against Black students as well as the mental health effects of their experiences—to center the experiences of Black students being policed in their own schools.

Critical race scholarship in education examines how various facets of education like, leadership, pedagogy, history, experience, persistence, equity, access, are structured by race and racism to create racial inequities throughout the educational pipeline (e.g., Bell, 1983; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Critical race scholarship centers the experiences of Black students and expose the racial inequities perpetuated by the educational enterprise. These studies use methodologies to ensure that Black student voices and experiences are centered and that Black students co-construct the research process. This changes the dominant narrative about the education of Black students from lacking intellectual capacity to understanding the educational excellence of Black students across the P-20 pipeline (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 2009; Platt, 2015). However, critical race studies have not sought to understand the health effects of racially hostile educational environments. The methodology of population health studies examine education merely in years of education, or educational attainment. For example, population health scholars seek to understand if whether attending more years of school buffers against poor health (e.g., Baldassin et al., 2008; Clouston et al., 2015; McFarland & Wagner, 2015). Consequently, population health studies examine the relationship between education and mental health without accounting for key aspects of education

such as leadership, pedagogy, history, experience, persistence, equity, or access.

Attempts have been made to discuss the education-health relationship amongst Black students, but these studies do not incorporate a critical race lens (e.g., Assari, 2018; Walsemann, Bell, & Goosby, 2011). Taken together, education scholarship has more nuanced education predictor variables, and population health scholarship has more nuanced health outcome variables.

Therefore, I will use quantitative methodology to center the educational and health experiences of Black students, while researching the education and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. To be sure, I investigated the relationship between school police behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students.

All-Black Research Methodologies

To date, studies with all-Black samples have proven useful to understand the experiences of Black people. Educational anthropology and qualitative educational studies informed by critical race theory, have been able to center Blackness through empirical research. Likewise, health psychology has set precedent in studying the Black experience in health. Whitfield et al.'s (2008) seminal work on utilizing all-Black samples in public health research.

In her seminal book, *The Dreamkeepers*, Ladson-Billings (2009) ethnographically observed several teachers leveraging the cultural capitals of Black students in the Bay Area by teaching these students how to critique historically white institutions. Not only did it bolster the identities of the Black students in Northern California, but this empirical anthropological study found that Black students succeeded academically as well. Unique

about this study was it shifted the roles of both researchers and “informants” to avoid researcher bias of cultural phenomena (Ladson-Billings, 2009, p. 180). Indeed, this was an intentional decision to employ Asante’s notion of “Afrocentricity” and Collin’s Black feminist epistemology, to ensure Ladson-Billings captured the educational experiences of Black students and their teachers. Ladson-Billings explained applying Afrocentrism; she states.

Afrocentrism is more than information or textbook knowledge about Africans and African Americans. It represents the building of a new scholarly tradition.

Included in this tradition is an approach to scholarly inquiry that is “consistent with the ways in which people of African descent see and experience the world.”

By conducting the research in a true collaborative style, the research process and products reflected interpretations and analyses by the teachers I observed as facilitators and directors of pedagogical activity. What moved this research from merely collaborative to Afrocentric is that each participant agreed that the African child and community were the *subjects* and not the *objects* of study. The approach throughout was to ask what could be learned from African American students and their teachers that maintains the integrity of their culture and their world view. We resisted the urge to make comparisons between African American students and [W]hite middle-class students. In short, we worked with the assumption that African American students and their parents demonstrate normative behavior and that they act rationally, making decisions that make sense. Nowhere in our deliberations did we cast students’ or parents’ behaviors in the language of pathology. . . . This departure from traditional modes of educational inquiry

means that objectivity was not necessarily the priority—the priority was the authenticity and reality of the teachers’ experiences. My role was to represent those experiences as accurately as possible while realizing that “no inquiry is ever without initial values, beliefs, conceptions, and driving assumptions regarding the matter under investigation. (p. 180)

Likewise, Platt (2015) centers Blackness in his empirical research of Black male doctoral students. By interviewing these students through a critical race method, Platt (2015) centers the achievement and perseverance of Black male doctoral students. His work changes the narrative of Black male students from negative to positive. The purpose of his work is to capture, and center, the experiences of Black male doctoral students at predominantly white research universities. Specifically, the methodology that Platt (2015) used to capture the experiences of Black male doctoral students is instructive to my dissertation because Platt’s work is an all-Black sample. The purpose of his 2015 qualitative study was to understand what it is like being a Black male doctoral student at a predominately white institution, common experiences of these students, and identifying their sources of support. Platt states that doing qualitative, phenomenological studies allows researchers to “study individuals in their setting and to give voice to the marginalized” (p. 111). These in-depth interviews foster a research environment of flexibility and provides dynamic qualities (Taylor & Bogden, 1998). In short, Platt (2015) teaches that to understand and surface the nuanced experiences of Black students, scholars must bolster marginalized voices and provide a research space centering Blackness.

Synthesis of Methodological Introduction of All-Black Research Studies

Taken together, in order to achieve semblance of Du Bois' and Jackson's work in, this dissertation will center Blackness by employing a sample of all-Black students (i.g., Whitfield et al., 2008), focusing on educational experiences that are disproportionate to them (i.e., Ladson-Billing, 2009; Platt, 2015). This dissertation will focus on the mental health effects of the school policing project against Black students, considering the limitation of the data from the Fragile Families Study data, to change the narrative about the education and mental health of Black students. Indeed, educational anthropology and critical race approaches push secondary data sets to change the dominant narrative of Black students. This dissertation marries approaches that center the experiences of Black students with quantitative Black health psychology approaches, in order to study the relationship of school policing and the depressive symptoms of an all-Black sample of students through a critical race approach. Therefore, employing the variables of school policing behaviors allows the author to understand how the quality of education affects the mental health of Black students, but it also allows me to understand the racist history of the United States in terms of social control, enforcement, and tracking on Black students.

Synthesis and Conclusion

The increases in zero-tolerance policies and school policing in the 1990s were due to mass school violence (Addington, 2009). These educational policies have led to a police state in schools where Black students seek to learn. Indeed, legal architects have chosen to police students more than counsel and teach students. This educational-police state has fueled a push-out agenda where many Black students first encounter the juvenile

legal system and are put at risk of entering the STPN (e.g., Turner & Beneke, 2020). The goal of increasing the presence of school police in schools was to create safer schools, but this goal was never achieved (e.g., Gottfredson et al., 2020). Still, every level of government insists on employing school police. This action speaks to a larger narrative that the United States equates safety with policing instead of achieving student safety through preventative initiatives that benefit the education and health of these students and their communities.

Though the school policing project literature informs about student safety and the push-out effect on Black students, educational researchers, practitioners, and policymakers need understand better what happens to the mental health, and specifically, the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. This dissertation assists in filling this gap by assessing the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students who were being policed, with and without use of physical force, in their schools. This posited relationship is not unfounded as previous scholarship suggests school policing and the mental health experienced by Black students are linked (Geller et al., 2018; Hurst, 2018), and educational environments perpetuate racial inequalities that affect the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students (Walsemann et al., 2011a, 2011b), which are symptomatic of, and explained by, RBF.

Hypotheses

The research questions of this dissertation are (RQ1) to what extent do Black students experiences of “physical” school police behaviors relate to their depressive symptoms, and (RQ2) to what extent do Black students experiences of “nonphysical” school police behaviors relate to their depressive symptoms?

This dissertation will investigate two hypotheses to understand school police behaviors through the perspective of Black students. The first hypothesis, or *Hypothesis 1*, tested the extent of physical school policing behaviors that affected the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. The second hypothesis, or, *Hypothesis 2*, tested the extent of nonphysical school policing behaviors that affected the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. Therefore, it was hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1, or H1

H1a: 15-year-old Black students who sustained the physical combination of school police behaviors is related to increased levels of depressive symptoms.

H1b: The relationship between the physical combination of school police behaviors and the increased levels of depressive symptoms will vary by the gender of Black students (male or female).

Hypothesis 2, or H2

H2a: 15-year-old Black students who sustained the nonphysical combination of school police behaviors is related to increased levels of depressive symptoms.

H2b: The relationship between the nonphysical combination of school police behaviors and the increased levels of depressive symptoms will vary by the gender of Black students (male or female).

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

In this chapter, I first review the methodological history of all-Black empirical research studies, starting with Du Bois (1899), and then discuss more contemporary all-Black studies by Jackson (1977), Ladson-Billings (1997/2009), Platt (2015), and Whitfield et al. (2008). Then, I review the background of the Fragile Families & Child Wellbeing Study (FFCWS) because I used data from it to research the relationship between school police behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black people. Next, I discuss that this dissertation research will be an all-Black sample and the benefits of such a study. From here, I discuss the specifics of the current dissertation study, such as which wave of data I use, variable choice, ordinal logistic models, and data analysis plan.

Current Study

The research questions of this dissertation are (RQ1) to what extent do Black students experiences of “physical” school police behaviors relate to their depressive symptoms, and (RQ2) to what extent do Black students experiences of “nonphysical” school police behaviors relate to their depressive symptoms?

In the current dissertation study, I highlight the mental health effects of the school policing behaviors (i.e., actions done by school police on students) experienced by Black students, I restricted the data in this dissertation to an all-Black analytic sample. The benefit of an all-Black analytic sample is there is no White reference group, which

decreases the likelihood of perpetuating the idea that social science is only valid if Black people are compared to another race of people (historically, White people). Lamar et al. (2020) shared this statement about the methodological benefits of an all-Black sample:

While comparison studies are important for documenting racial differences, given the profoundly different social environment that [Black people] experienced at that time, within race investigations are needed to further knowledge about how specific contextual factors may uniquely influence [health] among [Black people].
(p. 82)

Description of Study and Data

This dissertation study used publicly available FFCWS data from the Year 15 wave, which means the participants were 15 years old at this time in the Study. The FFCWS is a population-based cohort study that began in 1998 and is still ongoing. FFCWS is a national random sample from 77 large U.S. cities comprised of over 200,000 people (Reichman et al., 2001; Waldfogel et al., 2010). FFCWS followed a cohort of new parents and their children, providing unprecedented data about conditions and contexts surrounding unwed partners and families. Data was collected from 4,700 births (3,600 nonmarital and 1,100 marital) in 75 different hospitals in various U.S. cities (Reichman et al., 2001).

I used data from the FFCWS because it is one of the few population-based studies with variables about being stopped by school police and a variable about depressive symptoms. The sample size of the entire FFCWS was 4,898 youths, but once I restricted that sample to only Black students the sample was 1,601. Finally, once the sample was

delimited to Black students who were stopped by school police, the final analytic sample for this dissertation study was 1,580.

Though a strength of FFCWS is that it boasts a large sample of Black participants, how the study participants were chosen was deficit-based: FFCWS targeted unwed couples from neighborhoods predominantly comprised of people of color, which perpetuates a narrative that couples of color are problematically not married and may contribute to racial disparities. The FFCWS inquired after the negative effects of child and family health (and other trajectories) from unmarried, or “fragile,” couples, thus the name of the “Fragile Families” study. The Study investigators assumed that unwed partners are fragile this is deficit-based thinking and is entrenched in ideologies perpetuated by empirical studies like the FFCWS. Rather, it should be stated that the social structures are fragile and ill-equipped in which these families navigate their societies. It is crucial to note FFCWS has approached Blackness from a deficit-based approach because its investigators primarily targeted communities of color to understand couples who had their children out of wedlock, because primary investigators collected data from communities of color instead of white communities which perpetuates the assumption that people of color are problematic for having children out of wedlock and need help from the white academy. However, FFCWS is favorable for researchers to use because of its large sample size of Black people. Despite deficit perceptions, FFCWS’s population-based study provides unique variables and understanding of the mental health effects experienced by Black students and being stopped by school police. So, the results of this dissertation may only be generalizable to Black students of unwed parents, because the large majority of these participants were born to unwed mothers and were

born in the United States. Therefore, the FFCWS principal investigators went in with the white gaze that people of color predominantly have children outside of marriage, which is a deficit-based perspective. In addition, being unwed and having children outside of marriage is viewed as problematic for all races of parents, this stigma is not only limited to Black unwed parents. I acknowledge that this white gaze of the FFCWS is an ideological limitation, and in turn, a methodological limitation, to this dissertation's results and implications.

Notation of Equations

RQ1 states to what extent do Black students experiences of “physical” school police behaviors relate to their depressive symptoms. Likewise, the equation notation for the “physical” school police behaviors independent variable is presented here:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Depressive symptoms} = & \beta_0 + \text{PhysicalSchoolPoliceBehaviors} + \\ & \beta_2 \text{GenderOfStudents} + \beta_3 \text{PoliceStationSchool} + \beta_4 \text{PriorMentalHealthHistory} + \\ & \beta_5 \text{DelinquentActivities} + \beta_6 \text{NonSchoolPoliceStops} + \beta_7 \text{MotherIncome} + \\ & \beta_8 \text{MotherEducation} + \beta_9 \text{RespectGivenSchool} + \beta_{10} \text{PickOnYouSchool} + \\ & \beta_{11} \text{PartOfSchool} + \beta_{12} \text{FeelCloseSchool} + \beta_{13} \text{HappyAtSchool} + \varepsilon \end{aligned}$$

The equation notation for the [“physical” school police behaviors x gender of students] interaction variable is presented here:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Depressive symptoms} = & \beta_0 + [\text{PhysicalSchoolPoliceBehaviors} \times \\ & \text{GenderOfStudents}] + \beta_2 \text{PoliceStationSchool} + \beta_3 \text{PriorMentalHealthHistory} + \\ & \beta_4 \text{DelinquentActivities} + \beta_5 \text{NonSchoolPoliceStops} + \beta_6 \text{MotherIncome} + \\ & \beta_7 \text{MotherEducation} + \beta_8 \text{RespectGivenSchool} + \beta_9 \text{PickOnYouSchool} + \\ & \beta_{10} \text{PartOfSchool} + \beta_{11} \text{FeelCloseSchool} + \beta_{12} \text{HappyAtSchool} + \varepsilon \end{aligned}$$

RQ2 states to what extent do Black students experiences of “nonphysical” school police behaviors relate to their depressive symptoms? Likewise, the equation notation for the “nonphysical” school police behaviors independent variable is presented here:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Depressive symptoms} = & \beta_0 + \text{NonPhysicalSchoolPoliceBehaviors} + \\ & \beta_2 \text{GenderOfStudents} + \beta_3 \text{PriorMentalHealthHistory} + \beta_4 \text{DelinquentActivities} + \\ & \beta_5 \text{NonSchoolPoliceStops} + \beta_6 \text{MotherIncome} + \beta_7 \text{MotherEducation} + \\ & \beta_8 \text{RespectGivenSchool} + \beta_9 \text{PickOnYouSchool} + \beta_{10} \text{PartOfSchool} + \\ & \beta_{11} \text{FeelCloseSchool} + \beta_{12} \text{HappyAtSchool} + \varepsilon \end{aligned}$$

The equation notation for the [“nonphysical” school police behaviors x gender of students] interaction variable is presented here:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Depressive symptoms} = & \beta_0 + [\text{NonPhysicalSchoolPoliceBehaviors} \times \\ & \text{GenderOfStudents}] + \beta_2 \text{NumberofStops} + \beta_3 \text{PriorMentalHealthHistory} + \\ & \beta_4 \text{DelinquentActivities} + \beta_5 \text{NonSchoolPoliceStopsosite} + \beta_7 \text{MotherIncome} + \\ & \beta_8 \text{MotherEducation} + \beta_9 \text{RespectGivenSchool} + \beta_{10} \text{PickOnYouSchool} + \\ & \beta_{11} \text{PartOfSchool} + \beta_{12} \text{FeelCloseSchool} + \beta_{13} \text{HappyAtSchool} + \varepsilon \end{aligned}$$

Dependent Variable

Depressive symptoms were measured by asking respondents five items from the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Randloff, 1977), which are items improved upon from the full 20-item scale to enhance cross-cultural comparability by validating this measure on diverse samples (Perreira et al., 2005). The five items were: “I feel depressed,” “I feel I cannot shake off the blues, even with help,” “I feel sad,” “I feel life is not worth living,” and “I feel happy.” Participants responded on a Likert scale, 1–4, “strongly disagree,” “somewhat disagree,” “somewhat agree,” and “strongly agree.”

Per the scoring instructions, all the variables, except “I feel happy,” were recoded, so higher scores reflect higher levels of depressive symptoms. The “I feel happy” variable was a positively worded item, so it was recoded so higher levels of this variable reflected lower levels of depressive symptoms.

A study (Weissman et al., 1980) indicated that a CES-D score of 15 or above, based on the full 20-item CES-D instrument measured on a 0-3 scale, is clinically significant of depressive symptoms for 15-year-old adolescents. The FFCWS, however, has one-quarter of these instrument items as the full CES-D instrument, so when only one-quarter of the items are available, like in the FFCWS, it is suggested to multiply the maximum possible score, 15, with the FFCWS version of the CES-D by 0.25 (Fagan, 2022). This multiplication equals 3.75, which gives a new score cut-off for clinically significant depressive symptoms (Fagan, 2022). For the current dissertation study, the CES-D depressive symptom mean score of the Black student respondents who were stopped by school police was 2.93, and the standard deviation was 2.91. The totals of these variables were summed into one variable. The Cronbach’s alpha for the CES-D in this dissertation study was .76. The Cronbach’s alpha for the five-item CES-D is .78, .74 for non-White first-generation youth, and .73 for Black people (Perreira et al., 2005). The reliability of this measure is .81 (Perreira et al., 2005).

Independent Variables

Students were asked a series of yes/no questions regarding *school police behaviors* when students were stopped: (a) whether school police *frisked* students, (b) whether school police *searched* the bags or pockets of students, (c) whether school police used *harsh language* towards students, (d) whether school police used *racial epithets* towards students, (e) whether school police *threatened* students with physical force, (f)

whether school police *used physical force* on students. I coded these variables where 1 = yes and 0 = no, so 1 (yes) represented the exposure of a given policing behavior. To assess severity of school policing behaviors, I grouped two combinations of the independent variable. The first combination was “physical,” which was the combination of the (a) frisking and use of (b) physical force variables into one independent variable, and the second combination was “non-physical,” which was the combination of the (a) searching, (b) harsh language, (c) racial epithets, and (d) threats of physical force variables. I coded these two composite variables where 1 = yes and 0 = no, so 1 (yes) represented the exposure of the combination of the physical and nonphysical policing behaviors.

Regarding physical and nonphysical school policing behaviors and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students, crosstabulation analyses were run to inspect the scores in each cell. The results for physical school policing behaviors are found in Table 3.1 and the results for nonphysical school policing behaviors are found in Table 3.2.

Table 3.1

Crosstabulated Associations by Respondent’s Depressive Symptoms and Physical Policing Behaviors, Fragile Families Study, Year 15

Depressive Symptoms	Physical School Policing Behavior		Total
	No	Yes	
0	600	248	933
1	227	137	415
2	302	175	477
3	289	157	446
4	171	108	279
5	139	92	231
6	101	64	165
7	91	66	157

8	69	45	114
9	53	36	89
10	35	21	56
11	16	14	30
12	16	5	21
13	7	8	15
14	2	4	6
15	2	0	2
Total	1,891	1,545	3,436

Note. $n = 1,580$

Table 3.2

Crosstabulated Associations by Respondent's Depressive Symptoms and Nonphysical Policing Behaviors, Fragile Families Study, Year 15

Depressive Symptoms	Nonphysical School Policing Behavior		Total
	No	Yes	
0	636	297	933
1	251	164	415
2	269	208	477
3	262	184	446
4	151	128	279
5	122	109	231
6	88	77	165
7	81	76	157
8	57	57	114
9	45	44	89
10	29	27	56
11	16	14	30
12	10	11	21
13	6	9	15
14	2	4	6
15	1	1	2
Total	1,945	1,491	3,436

Note. $n = 1,580$

For the crosstabulation analyses for both independent variables, I note that the “yes” cells that centered around the mean (2.92) ranged from 92-164. However, the cells with scores of the extremely high level of depressive symptoms range from 1-14. Given

this study's mean score of depressive symptoms and the general depressive clinical score cutoff of 3.75 (Fagan, 2022), and cells with sufficient scores, I moved forward with the analyses for this dissertation study.

The *police stationed regularly at school* variable was categorized into a yes or no variable, where 1 = yes and 0 = no. For *prior mental health history*, the primary care givers were asked at Year 9 whether the child was unhappy, sad, or depressed, and they were able to respond "not true," "somewhat or sometimes true," or "very true or often true." I categorized these three responses into a yes or no dummy variable, where 1 (yes) was comprised of "somewhat or sometimes true" and "very true or often true" and where 0 (no) was comprised of "not true." Year 9 prior mental health history was used to capture some of the variance of the analytic relationship; it was used to observe how much of depressive symptoms in Year 15 was a result of school police behaviors or prior mental health history. *Gender* was categorized as male or female.

Delinquent activities in Year 15 were coded as a yes or no dummy variable, where 1 represents the presence of this exposure. The Delinquent activities in Year 15 variable was constructed from several binary delinquent behavior variables (yes or no) capturing the sum total of delinquent behaviors enacted by youth in Year 15. These activities included: "painted graffiti or signs on private property/public spaces," "deliberately damaged property that didn't belong to you," "taken something from a store without paying for it," "gotten into a serious physical fight," "hurt someone badly enough to need bandages or medical care," "driven cars without its owner's permission," "stolen something worth more than \$50," "gone into a house or building to steal something," "used or threaten to use a weapon to get something," "sold marijuana or other drugs,"

“stolen something worth less than \$50,” “taken part in a group fight,” and “were you loud, rowdy, or unruly in a public place.”

Nonschool police stops, the variables were: “stopped by police on the street,” “stopped by police in car,” “stopped by police on a bicycle,” and “stopped by police in some other place.” So, for example, if “stopped by police on the street” was 1, then the students were stopped by police on the street. These variables were totaled into one yes/no dummy variable. Furthermore, the nonschool police behaviors were combined into one variable to prevent spurious results and collinearity for the model testing.

For the *demographic variables*, nativity was categorized whether mothers of the youth were born in the United States or abroad. Family structure was dichotomously categorized whether the youths’ mothers were married or not. Socioeconomic status (SES) was categorized by mother’s education level: high school or less, some college, and college completed, or graduate level. Income level was categorized by mother’s income level at up to \$19,999 and \$20,000 to \$75,000+. In previous studies using FFCWS data, these demographic variables were related to depressive symptoms and used as covariates in those analyses (see Assari, 2014; Assari & Caldwell, 2018); therefore, I used them in this dissertation study for the same reason.

School-level variables were used to ensure I addressed confounding perceptions of school experiences. Youths were asked to respond to the following Likert items: “Teachers in school treat the students with respect,” “Kids at school pick on you or say mean things to you,” “I feel like I am a part of my school,” “I feel close to people at my school,” and “I am happy to be in my school.” These variables were operationalized from 1–5, with higher scores reflecting higher levels of students’ feelings described in each

question. Walsemann et al. (2011a, 2011b) used these school-level variables and found them related to depressive symptoms; therefore, I used them for the same reason.

Multicollinearity Testing

To account for multicollinearity, a few analyses were run on each independent variable before survey weights were applied to the main models. This was done to make sure that variables are not capturing too much of the same construct. If a variable had high collinearity, it was removed to improve model fit.

First, a Pearson's correlation analysis was run and there were no unusually high correlation coefficients. The highest coefficient was $|.53|$, which indicated no collinearity, so no variables were removed. Second, two un-weighted regression models were run. The physical composite model was run and Stata (Version 17) omitted for collinearity "income \$20,000 to \$75,999+," "greater than high school," and "mothers born abroad." The nonphysical composite model was run and Stata (Version 17) omitted for collinearity "income \$20,000 to \$75,999+," "greater than high school," and "mothers born abroad." Before I moved onto the VIF analyses, I removed the above omitted variables.

To augment the correlation analysis, a VIF analysis was run for the above models. For reference, a VIF score of ≥ 2.5 indicates that there are considerable amounts of collinearity (Johnston et al., 2018) and these variables should be removed and the VIF analysis re-run. For the physical composite model, the range of VIF scores were 1.02 to 1.58, with a mean VIF score of 1.20, so no variables were removed. For the nonphysical composite model, the VIF scores were the same as the physical model: the range of VIF scores were 1.02 to 1.58, with a mean VIF score of 1.20, so no variables were removed.

Lastly, weighted ordinal logistic regression models were run for both physical and nonphysical independent variable combinations, and spuriousness and multicollinearity were found. It was expressed in the relationship between the combined school policing behaviors variables and depressive symptoms variable that reported a negative direction, which is opposite to what was found in the correlation analysis. For the physical variable combination, I removed the number of number of police stops variable, and for the nonphysical variable combination, I removed the number of number of police stops variable and the police stationed at school variable. Making these two adjustments resulted in a coefficient in a positive direction that matched the previous correlation analysis.

Proportional Odds Assumption

To test if this assumption, I ran the test of parallel lines to see if the slopes in my models were the same. The null hypothesis stated that the slope lines were not different, and to alternative hypothesis stated that the slopes were different. Failing to reject the null hypothesis (e.g., large p-value), the proportional odds assumption is reasonable and I can move forward with using the ordinal logistic model. But if the null hypothesis is rejected (e.g., small p-value), the proportional odds assumption is not reasonable and I cannot forward with using ordinal model. For this dissertation, the p-value for the physical combination ordinal model was large (.06), and the p-value for the non-physical combination ordinal model was also large (.16). Therefore, for both models the proportional odds assumption is reasonable and not violated, and I proceeded with using an ordinal logistic regression for both the physical and nonphysical school policing behavior models.

Missing Data and Data Analysis Plan

This dissertation did not elect to run a missing data analysis, because there were no missing data for this analysis. So, I did not remove respondents based on missing values; the n-size 1,580 was from delimiting to an all-Black sample who were stopped by school police.

The focal relationship of this dissertation used with FFCWS data Wave Year 15. The FFCWS has employed a complex sample design that includes survey weights because these survey weights allow researchers to generalize their study findings to the U.S. population. Analyses that checked for multiple collinearity were run, and variables were removed (please see above). Once I ran the multicollinearity tests and updated the equations, I applied pre-constructed survey weights created by the investigators at the FFCWS. Next, I tested for the proportional odds assumption and the p -values were reasonable to move forward with ordinal logistic regression analyses. I applied survey weights for all descriptive and inferential analyses in this dissertation. First, descriptive analyses were run to learn about the background of the sample of Black students. For the bivariate associations, chi-square tests were used, to understand which variables were related to the gender of the participants at the $p > .20$ level. Finally, two sets ordinal logistic regression models were run. For the physical force combination independent variable, I ran an ordinal logistic regression model that regressed depressive symptoms onto the school policing behaviors that included threats of physical force and use of physical force, while controlling for previously mentioned covariates. I also ran an interaction model where I regressed depressive symptoms onto the interaction term physical force and gender of students, while controlling for previously mentioned

covariates. Next, for the nonphysical force combination independent variable I ran another ordinal logistic model that regressed depressive symptoms onto the combination of school policing behaviors that did not include threats of physical force and use of physical force, while controlling for previously mentioned covariates. I also ran an interaction model where I regressed depressive symptoms onto the interaction term nonphysical force and gender of students, while controlling for previously mentioned covariates. I used the software program Stata (Version 17) to analyze the data.

Descriptives

The majority of the Black student sample ($n = 1,580$) was almost evenly distributed in terms of gender, with slightly more male ($n = 791, 50.06%$) than female ($n = 789, 49.94%$) students. The majority of the sample did not have married parents ($n = 1,372, 87.39%$). Most mothers in this sample earned up to \$19,999 per year ($n = 650, 54.44%$), earned a high school diploma or the equivalent ($n = 587, 37.15%$), and were born in the United States ($n = 1,517, 96.50%$). These results are found in Table 4.1. The depressive symptom mean score of the Black student respondents who were stopped by school police was 2.93, the standard deviation was 2.91, and the range was 0 - 15. These results are found in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3

Descriptives, Fragile Families Study, Year 15, Weighted Data

	Total n	%
Gender		
Male	791	50.06%
Female	789	49.94%
Married Parents		
Yes	198	12.61%

No	1372	87.39%
Mother's Income		
Up to \$19,999	650	54.44%
\$20,000 to \$75,000+	544	45.56%
Mother's Educational Level		
Less Than High School	508	32.19%
High School or Equivalent	587	37.15%
Greater Than High School	483	30.61%
Mother's Nativity		
Born in the U.S.	1,517	96.50%
Born Abroad	55	3.50%

Note. n = 1,580

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Here, the dissertation findings are presented. Bivariate associations were run, and statistically significant associations between gender and depressive symptoms, some nonschool police stops, and students feeling they are a part of their schools. Both the physical and nonphysical models showed increased odds of Black students reporting depressive symptoms, however, these results were statistically nonsignificant. Additionally, the gender interaction terms of physical and nonphysical models reported increased and decreased odds of Black students reporting depressive symptoms (respectively), however, these results were statistically nonsignificant

Results

Bivariate Associations

Secondly, bivariate association analyses were run to compare participants' characteristics in terms of their gender. Additionally, when developing this study, bivariate analyses were run because it was important to understand which of these variables were associated with the outcome by gender. The bivariate analysis also helped to identify potential covariates to test in the multivariable models; this bivariate model was used to filter potential covariate into the multivariable models. So, I used a generous p -value threshold of $p < 0.20$ to ensure that I did not drop any useful potential variables from the analyses. Chi-square analyses were employed to test for bivariate associations to

understand the observed differences between gender and the participants' characteristics, as well as to test their correlations between gender and participants' characteristics. These results are found in Table 4.1

Table 4.1

Bivariate Associations by Respondent's Gender, Fragile Families Study, Year 15, Weighted Data

	Male %	Female %	Total %	<i>p-value</i>
Dependent Variable				
Depressive Symptoms	22.5*	26.93*	49.44*	.08
Independent Variables				
Frisking	23.8	19.23	43.03	.70
Searching	26.57	22.15	48.72	.343
Harsh Language	12.59	5.79	18.38	.27
Racial Epithets	4.88	2.53	7.41	.43
Threat of Physical Force	8.53	9.758	18.29	.46
Use of Physical Force	7.982	7.737	15.72	.51
Combine School Police Behaviors	23.55	21.75	45.3	.59
Police are Regularly Stationed at School	50.23	39.36	89.59	.35
Prior Mental Health History	3.554	4.742	8.296	.43
Delinquent Behaviors	27.33	18.69	46.02	.25
Stopped on the Street	7.244*	3.977*	11.22*	.20
Stopped Driving a Car	63.94*	13.6*	77.54*	.02
Stopped While Riding a Bike	53.03*	21.98*	75.01*	.00
Stopped, Other	65.3	17.87	83.16	.60
Combined Non-School Police Stoppage	22.53*	5.906*	28.43*	.00
Up to \$19, 999	27.9	24.25	52.15	.78
\$20,000 to 75,000+	27.05	20.8	47.85	.78
Less than High School	14.05	16.39	30.43	.25
High School or Equivalent	24.42	18.99	43.42	.75

Greater than High School	15.53	10.61	26.14	.39
Born in the U.S.	50.42	44.29	94.71	.29
Born Abroad	3.56	1.72	5.28	.29
Teachers in school treat students with respect	51.18	43.17	94.35	.43
Kids at school pick on you or say mean things to you	2.783	3.182	5.965	.56
I feel like I am a part of my school	52.05*	35.25*	87.3*	.02
I feel close to people at my school	45.65	37.44	45.99	.70
I am happy to be at my school	48.5	37.13	85.63	.49

Note. $n = 1,580$; * $p < .20$ level, Chi-squared test

High levels of depressive symptoms were statistically significantly associated to both male students (22.5, $p = .08$) and female students (26.93, $p = .08$). Being stopped on the street by a police officer was statistically significantly associated with both male students (7.24, $p = .20$) and female students (3.97, $p = .20$). Being stopped in a car by a police officer was statistically significantly associated with both male students (63.94, $p = .02$) and female students (13.6, $p = .02$). Being stopped while riding a bike by a police officer was statistically significantly associated to both male students (53.03, $p = .00$) and female students (21.98, $p = .00$). The combination of nonschool police stoppage was associated to both male students (22.53, $p = .00$) and female students (5.90, $p = .00$). And finally, respondents felt like they were a part of their schools was statistically significantly associated with both male students (52.05, $p = .02$) and female students (35.25, $p = .02$).

Correlation Results

To understand how each of the final variables relate to depressive symptoms, I ran a Pearson's correlation analysis. As expected, physical school policing behaviors were positively correlated with depressive symptoms experienced by Black students (.10), and

nonphysical school policing behaviors were positively correlated with depressive symptoms experienced by Black students (.11). These results are found in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2

Correlations of Depressive Symptoms, Fragile Families Study, Year 15

	Depressive symptoms		Depressive symptoms
Depressive symptoms	1	Mother income up to \$19,999	.07
Physical policing	.08	Mother education less than high school	.06
Nonphysical policing	.11	Mother education high school or equivalent	.03
Gender	.11	Mother nativity born in U.S.	-.00
Police stationed at school	.00	Teachers treat students with respect	-.16
History of mental health	.08	Other kids are mean at school	.13
Delinquent behavior	.17	I feel a part of my school	-.25
Nonschool police stoppage	.12	I feel close to people at school	-.21
-	-	I feel happy at my school	-.23

Note. $n = 1,580$

Ordinal Logistic Regression Results

First, I calculated the log likelihood to see if there was a statistically significant difference between the nonphysical and physical models. There was a statistically significant difference between the two models ($\chi^2(2) = 35.542082$; $\text{prob} > \chi^2 = 1.915e-18$; $p < .0001$), so adding threats of physical force and use of physical force to the second ordinal logistic regression model resulted in a statistically significant improvement in model fit.

The Effect of Physical School Policing Behaviors

For the first model (H1), I ran ordinal logistic regression models examining the association between the combination of physical force school police behaviors on the

depressive symptoms experienced by 15-year-old Black students, and whether the gender of the students moderated that relationship. None of the results for the models examining Hypothesis 1 (a and b) were found statistically nonsignificant, but I will still state the results. For the first model, Black students who were targets of the physical force school policing behavior combination had 27% (OR 1.27, 95% CI: .54-3.01) increased odds of experiencing depressive symptoms than Black students who were not targets of the physical force school policing behavior combination after controlling for covariates, however this finding was not statistically significant. For the interaction model, Black students who were the targets of the physical force combination and female had 55% (OR .45, 95% CI: .07-2.88) decreased odds of experiencing depressive symptoms than Black students who were not targets of the physical force school policing behavior combination and male after controlling for covariates, however this finding was statistically nonsignificant. These results are found in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Ordinal Logistic Regression “Physical” Models Predicting Depressive Symptoms, Fragile Families Study, Year 15, Weighted Data

Depressive Symptoms	Odds Ratio	95% CI		Odds Ratio	95% CI	
		Lower	Upper		Lower	Upper
Independent Variables						
“Physical” School Policing Behaviors	1.27	.54	3.01	1.77	.58	5.43
Female Students	2.00	.92	4.35	2.68	.97	7.40
“Physical” School Policing Behaviors x Female				.45	.07	2.88
Police are Regularly Stationed at School	.92	.42	2.01	.99	.46	2.13

Prior Mental Health History	1.24	.34	4.51	1.14	.30	4.33
Delinquent Behaviors	1.67	.85	3.28	1.80	.82	3.91
Nonschool Police Stops	1.34	.66	2.69	1.28	.64	2.54
Mother Income Up to \$19,999	1.03	.39	2.69	1.02	.39	2.64
Mother Education Less Than High School	1.60	.62	4.15	1.62	.61	4.29
Mother Education High School or Equivalent	2.49	.73	8.50	2.47	.74	8.24
Mother Education Born in the U.S.	1.52	.47	4.85	1.50	.53	4.27
Teachers in school treat students with respect	.49	.16	1.54	.56	.18	1.72
Kids at school pick on you or say mean things to you	2.38	.54	10.54	2.56	.63	10.31
I feel like I am a part of my school	.05	.00	1.25	.06	.00	1.28
I feel close to people at my school	.55	.15	2.02	.48	.13	1.82
I am happy to be at my school	.89	.13	5.91	.87	.13	5.69

Note. $n = 1,580$, $*p < .05$

The Effect of Nonphysical School Policing Behaviors

For the second model (H2), I ran ordinal logistic regression models examining the association between the combination of nonphysical force school police behaviors on the depressive symptoms experienced by 15-year-old Black students, and whether the gender of the students moderated that relationship. None of the results for the models examining Hypothesis 2 (a and b) were found statistically significant, but I will still state the results. For the first model, Black students who were targets of the nonphysical force school policing behavior combination had 77% (OR 1.77, 95% CI: .74-4.22) increased odds of experiencing depressive symptoms than Black students who were not targets of the

nonphysical force school policing behavior combination after controlling for covariates, however this finding was not statistically significant. For the interaction model, Black students who were the targets of the nonphysical force combination and female had 27% (OR 1.27, 95% CI: .11-13.67) increased odds of experiencing depressive symptoms than Black students who were not targets of the nonphysical force school policing behavior combination and male after controlling for covariates, however this finding was statistically nonsignificant. These results are found in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Ordinal Logistic Regression “Nonphysical” Models Predicting Depressive Symptoms, Fragile Families Study, Year 15, Weighted Data

Depressive Symptoms	Odds Ratio	95% CI		Odds Ratio	95% CI	
		Lower	Upper		Lower	Upper
Independent Variables						
“Nonphysical” School Policing Behaviors	1.77	.74	4.22	1.60	.51	4.98
Female Students	1.98	.89	4.39	1.78	.48	6.58
“Nonphysical” School Policing Behaviors x Female				1.27	.11	13.67
Prior Mental Health History	1.20	.34	4.15	1.23	.32	4.63
Delinquent Behaviors	1.59	.76	3.34	1.56	.66	3.71
Nonschool Police Stops	1.41	.73	2.71	1.44	.74	2.78
Mother Income Up to \$19,999	1.10	.47	2.59	1.12	.49	2.56
Mother Education Less Than High School	1.54	.62	3.85	1.55	.61	3.88
Mother Education High School or Equivalent	2.22	.70	7.01	2.20	.70	6.84

Mother Education Born in the U.S.	1.50	.48	4.68	1.50	.40	5.54
Teachers in school treat students with respect	.50	.16	1.5	.49	.15	1.52
Kids at school pick on you or say mean things to you	2.65	.53	13.08	2.60	.51	13.12
I feel like I am a part of my school	.06	.00	1.24	.60	.00	1.48
I feel close to people at my school	.52	.12	2.26	.54	.11	2.48
I am happy to be at my school	.79	.12	4.90	.78	.10	6.13

Note. $n = 1,580$, $*p < .05$

Summary of Findings

In summary, Chapter 4 displayed bivariate associations where depressive symptoms were associated to both Black male and Black female students, when only observing these two variables (bivariately). Also, this analysis found some of the individual school policing behaviors were related to the outcome, by gender (i.e., being stopped on the street, while driving a car, while riding a bike). Moreover, the combination variable of all the nonschool police stops were also related to the outcome by gender.

In terms of the ordinal logistic regression analyses, all findings were statistically nonsignificant. Though there appears to be relationships between physical and nonphysical school police behaviors and the depressive symptoms of Black students, these relationships did not have significant effect on the depressive symptoms of Black students.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose and findings of this dissertation study are discussed. Despite research on outcomes of school policing like student safety and student pushout into the school-to-prison-nexus, there is little research on the relationship between school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by 15-year-old Black students. Using data from the Year 15 wave of the FFCWS, I sought to fill this gap. The results were statistically nonsignificant for Hypothesis 1 and for Hypothesis 2. Next, I discussed the findings in relation to what parents and teachers can do to advocate for Black students in order to keep them out of the STPN. After that, I discussed the findings in terms of RBF, and then, I gave some limitations and strengths of this dissertation study. Finally, in the directions section, I wrote about the next steps for research, including to focus on person-centered, longitudinal studies. Next, I proposed how researchers could couch the findings of this dissertation in terms of the racist history of education and social control in the United States, as well as the dissertation findings in terms of the empirical research on white fear. My concluding remarks were final thoughts on the atrocious school policing behaviors at Spring Valley High School in Columbia, South Carolina in relation to this dissertation's findings, followed by a summary of this dissertation study.

Purpose and Findings

There is little knowledge about the effects that school policing behaviors (i.e., actions done by school police on students) has on the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation was to explain the potential relationship between school policing behaviors and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. School policing researchers have examined the roles, logistics, and operations of school policing programs as they are related to school administrators (B. Brown, 2006; Coon & Travis, 2012; Gottfredson et al., 2020), and school police as gatekeepers for students into the STPN (Turner & Beneke, 2020). Yet, besides Hurst and colleagues (2018) theorizing the mental health effects of school policing on Black students, there have been no empirical studies on school policing and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. To date, while there is empirical evidence regarding the mental health effects of school policing (D. B. Jackson et al., 2019), there is virtually no evidence found regarding the effect school policing behaviors has on the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. Further, there are no studies that center the experiences of Black students by employing an all-Black sample. Therefore, this dissertation employed an all-Black subsample of 1,580 students with FFCWS data and asked the following research questions:

(RQ1) to what extent do Black students' experiences of "physical" school police behaviors relate to their depressive symptoms, and (RQ2) to what extent do Black students experiences of "nonphysical" school police behaviors relate to their depressive symptoms?

This study did not find support for Research Question 1 or Research Question 2. Physical and nonphysical school policing behaviors led to increased odds in depressive symptoms experienced by Black students, but the results were statistically nonsignificant. Likewise, the interactions led to increased and decreased odds of depressive symptoms in Black female students (statistically nonsignificant). Therefore, to answer the research questions, school policing behaviors did not statistically significantly affect the depressive symptom experienced by Black students, nor were there any statistically significant effects by gender of the students. Furthermore, this dissertation hypothesized, and it was found:

Findings for Hypothesis 1, or H1

H1a: H1a: 15-year-old Black students who sustained the physical combination of school police behaviors is related to increased levels of depressive symptoms. *H1b*: The relationship between the severe, physical combination of school police behaviors and the increased levels of depressive symptoms will vary by the gender of Black students (male or female). None of the findings for H1a or H1b were statistically significant. Hypothesis 1a could not be supported, such that the physical school policing behavior combination increased the odds of depressive symptoms experienced by Black students (OR 1.27, 95% CI: .54-3.01); however, there was not enough evidence such that this relationship was statistically significant. Hypothesis 1b could not be supported either, due to statistically nonsignificant results. Meaning, Black female students where were targets of physical force policing behaviors decreased odds of experiencing depressive symptoms than Black male students who were not targets of physical force school policing

behaviors (OR .45, 95% CI: .07-2.88); however, there was not enough evidence to where this relationship was statistically significant.

Findings for Hypothesis 2, or H2

H2a: 15-year-old Black students who sustained the nonphysical combination of school police behaviors is related to increased levels of depressive symptoms. *H2b*: The relationship between the nonphysical combination of school police behaviors and the increased levels of depressive symptoms will vary by the gender of Black students (male or female). The findings for H2a or H2b were not statistically significant. Hypothesis 2a was not supported, such that the nonphysical school policing behavior combination increased the odds of depressive symptoms experienced by Black students (OR 1.77, 95% CI: .74-4.22); however, there was not enough evidence to where this relationship was statistically significant. There was no statistically significant support for Hypothesis 2b found either. Meaning, Black female students who were targets of nonphysical force policing behaviors had decreased odds of experiencing depressive symptoms than Black male students who were not targets of nonphysical force school policing behaviors (OR 1.27, 95% CI .11-13.67); however, this relationship was statistically nonsignificant.

The results of this dissertation were statistically nonsignificant, and this in turn informs the emerging youth policing literature which finds statistically significant associations between police contact and psychological harm to youths (D. B. Jackson et al., 2019). Previous research found that police contact with youths results in statistically significant increases in emotional distress, social stigma, and post-traumatic stress experienced by youths (D. B. Jackson et al., 2019). Though the study cross section of this dissertation solely focused on school policing and the depressive symptoms of Black

youths, it was surprising to find statistically nonsignificant associations between school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black youths. It is possible that school policing and depressive symptoms are different enough from traditional youth policing and mental health outcomes. Said differently, even though traditional policing and school policing share similarities, the two are still different enough to where they effect mental health of Black youths in different ways and degrees. More research is needed on both traditional and school policing and the mental health of Black students.

More broadly, previous research on school policing examined the association between school police presence and students' feelings of safety at school, which lend insight into the statistically nonsignificant results found in this dissertation. In their study on school policing contact and student perceptions of safety, Theriot and Orme (2016) found a statistically nonsignificant relationship between student-school police interactions and students' feelings of safety. This exploratory dissertation studied similar phenomena by examining the relationship between school policing and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students, and there was no statistically significant relationship found either. Though Theriot and Orme's (2016) outcome variable was feelings of safety and this dissertation's outcome variable was depressive symptoms, both are negative emotions from school police interactions. So, like Theriot and Orme (2016) found school police has no statistically significant emotional effect on students, and neither did this dissertation. Furthermore, Theriot and Orme (2016) found students felt unsafe in their schools when acts of violence occurred. Because of data availability, this dissertation study did not examine reports of violence or crime, but this is a variable to

consider moving forward with research pertaining to the relationship between school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. The broader ecological contexts of school play an important role in understanding the relationship between school policing and the mental health conditions of Black students. Therefore, perhaps it is only useful to study the emotional effects of school policing with other important variables like reports of crime on school campuses, thus, providing a more ecological view, and explanations of, the focal relationship of school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. These contextual covariates may account for some of the variance in the focal association of school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students.

Next, this dissertation considered the designation between physical and nonphysical force. Even though some studies consider physical force (i.e., D. B. Jackson et al., 2019), these studies only considered the severity of physicality of school police behaviors as a covariate. This dissertation brought certain attention to physical and nonphysical contact on Black students as the study's independent variables. Therefore, moving forward, I need to rethink the research study design in how to best use severity of police physicality.

Finally, Zero-tolerance school discipline policies, and adjoining school policing, have been in effect since the late-1980s and 1990s. The FFCWS started in 1998 and by the time the Black students who participated in the FFCWS, the year was 2013 (Year 15 Wave). By 2013, school policing was normalized across the United States and more school police were being inserted in 2013 because of the Sandy Hook School mass shooting in 2012. Therefore, the psychological effects of school policing could not have

statistically significant effect on the psyches and emotions of youths across America. This normalization of the police state in school could be why many student perceptions of school police were usually not negative (Theriot & Orme, 2016). It may take severe physical acts from school police for students to be adversely affected, which would be relatively less normal and would not show up as statistically significant in an associative examination of a national survey study like the FFCWS and this dissertation study.

Future researchers should consider qualitative methods, then, to capture these relatively severe instances with school police and Black students. Once this happens, surveys should be created from these interviews that are meant to specifically capture the relationship between school policing and the mental and cognitive state of Black students. Overall, while this dissertation found notable relationships between school policing behaviors, there was no statistically significant relationships and provides insufficient evidence to the current literature because (a) the differences in policing and mental conditions, (b) previous literature is still unsure about the association between school policing and emotions of students, (c) ecological factors, (d) research design of school police physicality, and (e) the normalization of the police state in schools across the United States.

For Parents and Educators

I wanted to write to parents and educators first, because these adults have primary influence and stewardship for 15-year-old Black students and their relationship with the STPN. Recently, I was talking with a teacher about my dissertation research. We talked about school discipline and school policing towards Black students. My colleague asked an honest question: “What do you do with students who are constantly being disruptive?”

This section is a summary of my response. In short, I said that while we do need to consider how Black children are contributing to their discipline, it is just as important, if not more important, to check how schools and educators are contributing to the overrepresentation of Black students who receive school discipline and school policing. I broke my answer into three contributing factors to consider: (a) vague school discipline policies, (b) teacher stereotypes of Black students, and (c) differences in teacher and student perceptions of student behaviors. I hope that noting these reasons can help inform parents and educators about school discipline and policing, in order to lessen the rate of Black boys and girls being disciplined and policed.

The vague and universal language of which school discipline policies are written negatively affect Black students more than White students. Generally, for minor infractions, the language is ambiguous, universal, and otherwise relative; for larger infractions, the language is tighter, more succinct, detailed and spelled out, and overall more explicit (Allen, 2012; George, 2015). Allen (2012, p. 186) explains:

[T]he use of the discipline rubric allows administrators to act as “objective” or “colorblind” disciplinarians, hiding behind an institutional set of so-called universal guidelines that can be applied to all cases across time. The “objectivity” of such educational policies is called into question by CRT, which argues against universalistic application of laws in favor of a particularistic approach, one that accounts for history and context.

Due to most of the discipline policy being vague, it gives educators and school police more room to criminalize the misbehaviors of Black students, leading to an overrepresentation of Black students receiving school discipline. Conversely, specific,

fine-tailored school discipline policies are written for egregious behaviors and White students are disciplined more for these behaviors because White students are found to commit more violent behaviors. For example, Annamma et al. (2019) reported that Black girls were more likely to have their behaviors labeled as disobedient or defiant; Black girls, compared to White girls, were statistically significantly more likely to be referred for behavior problems; Black girls were referred for alcohol possession, but White girls were referred for alcohol use. As a consequence, White students are punished and criminalized less than their Black counterparts; Annamma et al (2019) found that one sample of Black girls was suspended more than the district average (a rate higher than White and Latino boys in this sample), and that Black and White girls were sent to law enforcement at similar rates. The study also found that Black girls were more likely to be expelled than White girls. The literature highlights that there is a dominant narrative of students of color, which cleaves to neutrality, objectivity, universalism, and colorblindness (Delgado, 1991; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 2006). Because of the vague laws and deficit-based narratives about Black student, the Annamma et al. (2019) study found that compared to White girls, Black girls were more likely to be referred for disobedience or defiance ($RRR = 174, p < .05$), drug possession ($RRR = .39, p < .001$), and alcohol violations ($RRR = .17, p < .05$). Therefore, even though White students commit comparable amounts of misbehaviors or violent acts, they are disciplined less because of how vague, colorblind, and universal discipline policies are constructed.

Another factor of disciplining and policing Black students is White teachers stereotyping Black students as more violent people. Kunesh and Noltemeyer (2019), in their recent work, find that the overrepresentation of Black students being disciplined is

based on the stereotypes that pre-service teachers have of the behavior of Black children. These educators were randomly assigned vignettes about both Black and White children to test their attitude towards Black children. The results found that pre-service teachers perceived that Black children were more likely to misbehave than White children.

Participants who were randomly assigned to read the vignette featuring a Black student whose race was implied through the stereotypical name alone had 6.187 higher of reporting that recurrence was “likely,” compared with participants who were randomly assigned to read the vignette featuring a White student. (p. 486)

The social attributions of the respondents were due to the history of past alleged violent behavior of Black people, cultural misconceptions about Black people, and racial bias. Additionally, these perceptions play a role with White teachers giving instructions to Black students. Unless White teachers know to state what they want Black student to do, teachers will get frustrated with those students and refer them to the principal or have a school police officer come and enforce. For example, White teachers may state instructions to Black students in the form of a question, but in reality the White teachers articulate questions that could be responded to with a simple “yes or no”. So, back to my colleague’s question: it is not that Black students are more rude or disruptive, but White teachers have not gotten to know their Black students, and Black students receive discipline for a repeated offense.

Due to the racial history between White people and Black people, our society has perceived the latter as more violent, hypersexual, and unintelligent (Irby, 2014; Grey White, 1999 Smith et al., 2016). This history is linked to the referral process when referring Black students to disciplinary heads at schools because educators report minor

misbehaviors as violent acts (Allen, 2012), which has led to the over-referring of Black students to educational administration (Allen, 2012; George, 2015). This history fuels teachers' perceptions into thinking that behaviors like students' misbehavior, like verbal arguments, is actually physical threats and violence (Allen, 2012). One scholar (Allen, 2012, p. 184) relates a common experience of Black students in this predicament: There was a verbal argument between two classmates. The vice principal thought this should have been handled by the teacher, but this teacher was scared of students of color. The father of the student of color was called in to meet with the vice principal, where the father learned his son was to be suspended for three days. The caring father disagreed with the suspension decision given that his son's school record would show he's a top student with no prior misbehaviors or altercations. The father said the two students got into a verbal argument which is what kids do. Finally, the father said he had enough and was going to report the vice principal to the school board, but when this happened the vice principal immediately dropped the suspension and remove it from his sons' and the other boys' records. Parents are crucial, as this example clearly showed.

The teacher failed to act and perceived something that did not even occur between the students—all of this because of their fear and bias against Black people. Since the principal was told the altercation was something more than what it actually was, and due to zero-tolerance discipline policies, the referred Black student was going to lose three days of his education, even though he had no prior history of negative behavior. In short, “assumptions of deviance by teachers and administrators...led to the criminalization of Black men through the discipline policy” (Allen, 2012, p. 185).

Taken together, these factors (i.e., universal discipline rubrics, stereotyping, and educator misperceptions) contribute to Black students being recommended for school discipline (and are excluded from their classes). Being disciplined because of vague policies and stereotyping and misperceiving Black students, puts this in contact with school police and the STPN.

Racial Battle Fatigue and Minority Stress Theories

The statistically nonsignificant findings from this dissertation did not provide enough evidence to find support for RBF theory, and a discussion of this will follow. To recap, RBF is the psychological and physiological response to racism-related stress in people of color caused by educational environments that are replete with racism (Smith, 2008a, 2008b, 2010). Further, RBF is a framework “to better understand how the biopsychosocial approach is a valuable method for examining the impact of race-related stress to the biological, psychological, and social factors and their complex interactions in the health of People of Color” (Franklin et al., 2014, p. 322).

First, there was a link between physical nor nonphysical school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms of Black students; however, this association did not provide ample enough evidence to be found statistically significant. The reasons why the findings of this study found no evidence to support the RBF literature surround three major themes: (a) policing behavior combinations, (b) respondent population age, or (3) empirical methods. In the RBF literature, respondents report various policing behaviors, or combinations of policing behaviors. Generally, frisking Black students occurs when Black students are being frisked in tandem with only physical force and searching. Smith

et al. (2016) found that Black college students who had physical force used on them, frisked, and searched incurred RBF. Smith et al. (2016) shared these findings:

We were pulled over for allegedly speeding. The state trooper said we were going at least 70 and he had to go all the way up to 65 in order to catch us. So, we immediately were like ‘What?’ And he then went back to his car, ran my friend’s plates and the next thing there were six patrol cars there. They took us out of the car, patted us down, searched the car, and found nothing. There was nothing to find. And then left without issuing a ticket of any kind. (pp. 8-9)

A second reason that this study did not find support for RBF is due to the age of the population of the existing RBF literature and the age of this dissertation study. The extant literature mostly studied adults and this dissertation studied 15-year-old youths. These different populations may respond to racism-related stress in different ways. Also, perhaps the cumulative health effects of school policing show in adulthood and not in adolescence. One study Smith et al. (2011) conducted found that the health of Black men who did not graduate from high school were not adversely affected by racism in educational spaces; however, Black men who graduated from high school and attained higher education had their health adversely affected by racism in educational spaces. In these future studies of adults, there needs to be a mechanism that measures cumulative effects of racism to account for the racism experienced in childhood and adolescence. This study and future studies need to account for the age of Black students. Thus, the Black students that Smith and colleagues interviewed and the Black students in the FFCWS data set are different samples of people, at different ages in the life course, and at different grades in the P-20 educational pipeline, so the corroboration of the two sets of

exploratory results is telling. Therefore, Black students who traverse historically white institutions throughout their entire educational careers, which educational experiences lead to symptoms and expressions of RBF. In all, this dissertation found no evidence to support the RBF literature because age and temporal aspects of the respondents were different than the respondents in the extant RBF literature.

Third, mostly all of the extant RBF literature is qualitative empirical research, and after doing this dissertation study and finding statistically nonsignificant results, there is probably a reason why. In qualitative methodologies there is flexibility and an accuracy that centers the experiences of Black students—which allows researchers to continue more qualitative work or prepare for quantitative methods (like surveys) that center the experiences of Black students. Until there are quantitative measures to capture the educational and health experiences of Black people, qualitative inquiry will continue to be a good option for research.

Qualitative methods have allowed researchers to capture the experiences of Black students who encounter various severities of school policing. Interviewing Black students brings to center their voices and lived experiences, instead of applying preregistered survey instruments onto their experiences, even if those instruments have been validated on diverse samples.

Another strength of qualitative inquiry when investigating the mental health effects of school policing behaviors is that researchers can use a grounded theory, which means researchers can develop or change a theory as their research progresses to better capture the experience of study participants (Hernandez, 2009; Jørgensen, 2001). Theories and questions can be formulated after the data are collected. This means to say

in the case of school police behaviors and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students, researchers can learn from the students and parents who are interviewed. Potentially, within those responses (before or after data collection), researchers might see connections between, for example, being frisked, being threatened, or being called racist slurs, and the depressive symptomology (and in turn RBF) in Black students. This form of question creation and asking centers the dynamic, and anticipated, experiences of Black youth and their families, and thereby give Black people a voice supported by research to create or change policies for the betterment of Black people over the life course. In all, the findings of this dissertation do not support the RBF literature because secondary data may not capture the nuance needed in the lives of Black youths than studies that are qualitative, or at least start with qualitative inquiry.

Some conclusions that I have arrived at are that we need better quantitative data which include variables of institutional actors and their performances and norms, which means for example, it would be helpful to have variables on White female teachers clutching their purses who walk past a Black male students (i.e., Smith et al., 2016), or White students and White professors who single-out Black students to inform the predominantly White class about Rap music (i.e., Smith, 2010). I call for these, and similar, quantitative variables because knowing the cumulative effect of campus behaviors of teachers and students, classroom behaviors of teacher and students, and school police behaviors on Black students would increase the knowledge, and in turn policymaking, towards knowing how historically white institutions adversely affect the education and depressive symptoms experienced by Black people throughout their life course and educational pipeline. Scholars also need larger samples in data sets to

certainly state that statistically nonsignificant results are not because of small sample or cell sizes.

This dissertation did not find significant statistical evidence to support minority stress theory either, of which I was more surprised because this theory focused on health outcomes like depressive symptoms more than RBF. One reason there may have not been ample evidence to support this theory is because school policing, and education as a whole, have not been fully considered as a psychological stressor. Minority stress theory rests on the relationship between life stressors affecting the mental health of minoritized people; however, this dissertation does not align with this paradigm. This theory may have not of found support because this dissertation did not have data available to study the sexuality of the Black students. The sexuality and gender are staples to this theory, and data sets still need to address these identities. Though I was able to study how school policing affected Black students, this dissertation was unable to ask if the sexuality affected the school policing-depressive symptoms relationship. Moving forward, I will seek out data that includes the sexuality of Black students to better understand how school policing behaviors affect Black student as well as to best highlight the benefits of using minority stress theory.

Directions and Applications

The directions that this dissertation study could take are many, however, the directions that I will discuss here are: (a) the methodological to state and call for more sophisticated methods to center the educational and mental health experiences of Black students; (b) the educational histories of social control and police enforcement so that anti-Black racial oppression in educational spaces are not random, but rather is part of a

greater calculated history of the United States; and (c) the psychology of white fear to understand the white psyche and to what lengths White people will go to satisfy their racist fears of Black people potentially taking their white privileges.

Methodological Directions

Because this dissertation study used ordinal logistic regression analyses that highlighted and found statistically nonsignificant findings regarding the education and mental health of 15-year-old Black students, it is important to consider the implications of more sophisticated methods to capture the experiences of Black individuals and communities. There are many methodological directions this dissertation study could go, but I will discuss two: person-centered cross-sectional and person-centered longitudinal approaches are able to capture nuances that variable-centered approaches (i.e., ordinal logistic regression, OLS regression) cannot capture. Latent class analysis (LCA) allows investigators who use population-level data sets, like FFCSW, to understand health issues, like depressive symptoms experienced by Black communities, as a whole, by analyzing the individual mental health profiles of Black people who have been school policed. With a logistic regression analysis, one can learn the relationship of two variables, but with LCA, a person-centered approach, researchers can investigate the odds that students who are policed are also likely to display depressive symptoms. This analysis provides generalizable findings to Black communities, but in a more individualized way. Next, while regression gives us a general association of two variables, LCA allows researchers to work with relatively smaller samples sizes to highlight social phenomena that might otherwise go untraced; LCA allows researchers to do robust studies for historically oppressed communities, or what many public health

disciplines call “hard-to-reach populations.” Though most person-centered approaches need large samples sizes, these approaches do not need as many participants as variable-centered approaches.

Further, researchers should seek to conduct person-centered longitudinal analyses to control for confounding and show causation over time. I suggest two types of longitudinal analyses: latent transition analysis (LTA). The first, LTA allows researchers to observe variable changes over time and the second allows researchers to observe individual profile changes over time. Further, for the second, LTA, could be used to understand individuals’ profiles over multiple time points, which lends understanding to the long-term and causal effects of youths having a mental health profile filled with depressive symptoms due to school policing. For example, both types of longitudinal analyses provide researchers with tools to answer these study questions like: does school policing behaviors on Black students have long-term mental and cognitive health effects; how long after students are policed in their schools do they incur adverse health effects; and does it affect their odds of increasing in depressive symptoms or cognitive decline?

Finally, using ecological, spatial data analyses would be fruitful for geographic or geospatial studies to understand the health conditions or disparities of Black youths due to school policing and zero-tolerance discipline policies. Being able to see on maps the health implications of school policing would be helpful: where does school policing occur in proximity to people with health conditions like depressive symptoms, cognitive delays or abilities, diabetes, crime rates, or prison and jail locations? Or, are Black students treated differently in different parts of the same school district? Understanding the school policing-mental health relationship from a geospatial standpoint is important

because many forms of racism stem from residential segregation, housing inequities, and the suburbanization of white America.

Applications from the Educational Histories Literature

From a historical standpoint, school policing and school discipline come from long lines of social control of Black students. There are three broad prongs of social control: (a) laws and policies, (b) rhetoric and strategic communication, and (c) enforcement against Black communities. School policing Black youths falls under the third prong, police enforcement. Here, I will provide a few historical examples of social control of Black communities over the past two hundred years, and I will end with contemporary school policing. It is important to know from what tradition school policing came from; school policing did not spontaneously appear, in fact, it is an integral part of U.S. educational histories.

Douglass (1845/2014) liberated himself through self-education, literacy, and reading. Douglass was reminded that white social control was robust in the 1820s, when the man that enslaved him, Auld, warned his wife against teaching enslaved Black people to read. Douglass recorded these words in his *Narrative*: “If you give a [Black person] an inch, he will take an ell. A [Black person] should know nothing but to obey his master—to do as he is told to do. Learning would spoil the [Black person] in the world. Now,” said he, “if you teach that [Black person] (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him” (p. 27). Douglass progressed to his liberation, in part, because he taught himself how to read, and became one of the greatest orators of all time. Speaking of usurping his enslaver’s power by learning to read, he said “[f]rom that moment, I understood the pathway from slavery to freedom” (Douglass, 1845/2014, p. 27).

Since the earliest years of Black literacy and liberation in the U.S., White people have intentionally oppressed Black people from obtaining education by various forms of social control. The purpose of these white control strategies was the continued segregation of White and Black people. For example, in Douglass' time, it was illegal to teach enslaved people to read and write (e.g., create law; Morris, 2013). White people would spread rumors (i.e., strategic communication) about Black people, portraying them as violent, uncivilized, unintelligent, ungrateful, and therefore unfit for education and self-government (Anderson, 1988; Morris, 2013). Therefore, law enforcement officials would ensure that Black people adhered to the racist laws (i.e., police enforcement tactics; Anderson, 1988; Morris, 2013; Douglass, 1845). Indeed, police enforcement was used to oppress Black people from becoming literate and educated.

On May 18, 1896, the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case of the U.S. Supreme Court decided the infamous “separate but equal” doctrine, meaning that both White and Black people were entitled to the same quality of educational opportunities, but in segregated spaces. Though this equality was the law of the land, the practice of this law was inequitable and increased the racial disparities in educational spaces like inequities in school financing, school materials, amount of learning time, or teacher salaries. The Plessy decision came as a result of a light-complexioned Black man, Homer Plessy's attempt to ride in a whites-only train car.

The Supreme Court ruled against Plessy saying that as long as the accommodations were “equal” their separateness did not reflect discrimination. For fifty-eight years, this remained the law of the land. The Brown decision reversed this principle, but did not reverse the actual experiences of [B]lack and

[B]rown people in the nation. One of the places we see the intransigent nature of segregation in our schools. (Ladson-Billings, 2007, pp. 1286-1287)

The outcome of the Plessy decision set fertile ground for the Jim Crow laws. In the interim time, White people controlled the dominant rhetoric that surrounded and upheld the Jim Crow laws to justify the racist laws and police enforcement tactics against Black people. White people also employed police officers, lawyers, and judges to carry out the bidding of the laws and rhetoric of the time, which included, but was not limited to, not arresting White people who oppressed Black people, police brutality against Black citizens, and the like (e.g., Rothstein, 2017). Indeed, the three prongs of social control (i.e., law, rhetoric, police enforcement) continued the racial segregation which oppressed Black communities. Though the separate but equal doctrine was abolished, social control of Black people took new life in other forms thereafter.

The three prongs of social control (i.e., law, rhetoric, and enforcement) were also prevalent in the 1900s, though the tactics to enforce were different than previous years. The police enforcement tactics in 1900s were more covert than the tactics of the previous century. In the 20th century, racist law, rhetoric, and police enforcement towards racial segregation are seen through two main enforcement tactics disproportionately used on Black youths: school policing and school discipline.

Flint, Michigan instituted school policing in 1953, though this was not a publicized project (Bleakley & Bleakley, 2018). Also, at that time, there were many legal pushes to racially desegregate public schools. The nation's schools were legally desegregated in 1954, with the U.S. Supreme Court decision *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*. The *Brown* decision disbanded the 1896 *Plessy* Supreme Court

“*separate but equal*” decision. Strategic communication filled our country’s popular press and state legislatures to discourage rolling out the overrule of the *Plessy* decision. These rhetorical and legal efforts were so successful that it was not until the 1970s that states like Virginia and South Carolina finally desegregated their public schools. When White people failed to keep the nation’s schools racially segregated, they employed law enforcement in schools in predominantly-Black neighborhoods, like Flint, Michigan. Bell (2004) astutely pointed out failures in the intended outcomes of the *Brown* decision such that it mostly did not improve the education, economic, health, and social outcomes of Black communities, and the history of policing Black communities was a factor why the *Brown* decision was for naught.

Under the late President Reagan’s War on Drugs, punitive actions against Black communities were common. Both school policing and school discipline were influenced by Reagan’s police state. Under the guise of community outreach, policing increased in urban schools which predominantly consisted of students of color. The increases in school police in the 1980s was due to perceptions that students of color were violent in urban schools and communities. (Addington, 2009; Anyon et al., 2014; Skiba & Losen, 2016). The legacy of school policing and discipline continued into the 1990s and is the current apparatus of social control and police enforcement. School policing increased in the mid- to late-1990s because of the emergence of mass school shootings in suburban, predominantly-White communities, like Littleton, Colorado. The popular rhetoric of the police state of the 1990s was commanded by former U.S. President Bill Clinton’s rhetoric of “getting tough on crime.” For example, Clinton passed the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 which was the impetus for the “Community Oriented

Policing Services,” or the “COPS” Act (Eklund et al., 2018). Moreover, the “Omnibus Crime Act of 1968,” signed by the late President Nixon was revised, updated, and bolstered by Clinton in 1998 (Theriot & Orme, 2016), which stymied positive effects of the *Brown* decision of 1954 (Theriot & Orme, 2016). Finally, School policing in the 21st century carried over many laws from previous years. Former President Bush was complicit to the laws previously passed by Clinton, and former President Obama took swift punitive action by dispensing funding for school policing in the 2010s.

In order to sustain white supremacy, the historically white educational enterprise has oppressed Black people for over 200 years by (a) creating laws and policies, (b) communicating divisive and racist rhetoric, and (c) enforcing racially arbitrary laws. In the 1800s, Douglass was not allowed to learn how to read. In the early 1900s, educating Black people was for the economic gain of White people and to instill white Christian morals. In the mid- to late-1900s, to segregate Black and White people in public spaces, the latter used multiple strategies and tactics to keep schools segregated up until the *Brown* decision. In the mid-1990s to the present, mid-way through the school policing and school discipline policies were employed as democratic legislation to “get tough” on crime which has tracked Black students out of, and has segregated them from, White people in educational spaces and U.S. society at large.

The above histories allow us to see the oppressive, anti-Black systems in which to couch contemporary school policing. Policing Black people is an integral part of the histories of the United States. When studying the empirical relationship between school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black youths, researchers can frame the onus of mental illness experienced by Black students on

historically white institutions instead of constructing depressive symptoms as endemic of Black communities. There was a “de jure,” intentional process that white institutions enacted to ensure Black communities were controlled. The adverse outcomes for Black communities were many.

In terms of this dissertation, the statistically nonsignificant findings insufficient evidence for the contemporary outcomes of the social control and school police enforcement. In this dissertation, the relationship between school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms of the Black participants in the FFCWS sample was not found statistically significant for both hypotheses. This could be because we are in a new part of educational history where school policing is more acceptable to Black communities, and White communities could employ police enforcement in educational settings in new, more covert ways that are not easily identified by national empirical studies like the FFCWS. The findings of this dissertation, through a historiographic lens, could mean that the system has changed and adapted in terms of how historically white institutions police Black students.

Applications from the White Fear Literature

This section discusses the “White Fear” literature and how it applies to contemporary school policing. Indeed, it is important to understand the white psyche and the process from which White people think about and justify their acts of anti-Black racism. Further, it is essential to understand how White parents and elected officials justify having police in schools even though it is harmful to the psyche of Black youths. Essentially white fear is the fear that White people have of losing their race-related privileges (Lenhardt, 2004; Neville et al., 2013; Pinterits et al., 2009). White fear

compels White people to be complicit to social control and police enforcement tactics on Black people.

In turn, there are strategies that help White people retain their privileges (Neville et al., 2013; Pinterits et al., 2009), such as controlling the bodies of Black people (Lenhardt, 2004; Smith, et al., 2007, 2016). Spanierman and Heppner (2004) report that White people have fears towards people of color, because they ultimately fear their privileges from being white will be taken away (e.g., Lenhardt, 2004; Neville et al., 2013; Pinterits et al., 2009). Specifically, these rationales include fears regarding scarce resources, jobs, and college admission, physical well-being, economic, political, and sexual/romance (Lenhardt, 2004). Furthermore, White people are fearful of losing material benefits, downward mobility, and loss of power (Pinterits et al., 2009; Neville et al., 2001). Secondly, White people are fearful of being rejected by family and friends if they discuss the benefits of white privilege (Pinterits et al., 2009; Goodman, 2001; Neville et al., 2001; Tatum, 2002). Akin to this negative affect, White people report fear from being associated with ambivalence to engage in behaviors that challenge white privilege (Goodman, 2001; Thompson & Neville, 1999). Finally, White people reported their fear of being rejected by racially minoritized people or fear of rejection by racially minoritized people if they show positive instead of negative affect (Jensen, 2005; Spanierman, Oh, et al., 2008). This means that white fear sparks initiatives to preserve white privilege by controlling people of color. White people strive to control people of color to ensure their (white) privileges are not stripped away (Smith, Allen, et al., 2007). One enforcement tactic that comes from these white fears, is school policing. Policing

and tracking Black children into the STPN allow White people to keep the privilege of a quality education to themselves.

When studying the school policing on Black students, in tandem with the white fear literature, what surfaces is that school policing enforcement tactics are there to alleviate the fears of White people, so these people will not lose their race-related privilege. In this case the white privilege that White people want to keep and secure for themselves is the same privilege they have wanted to secure for the past two hundred years: educational environments without Black people. Therefore, from this standpoint school policing is a part of a system to alleviate white fears and retain spaces that White people think are theirs. The increased number of Black children who were school disciplined, helps make the *Brown* decision negligible; the *Brown* decision sent Black students to white schools, but school discipline and school policing removed Black youths availing White people of an all-white educational space back for themselves.

In terms of the findings of this dissertation, it presented no statistically significant evidence to make a case that school police enforcement is one part in the process of white fear. Without a statistically significant finding on the relationship between school policing and the depressive symptoms experienced, there is scant empirical evidence to make the link between the psychological process of white fear, school police enforcement, and the adverse psychological outcomes of Black students. This means that white fear-borne police enforcement tactics against Black students and communities will persist.

Limitations

This dissertation has a few limitations from a traditional standpoint, such as small sample size and cross-sectional study design. The original study sample was 4,898, but after delimiting to only 15-year-old Black students who school police had stopped, the analytic sample was 1,580. Disparities in sample sizes in these large data sets lead to results based on reference groups, and in turn, deficit narratives about the mental health of Black communities. These methods and narratives would have us believe that mental health ailments, like depressive symptoms, are endemic to Black communities instead of historically white institutions (schools and their actors). Though school policing against Black students is a social epidemic, this study, like many study samples, has a small number of Black students who were stopped by police on their school campus. Secondly, FFCWS currently only has one wave of data of school policing behaviors and depressive symptoms of students, so this dissertation study was merely cross-sectional, and therefore, no causal relationships could be tested. Thirdly, because the FFCWS data (used in this dissertation study) the methods and findings of this study rest on non-causal methods and results, which does not advance the literature in terms of longitudinal trends and causation. Though this study advances the research substantively, it leaves more to be wanted in terms of novel or more sophisticated methods. Recent research on the safety effects of school policing which has used a more sophisticated data analysis methodology to show causation after accounting for selection effects (Gottfredson et al., 2020). More statistically advanced and otherwise more nuanced studies have confirmed this and find increasing school police presence does not enhance school safety compared to school without such increases. Schools with increased school police presence have increased

school violence and crime per capita (Gottfredson et al., 2020; Na & Gottfredson, 2013). Thus, future studies on the relationship between school policing and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students should control for confounding and causation. In order to test causation, scholars should seek to include both educational and health variables in multiple waves of data. Finally, the majority of the study sample was from urban communities, and therefore, the findings of this dissertation are only generalizable to urban communities. The depressive outcomes of Black students in rural areas does not apply to this study.

Finally, from a critical standpoint, this dissertation has limitations about the deficit-based portrayal of Black communities. First, the FFCWS sought to understand the adverse effects of child and family health (and other trajectories) from unmarried, or “fragile,” couples, thus the name of the “Fragile Families” study. To assume that unwed partners are fragile is deficit-based thinking and is entrenched in ideologies perpetuated by empirical studies like the FFCWS. Rather, it should be stated that the social structures are fragile and ill-equipped in which these families navigate their societies. Indeed, empirical studies, like FFCWS, merely confirm the dominant discourse and ideologies of the time when studies are conducted. Similarly, FFCWS investigators gained information mainly from communities of color. The largest sample in the FFCWS is Black families. Again, to assume that fragile families primarily exist in communities of color is deeply problematic and perpetuates deficit-based thinking about Black communities and other communities of color. Together, the FFCWS has created and continues to perpetuate a dominant discourse and narrative that Black families and other families of color are fragile and need the historically white institutions to uplift and alleviate Black families is

problematic. In sum, this dissertation study was able to observe school policing behaviors, but this nuance could have been more nuanced with person-centered approaches, and these approaches could contribute to anti-deficit work that helps Black communities.

Strengths

Though there are limitations to this dissertation, there are strengths as well. This dissertation study is novel, because it studied the specific relationship between school policing behaviors and the depressive symptoms experienced by 15-year-old Black students. This avant garde research sets the stage for future, more robust research studies, and especially sets the stage and calls for changing the narrative about school policing on Black students, and the mental health effects of school policing on Black students. This dissertation used data from the FFCWS, which is mostly comprised of 15-year-old Black participants. This proportion of Black people in secondary data set that is a population-based, nationally representative study, is unfortunately unusual and should be lauded. Because of that unique Study strength, I was able to restrict the data to only account for and study the Black youths in the Year 15 wave. Choosing to restrict the secondary data in this way is one way I was able to center the educational and health experiences of Black students in my dissertation study. The methodological choice to use an all-Black sample was informed by Black educational anthropology and Black psychological health. Both of these academic fields have reaped positive results in portraying the education and health of Black communities. For example, Ladson-Billings (1997/2009), a Black educational anthropologist, who uses black feminism in her seminal work, empirically observed educational processes employing all-Black or mostly-Black samples of

respondents, which allowed her to create a culturally responsive pedagogy, that both White and Black teachers can use, to increase the academic achievement of Black students by highlighting the strengths that Black students bring to their classrooms and critiquing historically white social structures that oppress Black communities. Also, the black health psychology methods find that some psychological experiences are unique to Black people, and it is better to study and treat these experiences by employing all-Black research samples (Whitfield et al., 2008). Additionally, racial disparities studies, and studies with similar logic and methods, have seldom produced positive changes for Black communities. This is primarily the reason why Jackson's all-Black 1977 health study has highlighted and has produced more benefit to the health of Black communities than any other NIH study of our generation.

Another strength of this dissertation study is that the FFCWS data included both education (i.e., school policing) and health (i.e., depressive symptoms) which is unusual, and therefore, compared to other large population-based studies is very novel. Because these were available, I could study the relationship between school policing and the depressive symptoms experienced by Black youth—research that is virtually lacking in the literature. Informing this quantitative dissertation with Black educational anthropology and Black psychology allowed this study to generalize the findings to similar Black youths from an anti-deficit perspective. In sum, the strengths of this dissertation are that the data used (from FFCWS) included a large Black sample of youth which included information about their education and mental health, and this dissertation was able to apply Black educational anthropology and Black psychology perspectives to this all-Black sample of youths.

Conclusion

Spring Valley High School Conclusion

In Shakara's story stated in the introduction, I studied the physical and nonphysical policing behaviors from a national sample of Black students. This dissertation did not find sufficient evidence to support the hypotheses of physical or nonphysical school policing affecting the depressive symptoms of Black high school students in urban schools. However, this dissertation engaged in a needed conversation about the mental health effects of school policing on Black students like Shakara, to inform future discussions on school policing its effects on Black students.

Additionally, the findings of my dissertation show that in order to understand and research the social epidemic of school policing on Black students, empirical interviews, humanistic inquiry, the arts, protests, race-centered spaces shed a flood light on how quantitative empirical studies like this dissertation can be in capturing the depressive symptoms experienced by Black students. Surely, better, more nuanced empirical methods that center blackness need to be employed so the small or large adverse experiences of Black students in schools are not erased. Because if their experiences are erased it perpetuates deficit-based, dominant narratives towards a lack of educational or health policies to care for Black students.

The nonprofit organization, *EveryBlackGirl*, is a pro-Black, race-centered space for Black girls to be agents unto themselves, to receive social support, discuss shared experiences, vent, normalize realities, express creativity, learn skills to create one's own future, and enact prosocial behaviors. Spaces like these have been psychologically helpful to minoritized students. Once I can study and understand the relationship between

educational spaces that perpetuate anti-Black racism and the mental and cognitive health conditions experienced by Black students, I wish to focus on examining the psychological health benefits of spaces like *EveryBlackGirl*. There must also be research about how to empower Black youths; not just research on what is averse to the health of Black students.

General Conclusion

To conclude, this dissertation reviewed the literature on the outcomes of school policing. Major themes found in the school policing literature review included (a) the roles, logistics, and operations of school policing related to school officials, (b) the negative impacts of school safety that school police have, and (c) the central role school police play in placing Black students into the STPN. Though it is important to know the roles of school police, how they interact with educators, the safety effects of school police presence, and the role school police play in placing Black students onto the STPN, it is just as important to understand the mental health implications—specifically, implications for depressive symptoms—of the of school policing behaviors on Black students. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation was to explain the potential relationship between school policing behaviors and depressive symptoms experienced by Black students using data from the FFCWS. All the results of this dissertation were statistically nonsignificant, and therefore, this dissertation study found no evidence and support either its hypotheses, RBF theory, or minority stress theory. Neither physical nor nonphysical school policing behaviors were statistically significantly associated to increases in the depressive symptoms experienced by 15-year-old Black students. Educational and health researchers and practitioners should continue this research by

creating person-centered longitudinal data sets and studies to advocate for Black students. In order to understand the motivations of school policing, I gave historical perspectives and empirical perspectives in which to couch discussions of school policing of Black students—to take the onus of depressive symptoms experienced by Black communities and putting the onus on historically white institutions.

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