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Shaping Young Citizens: High School Social Studies Teachers' Perceptions of Patriotism in
History Education

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This research seeks to complement theoretical discussion in the field of education on the influence of patriotism in history education. Throughout history, countries have used education to impress upon young citizens loyalty and to promote national values. History education, in particular, has been curated to give these values a creation story. A patriotic national narrative is drawn in which glorified heroes and grand feats solidify the nation's legitimacy, and inspire its citizens' unwavering support. While this phenomenon is heavily discussed in educational theory, few qualitative studies have supported it with personal accounts from within schools. For this study, data was collected through semi-structured interviews with high school social studies teachers in North Carolina, to gain insight on their experiences with patriotism in education and the promotion of it in history curriculum. The findings show that patriotism is still an underlying virtue that dictates the historical narrative taught to students. However, it is seen as largely a systemic effort, not a pursuit of teachers. The teachers ultimately pointed to a gap between what is taught in high school history classrooms and current historical research in academia. As such, this study concludes that much of the patriotic undertones in high school history curriculum would be eliminated with the introduction of current academic historiography. Furthermore, the focus of high school history should be on skill development through source analysis, ultimately preparing students to be productive participants in civic life. And in turn, a decreased reliance on teacher's interpretations and the dramatics of a historical narrative. Finally, the study argues for a more multicultural and global approach to history education for the promotion of cosmopolitan values and global agency. In a time of heightened nationalism around the world, this research helps to locate the role of education and historical interpretation in shaping young citizens.

Keywords: education, history education, patriotic history, patriotism, mythologized history, nationalism, social studies

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1 INTRODUCTION

This research focuses on U.S. social studies teachers' perceptions of patriotism in education, specifically in high school history courses. My research aims to gain insight from teachers on how they have experienced patriotism in school and how they perceive patriotism to be influencing history education as a whole.

With the global political climate seeing a rise of the conservative right and nationalistic tendencies, I argue that there is a growing need for teachers to be aware of how their classes influence student's identity politically and socially. Historically schooling, in particular history education, has been used for nation building, promoting civic values and working to create a shared cultural identity. This was a clear intention of education in the U.S. earlier in its history, but as assimilation techniques and propaganda in education has become more widely recognized and criticized, education has come to be framed as neutral. However, in the social studies classrooms in particular, including courses in history, government, economics, and social sciences, there is a high risk of ideologies and values infiltrating curriculum, both intentionally and unintentionally. Like with many things, the schooling years are extremely formative in shaping young peoples' ideas of what it means to be a citizen and the values and virtues associated with it. Social studies and history courses play a major role in this. It is in these courses that students acquire the bulk of their knowledge about government and economic systems, social issues, cultural beliefs and practices around the globe, and how all of these things have changed over time. The way in which these sensitive topics are taught can have a lasting impact on students and how they view the world.

It has been argued by scholars that often in the United States, a very heroic, and mythicized version of history is taught- one that promotes patriotism and even ethnocentrism. With concepts such as 'manifest destiny' and 'American exceptionalism' being used in history courses to justify the U.S.'s decisions throughout its history, it is not surprising that students might grow up with nationalistic ideals and romantic notions of the country's founding, unreflective of the country's mistakes and wrong doings. Though that is primarily a personal view inspired by the works of Howard Zinn and James Loewen, not reflective of any scientific causation. Furthermore, emphasis on global citizenship education has been made by many international organizations, and has increased in popularity in many countries around the world. Part of the

motivation behind this research was to see if global mindedness was something teachers in the U.S. were emphasizing in their classrooms at all. Thus, amid a globalizing world, in a polarized country that has seen a resurgence of nationalist rhetoric, this research aims to gain teacher's perspectives.

This study was designed to better understand social studies teachers' perceptions of what, if any, values are being promoted in history education. More specifically, if and how patriotism manifests in history education and the teachers' experiences with it. And further, how the teachers viewed it in connection with the current political landscape in the U.S. The participants were asked a range of interview questions from how they view their role in shaping students as young citizens, their personal views on patriotism, to whether or not they promote global citizenship in their courses. The teachers told about their own approach to history education and their position on patriotism in education, as well as their perceptions on how other teachers interact with patriotism in history education. Ultimately, this research came to focus on different factors that influence what approach is taken in a history course, how and why those approaches might manifest, what values those approaches promote, and the teachers' opinions on their impact.

1.1 Position of Researcher

Having gone through teacher training as a secondary social studies teacher, and heavily influenced by Howard Zinn and James Loewen, I have an interest in how perspectives shape historical narratives, and how those interpretations, and their biases, then shape the understanding of history. In my professional life I have been shocked by how much teachers' understandings of history differ. I have spoken to teachers that paint historical figures and events in a completely different light, such as the dropping of the atomic bomb being a good decision and necessary evil, westward expansion in the U.S. as the taming of the 'wild' west, or that the U.S. Civil War began over states' rights, not slavery. This was shocking, as such conclusions are heavily skewed, and do not align with recent academic works on these topics. These differences in historical interpretation and understanding were not small, and yet these variations were being taught to students. These situations have intrigued me and inspired my interest in the variations of historical narratives taught in high school.

It is my view that social studies courses, involve a lot of sensitive material that is often very polarizing. The content taught in social studies has the ability to shape how students see the

world, their country, and their own role within them. This should require not only a great deal of self-awareness from teachers of their own assumptions and backgrounds, but a clear approach in the classroom to allow for a safe and inclusive learning environment. Often, however, I think cultural norms and teachers' biases infiltrate classroom curriculum and promote not only democratic ideals, but patriotism as a virtue. Having done my masters studies in Finland, not the U.S., I was struck by the emphasis put on global citizenship, including equity and multicultural education. These were themes rarely addressed in my teacher training in the U.S.. Returning home to conduct this research, I was eager to see if these global values were promoted in schools in the U.S. now, and how that might interact with the history narrative that is taught. Aware that I have clear assumptions on this topic, I was careful throughout the research to frame my research questions carefully, limit my responses during the interviews, and most importantly, to reflect only on what the participants said, putting my own opinions aside. Throughout the process, however, I found that the participants had such strong, interesting perspectives that separating my own opinions was much easier than expected.

1.2 Link to UN Sustainable Development Goals

The promotion of global citizenship in education was emphasized by the United Nations in goal 4.7 of their global development goals, along with the appreciation of cultural diversity. The goal reads:

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development (United Nations, 2015)

My research will seek teachers' insight on how patriotism and national values seen in history education during a surge in globalization and multiculturalism. More specifically, it will indicate if the patriotism they have experienced in education is inclusive and complementary to global citizenship and diversity, or in contrast to.

1.3 Research Aims

Historically schooling and history education has been used in the promotion of patriotism. This research aims to gain teachers' perspectives on this phenomenon based on their own experiences. Much of the existing research on the topic is theoretical in nature (Insert Sources), or focuses on dissecting and demythicizing patriotic historical narratives (Insert Sources). The perspectives of the teachers in this study will compliment this discourse by providing empirical conceptualizations to further elucidate the phenomenon.

1. How have the teachers experienced patriotism in education?
2. How do the teachers perceive the promotion of patriotism in history education?
3. How do the teachers perceive their role in the promotion of patriotism in history education?
4. How do the teachers view the relationship between patriotism and multiculturalism in history education?

1.4 Main Concepts

The concepts of patriotic history and mythologized history are at the core of this research. They are elaborated on in the theoretical background of the study (Section 3.2), and were also referred to in the interviews by way of quotes. Alongside talking points and questions, the teachers were provided quotes by key scholars on these concepts to elicit discussion on how they have experienced patriotism in education. The following are brief descriptions of the concepts as they pertain to this research:

Patriotic History: a sanitized rendition of history that aims to shed a positive light on a country by emphasizing successes and downplaying mistakes; created to legitimize a country and unite its people in pride, or love for it.

Mythologized History: a romanticized interpretation of history, that focuses on national heroes and glorious feats.

1.5 Data and Epistemological Premise

Constructivist in approach, this research is built on the premise that reality or truth is relative and varies between individuals and groups. These realities should then be interpreted to illuminate deeper understandings of phenomena. Pertaining to this research on the promotion of patriotism in education, it is assumed that teachers have different realities and conceptions of the phenomenon. As they are depicted as playing a significant role in the promotion of patriotism in philosophical research, their perception, or reality, should provide unique insight.

This insight makes up the empirical data for this study, collected in separate semi-structured interviews with five high school social studies teachers. The choice to interview high school teachers was made on the understanding that 9-12th grade history and civic education is the most thorough and emphasized in K-12 U.S. public education. It is also the latest interaction teachers have with students in public school before they turn 18 and are able to fully exercise their rights as citizens. Thus, high school social studies teachers should have the most comprehensive experiences with influencing students as young citizens. These interviews are then cross analyzed with the existing literary discourse on patriotism in schooling, combining theoretical and empirical, to deduce a more well-rounded conception of the phenomenon.

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Patriotism in Education

The debate over patriotism in education, a conversation once popularized in the early 1900s by John Dewey and others, has undergone a revival in recent decades with the continued exploration of American identity, within a multicultural United States (Dewey, DAE; Graham, 2005; Hansen, 2003; McKenna, 2007). With the rise of neoliberal values and a resurgence of nationalistic ideals and rhetoric, scholars and educators are searching for a means to create balance in American society and unite citizens in a diverse, pluralistic climate (Archard, 1999, p 157; Brighouse, 2003, p 158, 173). Scholars recognize that this conversation arose in response to increasing pluralism and multiculturalism in liberal democracies around the world, and a growing desire to establish a national identity for cohesiveness (Archard, 1999; Brighouse, 2003; p 158, 173; Callan, 2002; Hansen, 2003). Brighouse (2003, p 158) explains that often this idea of a united identity is used to justify employing education to create ties and loyalty to the nation-state, or as Hansen (2003) would insist, loyalty to the democratic process and ideals. Congruently, education has been at the core of the discussion throughout its evolution, as schooling has played an important role in instilling American values, traditions, and democratic principles since the country's commencement (Graham, 2005; McKenna, 2007). Thus, the argument for teaching patriotism in the classroom has continued to be revisited as a solution to political and social issues throughout the literature on American education and identity. However, the morality of promoting national pride and values in education must be called into question. Does the teaching of patriotism in school, have a place in a multicultural society? This section aims to address this moral dilemma and discuss an alternative to the traditional patriotic ideals we commonly understand.

Throughout its history, public education in the United States has been used as a tool by the state, not only to stimulate development, but to create unity through the promotion of civic beliefs and "Americanization," which has only intensified with the growing diversity from immigration and the rise of the U.S. as a world power (Galston, 2002; Graham, 2009). During the colonization of the U.S., early Puritans acknowledged that the new population lacked a shared history and culture and sought to overcome these vulnerabilities by instilling a sense of pride to ensure the survival of their communities. (McKenna, 2007, p 1). Though, as the U.S. becomes increasingly more multicultural, older concepts of American identity and civic unity,

grown out of an Anglo-Saxon dominated history, will no longer be sufficient in uniting a diverse population of citizens (Callan, 2002, p 467) However, this need for a more evolved, multicultural narrative for American citizens to unite behind is met by resistance from many Americans that feel threatened by the growing diversity, and want to hold on to the traditional concepts of civic identity (Callan, 2002, p 467). This backlash makes the discussion of patriotism in education sensitive, particularly regarding changes in the teaching of national history and civic education (Brighouse, 2003; Callan, 2002).

As many scholars have pointed out, the major moral dilemma is the impact patriotic teaching has on minority students (Archard, 1999; Callan, 2002; Graham, 2009; Kodelja, 2011). If not done with caution, the promotion of patriotism can border on indoctrination, calling into question the morality of it in schooling, especially in a multicultural environment (Archard, 1999; Kodelja, 2011). In the early 1900s, patriotism was a value expected to be taught in school (Graham, 2009, p 23). However, it was understood that “native-born, white families” would instill patriotic values at home, and that its inclusion in formal education was intended for immigrants, as immigrant children “need[ed] Americanization in school” much more than native-born children (Graham, 2009, p 23). However, as Callan (2002, p 465) points out, this approach is no longer effective, as the increasingly diverse citizenry is less likely to be coerced into assimilating than they were in the past. Furthermore, perhaps the frailty in the discussion is the assumption that there is a “single national identity” by which students can be united (Archard, 1999, p 157). Thus, just as patriotic education is suggested as a response to pluralism, it may also be dismantled by the very pluralism it seeks to combat (Archard, 1999, p 157).

The question then is if patriotism, as a virtue taught in school, still has a place in a multicultural America (Callan, 2002, p 468). Callan (2002, p 468) warns that, while national identity is a complex and sensitive topic, we cannot ignore the question of stability. If we agree on a multicultural America, we then need multicultural education to create the foundation for the unity and stability we seek (Callan, 2002, p 468). Cosmopolitans answer this dilemma with a broadened more inclusive patriotism, cosmopolitan patriotism (Appiah, 1998; Nussbaum, 1994). Embracing of plurality, cosmopolitan patriotism is not tied to a single identity or nation, but humanity as a whole (Appiah, 1998; Nussbaum, 1994), thus poised as the appropriate sentiment in a globalizing, multicultural world.

2.1.1 Cosmopolitan Patriotism: A Response to Multiculturalism

Nussbaum challenges the conversation on patriotism by advocating for an even broader allegiance and pride, that goes beyond national borders, to identify as global citizens (Nussbaum, 1994). Thus, many scholars, such as Appiah (1998) and Callan (2002), have joined with Nussbaum in a consensus that while the more archaic patriotism may not have a place in education, a more evolved and inclusive, global patriotism, should be considered. This cosmopolitan patriotism, as it is termed, values cultural ties to one's origin, but equally appreciates migration and the multicultural communities that develop as a result (Appiah, 1998; Brighouse, 2003; Hansen, 2003; Nussbaum, 1994). Cosmopolitans insist that we not discard our differences, but celebrate them because that is what makes human interaction rewarding (Appiah, 1998, p 638). The Stoics of ancient Greece, seen as early cosmopolitans, believed that unity would not be *despite* differences in ethnic or religious backgrounds, but that differences should be embraced with dialogue and respect (Nussbaum, 1994).

In a conversation dominated by liberalists, there is an assumption that liberal values would coincide and be upheld by cosmopolitan patriotism (Appiah, 1998; Brighouse, 2003; Nussbaum, 1994). Cosmopolitanism is described as more of a sentiment, whereas liberalism is a political ideology, allowing the pair to coexist in theory. However, the 'extreme patriotism' that hedges on nationalism (Kodelja, 2011, p. 130), is a sentiment that cannot wholly coexist with liberalism (Appiah, 1998, p 619). Liberalists would challenge extreme patriot's "my country, right or wrong" mindset, as liberals are only loyal to a country that maintains certain liberal values, such as democracy (Appiah, 1998, p 619). While cosmopolitan patriots value democracy and liberal values, their focus is not solely confined to the state which often clashes with the liberal emphasis on national borders and a focus on national morality within said borders (Appiah, 1998, p 620; Nussbaum, 1994). While the clash is more evident in practice than in theory, cosmopolitans argue that if human rights are not supported on a global level, can a state really claim to support human rights on a national level – especially among a diverse, immigrant populated, citizenry (Appiah, 1998, p 620; Nussbaum, 1994).

Thus, in response to the growing multiculturalism, a liberal cosmopolitan would not seek to homogenize at the global or local level under a promoted identity, but to instead respect a variety of cultures and social practices at all levels, with an insistence that basic human rights are protected, and the autonomy of all individuals is respected (Appiah, 1998, p 621-622).

Again, this is not a new idea. Stoics, our cosmopolitan ancestors, discussed the idea of being a world citizen and treating all the world's peoples as neighbors, not in disregard for local and national ties, but in acknowledgment of the bigger picture (Nussbaum, 1994). They believed that an allegiance to the world community, and the promotion of world justice, would make for more productive, unified citizenry at the national and local level (Nussbaum, 1994). Therefore, it is suggested that the inclusion of cosmopolitan patriotism in education is a morally sound alternative to traditional patriotism, that could instill a sense of unity while still being inclusive and embracing of multiculturalism.

At the heart of education for cosmopolitan citizenship, is the broadening of students' understanding of their own context, global contexts, and the relationship between the two (Osler and Starkey, 2005). This requires a certain amount of vulnerability from students and teachers, analyzing their own assumptions and position in the world, and how it impacts their relationship with others. The self-reflexivity involved in this can be a sensitive process for people, causing many teachers to avoid these difficult discussions all together. Education for cosmopolitanism, encompassing global and multicultural education, promotes "a vision of a world community where national, ethnic and cultural boundaries are blurred or porous and where hybridity is increasingly the norm" (Osler and Starkey, 2005). Cosmopolitan citizenship takes global mindedness and generates agency, responsibility, and solidarity. "Cosmopolitan citizenship is a way of thinking, acting, and feeling as a citizen" both "locally, nationally, and globally" (Osler and Starkey, 2005, p. 24). The teaching of cosmopolitan citizenship helps learners develop the skills and mindset to embrace diversity, and recognize our shared humanity, despite our differences (Osler and Starkey, 2005). So while this *global* approach to education might be included in *national* curriculums, it can still help to break down the binaries that restrict global cooperation and understanding

2.1.2 The Continued Question of Ethics

Still however, the conversation is pushed further. Amy Gutmann (2002) addresses the ethical question of whether education in a democratic society should promote cosmopolitanism or patriotism at all. Ultimately she argues, both are compatible with democratic education, but neither is more correct. Students instead should be able to develop their own social attachments freely, whether that be to the nation's citizens or humanity as a whole. She explains that someone can feel more closely attached to those that share a certain cultural and national

boundaries while still treating all people with respect. Thus, education should not promote or oppose either cosmopolitanism or patriotism but allow for self-identification by the students, or no identification at all. The role of education is instead to help students understand the complexity of these sentiments, and that commitment to democratic ideals or morality can take a variety of equally legitimate forms (Gutmann, 2002). This idea of self-identification and space for choice is extremely relevant in a time when society is undergoing a reevaluation of identity, whether concerning sex, ethnicity, race or national allegiance. Thus, the role of education must be continually readdressed and students' freedoms consistently at the forefront of priorities in school. This, in actuality, might build the communal respect and investment that patriotism is intended to create.

2.2 Patriotism in History Education

He who controls the past controls the future.
He who controls the present controls the past.
— George Orwell, *1984*

Patriotism, as a virtue promoted in education, is perhaps most pronounced in history education. Societies throughout history have debated over what histories to pass down to their youth, very often with political agendas and the aim of nation building influencing the decision (Nash, 2000). Scholars assert that often a patriotic or mythologized national history is taught with the purpose of invoking patriotism, loyalty, and service to the nation (Archard, 1999; Ben-Porath, 2007, p 22; Berger, 2009; Brighouse, 2003; Callan, 2000, p 470; Galston, 2002; Nash, 2000, p 26; Phillips, 1998; Phillips, 1999). A patriotic history is one that aims to shed a positive light on a country, by emphasizing successes and downplaying mistakes, to instill a sense of pride or love for the nation (Archard, 1999; Brighouse, 2003; Callan, 2000, p 470; Galston, 2002). This is often done by mythologizing the historical narrative, creating a romanticized interpretation of history, that focuses on national heroes and glorious feats (Archard, 1999; Brighouse, 2003; Callan, 2000, p 470; Galston, 2002).

Patriotic history is certainly not confined to the U.S.; nations around the world have enlisted education for the maintenance of national myth and unity (Berger, 2009; Phillips, 1998; Phillips, 1999). “Nations use history to build a sense of national identity, pitting the demands for stories that build solidarity against open-ended scholarly inquiry that can trample on cherished illusions” (Wilson, 1995, p 84). And it is in this way that “democracy and history always live

in a kind of tension with each other (Wilson, 1995, p 84).” Throughout the past century, that tension has risen. Patriotic history has been met by waves of criticism from academics and educational stakeholders of all backgrounds, frustrated with the manipulation of knowledge and the promotion of ideology in school (Nash, 2000; Loewen, 1995). Most recently in 2015 due to the College Board Curriculum revamping their history curriculum (Krehbiel, 2015; Paulson, 2014; Superville, 2014; Thrasher, 2015; Oklahoma, 2015). But each step toward progressing this historical narrative has been met by equal resistance and frustration from proponents of a proud national history (Nash, 2000). The dilemma, as Wilson (1995, p 84) frames it is “which human needs should history serve, the yearning for a self-affirming past, even if distorted, or the liberation, however painful, that comes from grappling with a more complex, accurate account.” It is a dilemma that continues to exist, debated in academia and in the field. In a time of heightened polarization and attention to cultural identity, the debate takes on new significance, tied to national identity. Will the U.S. embrace its ever-increasing diversity with a re-inspired, multicultural national history that broadens the national identity? Or hold tight to the prevailing and traditional, Anglo-Saxon fixated history of White America?

2.2.1 A New Understanding of History

In the early 20th century there was a shift in the way history was seen (Nash, 2000, p 25- 26). Instead of an objective recounting of the past, history became seen as something that is built, the findings undetachable from the builder’s own background and biases (Nash, 2000, p 25- 26). This variation and constant reinterpretation of history made nationalists uncomfortable, as it does today. Patriots often favor a more celebratory national history, whereas liberals are more inclined to critical reflection (Appiah, 1997, p 619). Presenting history as having multiple perspectives and interpretations makes it more difficult to propagate a strong national narrative (Nash, 2000, p 25- 26). Often times it is decided that students can learn the complexities of history when they are older, and that a simplified, easier to digest, history will still transmit the important information and national heritage (Nash, 2000, p 25). However, the

more simplified histories tend to leave out the less kosher parts of a nation's past, resulting in false representation or myth.

2.2.2 Saving a Legacy

The argument is that “myth inspires in a way that plain facts about predatory warfare, self-serving elites and downtrodden or resistant masses cannot possibly equal” (Callan, 2002, p 470). A transparent history, that illuminates the controversial decisions and actions of a country, could tarnish its reputation, and in turn, jeopardize stability—a risk proponents of patriotic history are not willing to take. In the aftermath of defeat or atrocities, measures were often taken in an effort to protect the legacy of a people or the nation as a whole. After the U.S. civil war significant action was taken by groups such as the daughter of the American Revolution and the daughters of the Confederacy to protect the legacy of The South after the Civil War. Their efforts were well orchestrated and have had a lasting impact on how the war was remembered, particularly on the cause of the war. One of the focuses of their campaign was for the cause of the war to be remembered as states’ rights and not slavery, to protect the moral integrity of The South after they lost (Faust, 1989; Goldfield, 2013; Morgan; 2005). This manipulation of history reflects a decision on the purpose of history. In this way, history is used as a legend or origin story, meant to inspire and unify a population in pride, not for the development of analytical skills, critical thought, or debate.

2.2.3 Forced Patriotism Can Lead to Less Engagement

One of the arguments for the promotion of patriotism in education is that it is necessary for inspiring civic participation in new generations (Galston, 2002, p 97; Gutmann, 2002). However, patriotism, though attached to emotions like pride, and a sense of connection and belonging, often does not always lead to the civic actions and responsibilities it calls for (Appiah, 1997, p 622). Educational scholars have largely agreed that civic participation and allegiance should come from democratic practices in the history classroom such as debate, analysis, and the fostering of critical thinking, not a sentimental national narrative that’s singular in perspective (Archard, 1999; Ben-Porath, 2007, p 22; Gutmann, 2002; Nash, 2000, p 26). Scholars warn that a patriotic history could actually have the opposite effect and instead of inspiring patriotism, create cynical adults frustrated that their history education was sanitized,

myopic, and jingoistic (Callan, 2002; Nash, 2000, p 15; Loewen, 1995). This could result in less civic engagement and more distrust for the government and public education system.

2.2.4 Patriotism without Consent

While both sides largely agree that patriotism cannot be forced on students, just as the government cannot require students to participate in the pledge of allegiance (Galston, 2002, p 94), this does not address the subtleties of the dynamic. Most high school students' content knowledge in history is not advanced enough to detect a patriotic interpretation of history. Tactics used in these histories can range from diction, strategic emphasis of topics, complete omission of topics, to distorted truths (Brighouse, 2003; Callan, 2002). Textbooks often use diction to convey patriotic ideals in history, such as addressing readers as 'we' and 'our' (Brighouse, 2003, p 158). While subtle, it creates a sense of unity and belonging, or a shared fate (Ben-Porath, 2007, p 22), that could go unnoticed by students. In a democracy, the power is to come from the people, their consent. If the state curates students learning of history and politics for a specified outcome, they are denying citizens the ability to provide knowledgeable consent, weakening their own legitimacy as a democracy (Ben-Porath, 2007, p 19; Brighouse, 2003, p 166).

2.2.5 Patriotic History Stifles Critical Thinking

Critics of patriotic history, argue that it weakens the intellectual process of studying history, eliminating critical thinking, and the depth and complexity of analysis (Brighouse, 2003, p.159). Sentimental history, as Ben-Porath (2007), refers to it, does not allow for critical, independent thinking in history education. Critical thinking is poised as one of the key aims in the study of history and politics (Brighouse, 2003, p159). Thus, it is argued patriotism, an emotional sentiment, not appropriate in these classrooms, if in any classroom at all (Brighouse, 2003, p159). Brighouse (2003) suggests using these 'moralized histories' that "promote a flowery vision of America's past" as teaching tools. He contends that the best way to teach unbiased history is to expose students to multiple textbooks, as well as a variety of primary and secondary sources, to teach students to think critically and recognize multiple perspectives and the impact of perspective has on how history is told (Brighouse, 2003, p.173,174).

2.3 An Argument for Multicultural History

2.3.1 Patriotic History vs. Multicultural History

By the 1980's 'multiculturalism' had taken on new meaning. People began to let go of the romanticized notion of the U.S. as a melting pot, enriched by its diversity, and began to focus on disparities, inequality, and otherness. American society was presented as divided, and in 1994, this set the stage for a two year long controversy in the U.S. over creating new history standards (Nash, 2000, p 99). Nash (2000) described it as a culture war in which educational progress was met with nationalistic fears. There were signs that "the United States was entering a new period of maturity in history education" that would "offer students an inclusive history of the country based on copious new scholarship, recognize that globe-encompassing history serves the nation's international interests and responsibilities, and ensure that children develop the analytic skills and level-headed perspectives that the contemporary world demands (Nash, 2000, p 98)." However, conservatives also harnessed this opportunity for change in history education and promoted a much more narrowed jingoistic narrative. More importantly, the narrative they proposed was in exact opposition of multiculturalism, which had been rising in popularity in educational, social, and political discourse. The history education debate took a new shape then, multicultural history vs patriotic history (Nash, 2000, p 99).

2.3.2 Multiculturalism Threatens to Change American Identity

Often Americans that feel threatened by the growing multiculturalism cling to the traditional concepts of civic identity and reject the notion that a more evolved, multicultural narrative is needed (Callan, 2002, p 467). As Williams (1999, para. 3) points out, "They have failed to acknowledge what Benedict Anderson has so persuasively made clear which is that as the world changes so do the ways all nations imagine themselves, their achievements, and their place in the international order." It is as if traditionalists want to embolden the traditional narrative of U.S. history, one that they ascribe to and find belonging in, to prevent a new national identity from taking shape. If the U.S. instead broadens its conception of 'what is American' in accordance with more modern values, a new historical interpretation could welcome a new national identity. And so, if there is to be a newly inspired multicultural history, and in turn a

more inclusive national identity created, there is a great risk that those that have traditionally held power would no longer.

2.3.3 A Multicultural America Requires a New Approach to History

As America becomes increasingly more multicultural, older concepts of America and civic unity, grown out of an Anglo-Saxon dominated history, will no longer be sufficient in uniting a diverse population of citizens (Callan, 2002, p 467) Creating a singular historical perspective, to garner support and pride for the state, further undermines pluralism, intellectually (Ben- Porath, 2007) and culturally. Often the prevailing historical narrative taught in the U.S. is one that is hallowed and jingoistic, successful largely due to the many narratives it leaves out. This is exasperated in the ideas of ‘American exceptionalism’ and ‘manifest destiny’ (Williams, 1999), concepts that are often taught to students with very little criticality, or without exposing them as undertones that have persisted throughout U.S. history. Williams (1999) compares the U.S. to South Africa, asserting that they both promote national histories that legitimize and glorify white hegemony, calling it “a story of how white supremacy triumphed if only momentarily.” Also similar, is the ability and need for the national narratives to change. History has shown in both countries that progress can triumph, and new conceptions of belonging can be made. As Williams (1999, para. 2) points out, the success of the Civil Rights Movement, although not outright, demands “a reordering of national consciousness in the U.S.” National identity must constantly be reconciled with progress, and as society is continuously evolving the national narrative must evolve as well.

2.3.4 A Multicultural Approach to History

Callan (2000, p 468) warns that while we should dismiss patriotic narratives, we cannot ignore the question of stability, that if we agree on a multicultural American, we then need multicultural education to create the foundation for the unity and stability we seek. With issues surrounding race and ethnicity still prevailing and significant in the U.S., scholars argue that multicultural education is essential for creating equanimity (Archard, 1999; Brighthouse, 2003; Callan, 2002; Williams, 1999). Doing so in the history classroom would require a “demythologized” national history in which the purpose is not to inspire but to inform future decisions (Callan, 2002, p 468). A new multicultural history would be taught, in which past heroes would be humanized, the truth behind epic victories as well as atrocities would be transparent,

and the voices of the many minority groups that helped to build the nation would be heard (Callan, 2002). Williams (1999) asserts that America does not need heroes or legends, but an approach to history that teaches “truth and reconciliation.” Instead of protecting students from the darker points of history, they should be taught to face the truth and develop a productive way to process it. A history that shows the highs and lows of the U.S. demonstrates that even when mistakes are made, progress is possible. This directly relates to addressing and reconciling race relations in the U.S. which is pertinent in a multicultural society, and a pillar of multicultural education (Archard, 1999; Brighouse, 2003; Callan, 2002; Williams, 1999). Further, more global perspectives would be included to fight the constant battle with ethnocentrism in U.S. history education (Callan, 2002, Gutmann, 2002; Nussbaum, 1994; Osler and Starkey, 2005). This connects multicultural history with the cosmopolitan approach to education. Americans lack of knowledge regarding the rest of the world “undercut[s] the very case for multicultural respect within a nation by failing to make a broader world respect central to education” (Nussbaum, 1994, p 6). Cosmopolitans argue that to teach a true multicultural approach, the understanding and acceptance it seeks to create among diverse peoples should extend beyond borders (Appiah, 1998; Brighouse, 2003; Nussbaum, 1994). Echoing this sentiment, Gutmann argues, “For the sake of achieving greater justice in the world as in our own society, we need to understand people not merely as abstractions but in their particularity, with their own lives to lead and their own ideas of what constitutes a good life to lead” (Gutmann, 2002, p 44). This is also key to locating one’s own country and culture, how it is and has been influenced by others and how it, in turn, influences others. Thus, a multicultural approach to history includes a diversity of perspectives from various backgrounds, domestically and abroad, to create a more inclusive narrative that uncovers the realities of a global citizenry.

2.3.5 A Multicultural Patriotism

It is argued that an honest, multicultural, narrative of United States history could pave the way for a new patriotism, a multicultural patriotism (Callan, 2002). Ben-Porath (2007) argues that along with a critical and pluralistic historical narrative, nationhood should be taught as a construct that the students and society as a whole inform. In this approach, teachers would not need to avoid patriotism, but foster it in a more inclusive and nuanced form derived out of a “shared fate” not solely national identity (Ben-Porath, 2007, p 22). At the core of this new

patriotism, would be a devoutness to freedom and equality for all citizens, united by “the betrayals to which the ideals have been subject, and the many ongoing struggles to make them real in the lives of all citizens” (Callan, 2002, p 472). Again, this multicultural patriotism is complementary to cosmopolitan patriotism, both critical and inclusive, but cosmopolitanism extends the sense of responsibility and agency to the globe. Cosmopolitan education, encompassing multicultural education, promotes “a vision of a world community where national, ethnic and cultural boundaries are blurred or porous and where hybridity is increasingly the norm” (Osler and Starkey, 2005). With this approach, less emphasis would need to be put on a national history for the sake of nation building. Through critical analysis of history, students would understand the fluidity of nationhood, and the ever evolving nature of a country’s population and identity. Instead, a multicultural, cosmopolitan patriotism would unite students in loyalty, agency, and respect for all people, not only a nation. For a new patriotism to take form alongside the implementation of multicultural history, and generate the desired unity and stability, students must not feel deflated due to the ugly past, but feel empowered to participate and make change in the present (Callan 2002, p 472). The short moments of progress throughout American history, in which democracy prevailed, must be the flicker of hope to inspire young citizens to continue on in the fight for a better America (Callan, 2002, p 476-477). Archard’s proposed solution is to match critical thinking in the curriculum with the empowerment of the individual, encouraging participation in the community as a way to improve the national trajectory and make the best of the nation they inherited (Archard, 1999). And so while ideal and reality clash in history, as they do in all aspects of life, it will have to be the value of democracy, the hope for progress, and personal agency that carries young citizens through this tension. Students must choose this patriotism on their own, with the full truth of their country’s history to guide them.

3 RESEARCH CONTEXT

This research was conducted in my home state of North Carolina. In the United States, education is largely managed at the state level, thus schooling can vary from state to state. Due to this, this section details the educational context within which the participants worked.

3.1 High School Social Studies in North Carolina

As stated on the Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction page of the North Carolina Public Schools website:

The NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR THE SOCIAL STUDIES (NCSS) defines social studies as:

...the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence. Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archaeology, economics, geography, history, law, philosophy, political science, psychology, religion, and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics, and natural sciences. The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. (Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction)

While school curriculum in the United States is primarily decided on at the state level, as there is no national curriculum, many states have adopted the Common Core curriculum which is integrated into the state curriculum (Federal Role In Education; Common core state standards initiative). The adoption of this national initiative was incentivized by federal funding. North Carolina was one of the states to do so, adopting them in 2010, with full implementation in the 2012-2013 school year (Common core state standards initiative). The Common Core standards are a set of yearly goals for each grade and subject geared at ensuring students are prepared for college, careers, and adult life (Common core state standards initiative). They put special emphasis on math and language arts/literacy, however there are standards for high school history organized as 9th- 10th grade standards and 11th- 12th grade standards (Common core state standards initiative). In both standards the focus is primarily on historical thinking skills such as analysis and comprehension.

High school in North Carolina, while there are some variations between districts and schools,

consists of ninth to twelfth grade, with students ages usually ranging between thirteen and eighteen. The mandatory courses are World History, American History I, American History II, and American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics (Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction). Social studies electives vary by school but can include any or all of the following: African American Studies, American Indian Studies, Latin American Studies, The Cold War, Twentieth Century Civil Liberties- Civil Rights, Turning Points in American History, Psychology, Sociology, 21st Century Global Geography, World Humanities, American Humanities (Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction). The North Carolina Standard Course of Study includes curriculum standards for each course, organized as Essential Standards, which start broad and then are detailed by clarifying objectives (Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction). The standards are content specific and focus on students' ability to analyze, evaluate, compare, and explain major themes, turning points, era and governing bodies deemed significant (Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction). While the Essential Standards are not intended to be used as curriculum, they are expected to be integrated and met by all curriculums (Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction). The state also pairs an "Unpacking Document" with each course's Essential Standards to assist teachers and faculty with the integration of the standards into the school/classroom curriculum (Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction). This document further breaks down the learning goals for each course, aligned with the Essential Standards (Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction).

Within all of these documents and standards, only the American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics course explicitly mentions democratic values, citizenship, and patriotism. As seen in Essential Standard 1, Clarifying Objective 1.4:

Analyze the principles and ideals underlying American democracy in terms of how they promote freedom (i.e. separation of powers, rule of law, limited government, democracy, consent of the governed / individual rights –life, liberty, pursuit of happiness, self government, representative democracy, equal opportunity, equal protection under the law, diversity, patriotism, etc.). (Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction)

Under which the students are expected to *understand* that "Principles and ideals underlying democracy are designed to promote the freedom of the people in a nation (Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction)." Along with *knowing* "Ideals that are considered fundamental to American public life (individual rights, self-government, justice, equality, diversity, patriotism, the common/public good, etc.) (Social Studies Curriculum and Instruction)." Here the intentional teaching of patriotism and other national values is made clear. This research will be

aimed at gathering teachers' insight into how this is executed. And further, the ways in which the participants have or have not seen patriotism in other history courses', though not explicitly stated in the curriculum.

3.2 College Board Advanced Placement (AP) Courses

As outlined in by AP Central (2018), College Board is a private organization that designs Advanced Placement (AP) courses for high schools. Their courses are designed to mirror college courses, with the ultimate goal of preparing students to take an end of year exam that can earn them college credit. To provide an AP course, the school must present their intended curriculum for the course to the College Board for audit. Teachers are also required to do training and become certified through the College Board. The College Board provides course overviews and guidelines as well as access to resources, but they do not provide a specific syllabi that teachers are required to follow. At most schools, with the recommendation of a teacher, students are able to take an AP course instead of a standard or honors level course. For example, instead of taking the standard 10th grade English course, students could take AP English 10, and at the end of the course take the AP exam. If they receive a passing score, they can receive credit for a college English course depending on the university or college they attend. Sometimes the length of an AP class differs from the standard or honors level courses. In North Carolina, standard and honors level American History is divided into two years-- 'American History 1,' and 'American History 2.' However, the AP U.S. History course is only one year (AP Central, 2018).

This is significant to the research as many of the teachers interviewed teach AP courses, and refer to the curriculum as it is separate from the state curriculum for standard and honors courses. One of the participants also mentioned recent controversy over the revamping of the AP U.S. History course. News articles about the controversy (Krehbiel, 2015; Paulson, 2014; Superville, 2014; Thrasher, 2015; Oklahoma, 2015) articulate the position of the politicians who criticized the new course for being too negative about the U.S.'s past, as well as the reactions their debate triggered. In reaction to the revamp, the politicians discussed banning AP courses in their districts, which spurred protest from teachers and students who not only valued AP courses, but resented the politicians' effort to filter of their history knowledge. This controversy, and the participants mention of it, reinforces the relevance of this research.

3.3 Charter Schools in North Carolina

The teachers that were interviewed all teach at the same charter school in North Carolina. Charter schools act as schools of choice in which students can opt out of their districted school to attend a charter school (Office of Charter Schools). Charter schools act as public schools and receive public funding, but can also raise other funds (Office of Charter Schools). They are authorized and regulated by the State Board of Education, but primarily operations are overseen by the schools own school board (Office of Charter Schools). Charter schools cannot discriminate in admissions or regulate what students enroll for any reason, nor can they charge tuition (Office of Charter Schools). To attend a charter school, students often have to enter a lottery and wait to be chosen due to the limited enrollment (Office of Charter Schools). Proponents of charter schools claim that they allow for more freedom in their operations, as well as the curriculum taught by teachers (Lubienski, 2013). Critics of charter schools argue that they are not regulated enough, which can lead to less access for disadvantaged and minority students. It is argued that they act as private schools, but with public funding (Lubienski, 2013). That aside, the participants being teachers at a charter school does impact their perspectives and experiences and is worth noting in this research.

4 METHODOLOGY

This qualitative research was conducted as a phenomenography, in which I conducted semi-structured interviews with five high school social studies teachers from Charlotte, North Carolina in the southeastern United States. This research focuses on U.S. social studies teachers' perceptions of patriotism in education, specifically in high school history courses. My research aims to gain insight from teachers on how they have experienced patriotism in school and how they perceive patriotism to be influencing history education as a whole.

4.1 Research Approach

While exploring my interest in researching history education, I knew early on that I wanted in-depth, personal accounts that reflect the varied perspectives and experiences of teachers. Qualitative research seemed like the natural route for inquiry and allows me to follow my ontological assumption that everyone has one's own truth and reality (Lewis, 2015, p. 16). Having been a teacher myself, it is important to me that I give light to teachers' individual voices and allow them agency.

Conducted as a phenomenography, this research will treat the participants' experiences in teaching history as a phenomenon. A phenomenographic approach is used to gain insight into how people think about and understand a phenomenon (Marton, 1986, p. 28). In this way, the research is not simply aimed at investigating the phenomenon, but understanding the various perceptions of those that experienced it, and the relationship between them (Marton, 1986, p. 31). Through analyzing the relationship between the participants' telling of their reality and the phenomenon as understood in scholarly discourse, insight can be drawn. In the case of my research, I aim to understand how teachers perceive patriotism in education, as well as in history education specifically. Furthermore, gaining insight into how the participants view their role in the promotion of patriotism as teachers, as well as the relationship between patriotism and multiculturalism in history education. Having read what has been said in academia on the concepts, the interviews allowed me further insight into how patriotism is interacted with within the field.

4.2 Data Collection

The data was collected through one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with five social studies teachers working at the same high school in Charlotte, North Carolina. After receiving permission to conduct my research from the school superintendent, the high school principal, and the department head, I was permitted to reach out to teachers individually via email to elicit their participation. I received an agreement from 5 out of 7 teachers. The interviews took place over the course of a week from the end of May to the beginning of June 2018, immediately following the completion of the school year. After receiving informed consent from the interviewees, these interviews acted as my sole data for analysis.

To prevent premature responses formulated before the interview, I kept my research aims ambiguous to participants, explaining that I was interested in teachers' perceptions of citizenship education (Groenewald, 2004). I informed the teachers that the interviews should last approximately one hour and that I am willing to meet them on or off the school grounds, according to their preference and availability. A consent form with the necessary information, such as the confidentiality they can expect, was presented to the participants for signing at the start of the interview. At that time I went over the information with them to ensure that they were fully aware of what their participation in the study would entail (Groenewald, 2004). My goal was for the participants to understand and trust my process, and in turn, feel more comfortable being open with me during the interview process. I also hoped that they would see the benefits they receive from our collaboration and in their reflection on their time teaching. Due to the sensitivity of some of the topics such as patriotism, citizenship, and multiculturalism, the interview was quite structured, but the open-ended nature of the questions allowed the participants more freedom to stay within their comfort zone while answering (Walker, 2007, p. 39). As the aim of my research was to gain insight into teachers' perspectives, making them feel comfortable and open during the interview process was key to collecting quality data.

Before conducting the first interview with the designated participants, I piloted the interview with a previous colleague that had also worked at the given school before. The interview was conducted in person, in a public library, in an attempt to emulate the school environment of the actual interviews. After a successful pilot interview, I altered the wording of a few questions but for the most part, kept the interview the same. Having completed my student teaching internship for my undergraduate degree with the school's humanities department, I have

maintained relationships with a few of the teachers I will be interviewing. While this could raise ethical and reliability concerns, as I explained before, my goal is to collect personal, in-depth accounts from teachers on their experience, and I believe my relationship with the school and its staff will aid me in doing so.

Organizing the Data

With the permission of the participants, I audio-recorded each interview. I avoided taking any notes during the interview, as I did not want to create any uneasiness for the participants. Following the interview, I took notes as a reflection process. While the audio will constitute the data to be analyzed, it is important to record initial thoughts on the conversation before much time passes. This helped me to remember the feeling and mood of the conversations and acted as an early step in interpretation, preceding the transition into data analysis (Groenewald, 2004). Additionally, each of the interview questions was aligned with one or more of the research questions. This was done to assist me in organizing the teacher's responses and the analysis of them to better answer my research questions.

After the interviews were conducted, each interviewee was anonymously assigned a number to act as their identifier, in replacement of their name, to protect their anonymity. Throughout the analysis process, the teachers will be presented as Teacher P1, P2, P3, P4, or P5. The teachers do not know what number represents them in the study. Throughout the findings section, quotes from the participants have their corresponding number as well as a letter code to locate it within the transcription of their interview. These are not intended to be of much use to the reader.

4.3 Data Analysis

For my analysis, I followed a simplified version of Hycner's explication process as used by Groenewald (2004). I chose Groenewald's (2004) explanation of phenomenological interview analysis as a guide, for he offers a clear and concise structure that matches my own analytical approach and desire for transparency. The analysis has five phases:

1. Bracketing and phenomenological reduction.
2. Delineating units of meaning.

3. Clustering of units of meaning to form themes.
4. Summarizing each interview, validating it and where necessary modifying it.
5. Extracting general and unique themes from all the interviews and making a composite summary.

4.3.1 Bracketing and Phenomenological Reduction

My first step in analysis was to listen to the audio recordings of each interview and to take notes again. After having conducted five interviews over a week period, this allowed me to revisit the conversations with a new perspective. I also took this time to address each interview wholly, before focusing on the transcription process. In accordance with the Hycner-Groenewald (2004) process, the most important part of this step is to revisit the interviews with an open mind, doing my best to leave out personal assumptions and theoretical framework. This is done to get a better acquainted with the participant's relationship with, and conceptualization of, the phenomenon before applying my own understanding.

After that initial analysis, I transcribed all of the dialogue from the audio-recordings. This allowed me to focus more on diction and identifying patterns and themes in the text. It also helped me to organize the teacher's responses to each question, and in turn to the corresponding research question. Prior to the interviews, each of the interview questions was aligned with one or more of the research questions. On the back end of the process, this assisted me in organizing the teacher's responses and my analysis but also ensured that my interview questions addressed my research questions adequately prior to the interviews.

4.3.2 Delineating Units of Meaning

After the transcription is complete and I matched the responses to the corresponding research questions, I began to code the material. During this phase, I read through the transcriptions, while referencing my notes, and carefully pulled out significant statements and phrases from each interview. I selected pieces that represented a core idea that arose from the conversation, that I saw as integral in answering the research questions. These ideas were organized in a separate document under their corresponding research question. This process was done for each interview individually, careful to eliminate any redundancy but only within a single interview's list of units.

4.3.3 Clustering Units of Meaning

Now, with a list of units of meaning from each interview, I compared the lists for a more holistic picture of the interviews. To do this, I tried to find patterns and similarities in the meanings drawn from the five interviews, matching the units of meaning to create themes. The clusters of units of meaning created themes, which were then labeled with a phrase that encompassed the main idea of the units as a group. During this time it was important that I revisited the audio-recordings from time to time to ensure that the meanings and themes stayed true to the original intent of the interviewees (Groenewald, 2004).

4.3.4 Summarizing and Validating

At this point, I used the units of meaning and the themes that illuminated from each interview to then write a summary of each interview. This assisted me in placing each interview within the more holistic picture created by the themes. I also used this summary to check for the validity of my analysis. Returning to the interviewees, I showed them the summary I drafted of the interview and asked if they felt it properly represented the conversation we had together. This was to ensure that the data represents their truth and understanding of the phenomenon, and not a misinterpretation (Groenewald, 2004).

4.3.5 Final Themes and Summary

Now, with my clusters and themes, I narrowed down the list to the themes that are most common among all of the interviews. These themes were then aligned with the research questions and elaborated on with evidence from the dialogue to answer said research questions. Themes that act as outliers, and represent a unique finding, also contribute interesting insight into the phenomenon and were also included in the findings (Groenewald, 2004). These final themes act as my data findings and are compared back to my theoretical framework to illuminate further meaning and how the findings fit into previous work in the field and in academia.

4.4 Chart of Methodological Process

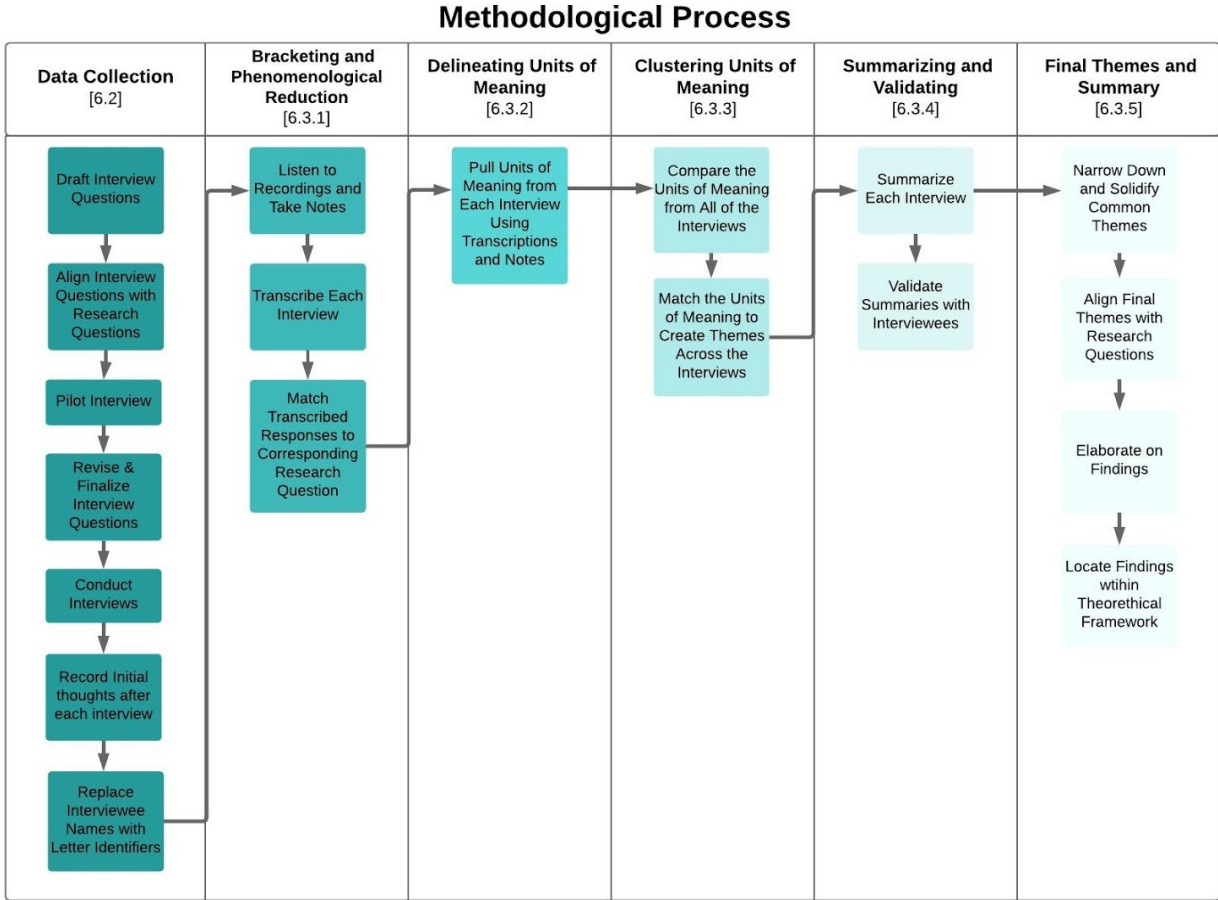


Figure 1. Methodological Process

5 FINDINGS

Throughout the analysis process, certain reiterated points were illuminated and themes arose across the interviews. The following section is divided into those themes and then elaborated on with evidence from the interviews. It is then followed by a summary section in which the findings are synthesized in two different ways, one conceptually and the other in correspondence with the research questions.

5.1 History is Political, and that Impacts the Social Studies Classroom

Across all of the interviews, there was the reiterated point that what is taught in the social studies classroom can be and has been political, and in turn controversial. While there is an obvious political component to the content— covering forms of government and economic systems, and the policies that have accompanied them— according to the teachers interviewed, there is even more nuance to the dynamic. When a participant was asked if they thought a more multicultural historical narrative was needed, they explained, “this is controversial because of essentially politics, and we know history has been politicized [P4-KK].” This was just one example of one of the participants claiming something about social studies is or could be controversial due to politics. It seems the controversy comes from political groups aligning themselves with a certain perspective of the past and political ideals, ultimately wanting that to be the perspective children grow up with. When one of the teachers was asked if they think U.S. conservatives interpret history one way and liberals another, they replied, “That’s what I see a lot [P5-WW].” Based on the interviews, this seems to be particularly true regarding the history of the United States and how the U.S. is presented. This is also congruent with what academics have said, claiming that conservatives prescribe to a more traditional, sanitized history (Nash, 2000). Throughout the interviews, the teachers highlighted that there are many parties that view themselves as stakeholders in the social studies curriculum, from politicians to parents, all with their own politicized opinions on history.

One of the interviewees pointed out that political controversy had recently broken out over the national history curriculum distributed by the College Board for the Advance Placement courses and exams. They explained:

In 2015 the College Board completely redesigned their test and their course. And, it’s been one that has been quite controversial. It’s like in the news because it’s like seen

as anti-American and so they ended up redoing them again based off the criticisms.

[P4-H]

When asked why people claimed it was “anti-American,” the participant said, “... certain people were like left out. I don’t think Jackson was mentioned, Reagan might not have been mentioned, so they... you know... [P4-H]” Later in the interview it became clear whom exactly the teacher was referring to. The teacher referred to the controversy as a “conservative backlash” and explained that it was actually a topic of discussion at the National Republican convention. The participant elaborated on the criticisms of the party saying that they felt it relied too heavily on revisionist history and negative aspects of America’s history and less on the positive. As well as saying that it down played the founders of the country. But the interviewee asserts that the College Board’s curriculum was “much more in tune with how history is done today, which is much more social focused. Like about regular people [P4-H].” In the end however, the College Board bent to the pressure and released another, amended version of the new curriculum and test. While the interviewee explained that the changes were mostly minor, it still demonstrates how politics impact the social studies classroom.

5.1.1 State Social Studies Curriculums are Created to Align with the State Politics

While the College Board acts as a private stakeholder at the national level, the participants also discussed how at the state level, politicians have allowed their political ideologies to influence the social studies curriculum and content. In one of the teacher’s statement on the matter, it appears to cost the curriculum value in their eyes:

And like, the standards say what the standards say. And we can go to places like Texas, or even North Carolina, and they standards are not always, you can tell the standards aren’t created by historians exclusively, you know, politicians usually have a say in those things. [P4-K]

Texas, in particular, was mentioned multiple times as being notorious for manipulating social studies content to favor tradition. One of the participants shared:

Certain states dictate what goes in the textbooks-- Texas is one of them. Texas has so many public schools buying textbooks that if they won’t buy it, you as a publisher are almost doomed. Texas will have specific things that they want included in that textbook or they won’t adopt it at the state level. And one of them is ‘American exceptionalism’ your textbook must teach that America is better, and it’s got to be that way.

Recently they've been de-emphasizing Jefferson because of his quotes on the separation of church and state. And so they are constructing that mythology. [P3-LL] Here, the teacher highlights some of the key values stressed by politicians in Texas—'American exceptionalism' and religion. And as the participant explains, the state goes beyond just putting these values at work in the state curriculum, but also dictates what textbooks can be used in the state and uses its large population size to strong arm textbook publishers.

The same participant also mentioned Utah as an example. "...In Utah, they actually adopted a textbook that said that the US constitution was divinely inspired. It didn't come from the French Enlightenment thinkers and Locke and those guys, it came from God," the teacher explained this half laughing, demonstrating how absurd they thought it was [P3-LL]. Again the teacher mentions the influence of religion on the state's decision. This is particularly interesting as federal law dictates separation of church and state. Not only does this bring religion into public schooling, but also obscures important historical actors and chronologies. It also connects to the idea of 'American exceptionalism,' mentioned by the participants as being the focus of by Texas and the College Board. This time with Utah alluding to the US Constitution being inspired or influenced by God, as if the country has divine backing.

Another participant spoke of Texas's politically charged curriculum changes, focusing on their teaching of the U.S. Civil War:

I mean, like Texas changing their curriculum and the ramifications of what it's like for the 5 million high schoolers next year that are going to be taught that slavery was a secondary or tertiary issue as it relates to the Civil War, when it's obviously the one and only issue. I mean we can look at secession document after secession document, and when they're talking about states' rights, they're talking about the states' rights to own slaves. [P1-GG]

The causes of the U.S. Civil War have been a point of contention for many Americans for decades. Great work was done at the end of the war to save the legacy of the southern states, and in doing so, lessening the emphasis on slavery as a cause and using the blanket idea of states' rights. This caught on and became the narrative for generations. However, historians have worked very hard to set the record straight, which is without a doubt the cause of the participant's frustration. As the participant mentions, there is documented evidence that the grievances of the southern state's centered on slavery. Texas, located in the south, seems to

still be fighting this new narrative, with a generation of students across the state as their vehicle.

North Carolina was not left out of the conversation. While many of the teachers commented on the state curriculum being poor and needing work, one of the teachers charged that the North Carolina curriculum is “weak in some areas, perhaps even deliberately.” The area that the teacher mentions is the civil rights era. The participant explains that the curriculum’s coverage of this integral time for African Americans is very short and vague, not giving it the attention it deserves. Other participants echoed this sentiment, however this teacher took the assertion a step further claiming it was intentional. As they explained, North Carolina was one of the battlegrounds for the civil rights movement, acting on the side of oppression. Many of the issues that were highlighted during the movement were never fully addressed in many states, North Carolina being one of them. Thus, as the participant points out, the state curriculum underserves that time period as a way to avoid drawing new attention to the still relevant cause. This point is elaborated on more fully in finding 5.9.

5.1.2 Threat of Parental Backlash

Similarly to how states intervene, the participants contend with parents policing social studies curriculum as well. The teachers acknowledged that there is always a risk of parents challenging them on politically charged topics when things don’t align with their understanding or viewpoint. As they explained, topics might conflict with parents due to political stances, as well as differences in historical interpretations—typically from what the parents learned when they were in high school. It was one participant’s perspective that parents “...don’t want their kids to think outside of the box a lot of times” but that it’s the teacher’s role to challenge student’s assumptions [P3-QL]. The teacher went on to explain:

I think, any kind of push back from the students is a good thing. It’s when it’s coming from parents, it’s my perception, that it’s like ‘I don’t want my child to think differently than I do.’ And, you know, the thing is that they’re going to. [JQM]

The teacher acknowledged that some push back from students is expected and a part of the learning process, but feels that push back from parents is actually an effort to control the learning process. So it seems, just as the state wants the students to grow up with a certain perspective, so do the parents. Although this came up multiple times in the interviews, none of the teachers shared a specific example of when this had happened to them.

Other teachers seemed to focus on parents with certain political ideologies as being the issue. When discussing the promotion of a more multicultural history, one teacher responded that backlash would come “from parents who are maybe a little bit more involved in seeing what their students are engaging in, some with certain political perspectives might be more reticent to accepting that [P2-JJ].” Here the teacher is alluding to a more hands on parent that might be upset if the teacher intentionally teaches about a wider diversity of peoples, in the promotion of multiculturalism. Based off of the interview as a whole and that stance towards diversity, it can be assumed that the participant is referring to someone on the conservative side of the political spectrum. Another participant discussed how the parental influence on social studies courses has been seen most dramatically in students, as in the students are projecting the opinions of the parents. The teacher explained that often students come in regurgitating things their parents have said, even calling it “programming.” They explained:

I can see the programming, the programming when they come in... I have kids come in and I can tell they're super nationalist, their parents are super nationalist and they've been like eating it up their whole life, and then I present like the Native American history in a pretty factual way that's like 'WOW, I've never even thought of this.'
[P5-DD]

Here the teacher claims to have students that are nationalist due to their parents influence, an influence that has been in the works their whole childhood. The teacher also expressed that their teaching of Native American history somehow challenges nationalist ideals in students. In the situation described the teacher seems to be successful in opening the students mind to another perspective and further understanding of the U.S.'s darker moments, despite their initial assumptions. The teacher went on to explain that they try to stay fact based and just share the many perspectives and interpretations of history. If that confronts a student's assumption, they will work through that with them, but they are not overtly looking to challenge the opinions of students and parents. This approach was reiterated by most of the teachers on the topic.

5.2 The Purpose of Social Studies is Skill Development not the Promotion of Values

Early in my analysis, it became apparent that one point all of the participants seemingly agreed on was the purpose, or goal, of social studies courses. In a number of ways, they consistently reiterated that the purpose of social studies was not content mastery or love for country, but skill development. One of the teachers stated, “The content, the political history, is a

tool to kind of exercise those skills. [...] Content is content. It's more about approach. You know, the process as opposed to this topic or that topic [P4-A,D].”

5.2.1 Skill Development

The skills the participants repeatedly referred to included analytical skills, argumentation, and critical thinking. More specifically, they discussed the importance of teaching the analysis and interpretation of sources, developing and articulating arguments, the analysis of others' arguments, as well as research skills. One participant explained this in a rather concise and striking comment:

The purpose is to build analytical skills. Alright, so understanding how to interpret sources, analyze sources, how to build arguments, how to analyze arguments. Those are what I see my purpose as, and then the content... [...] I could care less if they remember the causes of the war of 1812, it's more that they understand how to find those answers if that becomes relevant. Or if someone is presenting something to them, making an argument, they can basically call bullshit on that argument if they have those type of skills. That's what I hope they take away. [P4-B]

When asked the most important thing they hoped that their students take away from their courses, all of the teachers mentioned these skills. One of the teachers responded:

...it's definitely historical thinking skills, it's definitely contextualization, it's definitely comparative analysis, it's definitely, ah you know, augmentation, its being able to recognize and discern biases, it's to be more critical. The skills [...] are more important than anything else. [P1-A]

The participants expressed that these skills are something they hope the students take with them and apply throughout their life. As one participant put it “I want them to walk away thinking critically about the things they read, be able to make arguments, not just based on how they feel about something but based on evidence [P2-A].” Another participant echoed that sentiment saying, “I want them to construct arguments, as opposed to just spouting off an opinion. And if they can leave here doing that, I have done my peace [P1-O].” The teachers seemed to share the opinion that their courses are supposed to help the students to develop skills that will assist them the rest of their lives as they interact with others and information.

By teaching these skills along side the content and historical narratives, the teachers also expressed their hope that students leave their courses being able to identify the historical background of current issues. While they might not recall the exact historical details, their understanding of history as a discipline tells them that everything has a history, the past has a direct impact on present situations and how they should be weighed and approached. This is articulated well in one teacher's retelling of a lesson they do every year:

The whole point [...] is to get them to see that everything has a history and nothing is pre-historical. Everything is created in a certain context for certain reasons, and you should be thinking about that context and those reasons. When you do something you should think about 'where did this come from? And why was it created?' [P4-V]

This reiterates the importance the teachers put on teaching students to think historically. Again, not focusing on content alone, but getting students to understand the impact of context and causation when analyzing an event or situation— whether present day or in the past.

While civic competence was only directly addressed by a couple of participants as one of the goals of social studies courses, all of the participants linked the skills that they teach to productive citizenship. One of the teachers explained that they are...

...preparing these kids to actually be thinking citizens, because these are the people that are going to be voting and they need to be able to think about more than pop culture and what they see on the entertainment type news. They need to think about real issues and understand the background of the country, and what's in our past, and how we got to this point, and to hopefully make good decisions for the future. [P3-A]

The civic competence the participants described these skills assisting with, like in the quote above, centered on critical thinking. As they explain, critical thinking can be applied in decision making, such as voting, qualifying media sources, and conversing about political topics. And so while most of the teachers did not feel that they explicitly teach for civic preparedness, they do teach for skill development, which they hope are applied by students in different ways in their futures as citizens.

5.2.2 The Teachers Do Not Promote a Singular Point of View

One of the topics in the interviews was the promotion of values and ideology in the classroom. The teachers were asked in various ways if there was anything they hope to instill in students, or a certain message that they promote. In discussing this, the conversations often

centered around bias. The teachers spoke about how their own biases impact the classroom, but also how bias can be seen in other ways in social studies courses and how they handle that. The teachers mostly agreed that teacher bias could not be entirely avoided. They discussed how their decisions in the classroom, such as textbook choice, points of emphasis, or the documents and sources that are analyzed, will all somehow reflect the teacher's own values. As one of the teachers explained:

I'm picking the textbook, I'm designing the lessons... those are choices I make and that will affect the biases that I think are important, absolutely. But having said that... I'm not necessarily getting into drawing conclusions for my students, so it's not biased in that way you know, it's an open classroom. But you know I do craft the evidence and decide the topics, but they are ultimately like... it's not like I'm doctoring primary sources. [P4]

Here the teacher acknowledged how their decisions can impact the course, but also made it clear that they allow the evidence, drawn from various sources, to speak for itself. The teacher made the point that they are careful not to tailor the argument or draw conclusions for their students. The idea of presenting evidence but not drawing conclusions for students was repeated by almost all of the participants.

Many of the teachers said that they point out bias to their students and use it as a teaching point. "I always tell my students, there's no unbiased sources, so any source you come across there's going to be biases—from the printer, from the publisher, from the author—and I tried to show different perspectives even in the textbook," explained one participant [P2-D]. The teachers pointed out bias in textbooks and writings to show how perspective influences the telling of history. The importance of presenting students with multiple perspectives and balanced evidence was repeated multiple times by all of the participants throughout the interviews. One teacher said, "the more perspectives that are laid out, the better understanding that we're going to have of history [P1]." The teachers described this approach as a way to broaden students' understandings, and build their analytical skills by teaching them to detect bias in sources. The teachers also explained that this approach was helpful in avoiding the promotion of a single point of view as well.

Early on in each interview, the participants were asked if there were any values or ideas that they do intentionally seek to promote their classroom, to which the participants largely responded, no. One teacher responded, "I try not to push a particular perspective. I say, I see

your perspective, I also want you to consider this evidence and see how it fits with that narrative. I want them to draw conclusions based off of all the evidence [P2-W].” Again, this idea of presenting evidence and multiple perspectives was echoed by participants. The teachers voiced that they continuously stressed to students that evidence is essential in forming an opinion and generating an argument, and this behavior in the classroom mirrors that. Another teacher explained that they “try to present all the arguments and just let the kids, you know, decide [P5-F].” The teachers expressed that they try to leave space for the students to make their own decisions based off of as much information as they can provide. “So I don’t really think it’s my job to convince,” one participant responded [P1-EE]. They continued by saying that they believe that their job is more about building knowledge and understanding overall so that their students have “the full knowledge of the impact of what [they] believe” so that “[they] either change their opinion, or solidify what they believe, and genuinely understand why they believe what they believe [P1-FF].” These responses showed the respect the participants have for their students’ perspectives, as well as their trust in students’ abilities to develop informed opinions independently.

Largely the teachers agreed that they leave space for students to form their own opinions by leaving their personal morals and political beliefs out of the classroom, but some of the teachers varied in their reasoning or approach. “I try to avoid those conversations,” one of the teacher answered [P4]. However, the participant’s reasoning was not necessarily to avoid influencing the students, but because they felt that being “overt with [their] politics” is not a productive approach [P4]. They explained, “I just found that [...] The kids push back against it, because we live in a white suburban, polarized community. And so they stop listening [P4].” The teacher acknowledged that their ultimate goal is to “build [a] progressive story” of history, illuminating the ebbs and flows of social progress in the United States, but that sharing their personal views was not the way to accomplish that [P4]. They explained that “a better way to go about the fight” is to instead, “present them with historically sound research... let that kind of marinate, let them think about it. And if it happens, it happens, and if it doesn’t, it doesn’t [P4].” Their approach is not to ‘push’ a certain perspective on the students, but to present evidence that might lead them to adopting that perspective on their own. So while the teacher does not share their personal opinions or political beliefs directly, they do have an underlying objective to influence the student’s views.

In contrast to this more passive approach, another participant shared that they do overtly share their political beliefs in the classroom, and do not attempt to be unbiased or objective. They explained that as an older adult, their political beliefs do not align with most of their age demographic, particularly on LGBTQ rights, and so it creates a unique perspective for the students. They elaborated on his approach, saying:

I'll talk with the kids like 'hey I used to believe that' and then I had a roommate in college who was gay and he was the best roommate I ever had, and you know as a teacher some of my best students have been gay, I've had 2 transgender students now, and I'll say- 'you know what, I would trust those people to babysit my daughter.' And, I think it just changes their perspective that these people aren't human until you humanize it a bit. [P3-O]

The participant explained that they share their opinion, particularly in the form of anecdotes, as a way to humanize issues and make them more personal for students. The same participant also shared that they felt it is helpful for students to see how a teacher can articulate and support their opinions and arguments, acting as an example for how the students can do so with their own. And though they acknowledged that it could be controversial, the participant later said that they feel it's a teacher's duty to challenge students' perspectives and that this is a way to do that. So their intention did not seem to be the promotion of a single point of view, but again just to show students "a different way of viewing things [P3-K]."

Overall the teachers seemed to hold the perspective that most teachers do not intentionally try to influence student's opinions or views with their own biases. One of the participants remarked, "it's not like the teachers are trying to indoctrinate [P4-L]." Another participant defended teacher's intentions but addressed the difficulty of staying neutral in the classroom:

I think most teachers attempt to leave their political opinions out, but I also think we're more polarized than we've ever been. So I think that makes it really really difficult. Especially if you're liberal at a conservative school or a conservative at a liberal school. I think it becomes hard, and it's very emotion driven. So as a teacher, um, I think it would be... most teachers would be well served to remember their purpose in the classroom on a daily basis. I think some have a hard time remember that. They're not here to preach politics or to preach nationalism or patriotism. They're here to deliver that content to students in a way that's meaningful to them. [P1-JJ]

The participant acknowledged that most teachers attempt to avoid involving their own opinions in their courses, but that this has become more difficult with the heightened political tension currently. They asserted that this is a daily battle for teachers and that they ought to frequently remind themselves of “their purpose in the classroom.” That purpose, according to the participant is content, not the promotion of certain values.

5.3 Teacher Autonomy Allows for Variation Amongst Social Studies Courses

A sentiment echoed by all of the participants, continuously throughout the interviews, was ‘it depends on the teacher.’ This was repeatedly the initial response by the teachers to many of the interview questions. When asked to elaborate on the idea, different perceptions were revealed on how and why social studies courses can vary between teachers. Conclusions on this centered on teacher autonomy, and pointed to variances due to not only the nature of history as a discipline, but also a teacher’s education and even the location of a school.

The teacher autonomy that the teachers alluded to is the freedom teachers have in their approach to the curriculum. As one of the participants put it, “We pick the curriculum. We pick the textbook.” (P5-C) Though, as one of the teachers pointed out, being at a charter school does allow them more freedom in comparison to most public schools. Largely, teachers are able to make most of the choices in their classroom without consulting a supervisor of any kind. This can include what is taught and how. Although North Carolina has a state curriculum for each social studies course, there are no longer any end-of-course tests administered by the state for those courses, thus no way for the state to check on the enforcement or execution of their curriculum. Discussing variation across social studies classrooms, one participant points this out directly—“...because there’s no state test in North Carolina anymore, there’s no way to really be upheld to [a] standard, so it really comes down to the teacher.” (P4-L) They later remarked, “I think it all varies on the teacher [...] it’s a federal system so there is no national standards.” [P4-AA] The autonomy experienced by teachers, and the lack of standardized tests, is typically seen as a good thing, however the space it leaves for varying interpretations of history to be taught or the promotion of certain ideals, can be debated. When that same participant was asked if the variance is a problem, they responded, “I mean, it’s a problem absolutely, but it’s the reality. It’s just what it is.” (P4-AA) It can be seen that the teachers not only acknowledge the variance across social studies classrooms, they see it as a problem, one with many dynamics and no easy solution.

5.3.1 The Nature of History is Interpretation

Part of what leaves social studies courses open to so much variation is the nature of history as a discipline; history being the focus of most of the social studies courses offered. The foundation of historical study is primarily interpretation. While there are some hard facts and figures, most historical narrative relies on how those facts and figures are interpreted, woven together, and presented. This results in many perspectives, often conflicting, on the same topics and time periods being published and taught. Variation in academia trickles down to the high school level, resulting in variation between teachers based on what they were taught and exposed to, as well as their own interpretation. This paired with little supervision and accountability on a daily basis, leaves classroom vulnerable to all kinds of historical interpretations, misinformation, or the promotions of ideals.

In a rather summative statement, one participant expressed just how much the content and approach of a social studies class is tied to the teacher:

A social studies course could be whatever the teacher is, it ultimately comes down to kind of teacher in the classroom. No one's, well not no one, but very rarely is anyone going to really know what you're teaching on a day-to-day basis, unless you are overly controversial or you know. The background of the teacher is gonna kind of make a difference." [P4-J]

As the participant states, a teacher's decisions have the largest impact on a course and those decisions are heavily influenced by the background of the teacher. The participant also explained that this influence can go rather unregulated, as they pointed out that "very rarely is anyone going to really know what you're teaching." Again, the autonomy and lack of accountability means no regulation. This leaves room for the teacher's interpretation, which just like the teacher's daily decisions, is influenced by their background and biases.

When discussing what is taught in social studies courses, I asked another participant if the curriculum or the teacher mattered more, and they responded, "Again, I think it depends on the teaching." [P5-Hh] Even with the guidance of state standards, one teacher remarked, "...it come down to the teacher in the classroom. The teacher next to me, we can interpret the

standards differently...” (P4-AA) The same participant also said, “You can basically approach it how you want to approach it [...] if you want to focus in on political history, you can do that, if you want to focus in on race and gender history, you can do that.” [P4-H] Again, while this freedom can be seen as a good thing, it does leave classes vulnerable. Another participant voiced how far teacher’s interpretations can go:

You could very easily approach the curriculum as [...] sort of promoting American exceptionalism, and nationalism, or you could sort of look at the evidence and other perspectives outside of... what’s the easiest way to say it.. white American perspective on history.” (P2-S)

As they explained, history can be interpreted and then presented through various different lenses that promote certain perspectives. Another participant practically echoed this statement, saying, “if you want to teach American history with a nationalistic, you know, white male bias, I mean you can easily get through all the curriculum and still do that, so yeah.” (P1-H) Interestingly, both of the teachers said this could be done “easily.” This again alludes to teacher autonomy and lack of regulation. Participants also explained that this could largely go unnoticed, as the variations in historical interpretation can be slight. It could manifest in where a teacher puts emphasis and what topics they elaborate on, or not presenting all of the perspectives on an issue, or over generalizations of groups of peoples and regions. Some of this could be due to how current teacher’s knowledge is of history and social issues or if the teacher is a supporter of revisionist history. With revisionist history, historical narratives are constantly being revisited and traditional perspectives challenged, which can be controversial at times. As one teacher pointed out:

There are definitely biases. [...] I mean, I think it depends on the teacher. Revisionist history is still really big, and know you there are still parts of the country that, you know, they still teach it very nationalistic. So you know, you always have this sort of push or pull. (P5-E)

This push and pull the teacher is alluding to is between the traditional and revisionist camps. Typically the traditional telling of history is seen as more conservative, whereas revisionist progressive. Depending on which school of thought the teacher aligns with or maybe just what they learned, they might teach the same topic completely differently from the teacher in the classroom next to them. A popular example that the participants used was whether a teacher frames slavery as the main cause of the U.S. Civil War or a tertiary cause. A revisionist historian almost definitely teaches slavery as the primary cause, while those that follow the

more traditional narrative might down play its role. This was brought up multiple times in different interviews, and is not seen as a small issue to the participants. It is quite controversial, especially in the South, and could have a lasting impact on how student's view the history of their country and current issues. This variance is not unique to only history courses, but other social studies courses as well. One of the teachers spoke about geography courses saying that "it could be taught multiculturally or it could be taught solely from the American perspective." [P2-F] The participants pondered how these differences could lead students to either be more ethnocentric or more globally minded, but did not feel confident stating any causation. What was clear is that the participants viewed interpretation is an innate part of history, and that different interpretations of history create variance in high school social studies courses.

5.3.2 Location Impacts What is Taught

The idea of location impacting what or how social studies courses are taught was brought up multiple times by the participants. The participants seemed to share the idea that in rural parts of North Carolina, or the U.S., there is a more conservative approach to social studies. One teach expressed that they think it would be difficult to teach as they do now at a school in a more rural community:

"...you know if I teach in... rural North Carolina, I might be able to teach the way I teach—in the sense that I'm pretty well researched, and I can like point to history and point to people in the academy—but I think that would be difficult if I wasn't..." (P4-AA)

Here they are alluding that their current approach to the curriculum would be met with conflict in a rural area. In particular, the participants focused on these areas deemphasizing multiculturalism and civil rights. When discussing if social studies courses were designed to be multicultural, one participant responded, "I think it depends on the teacher. I think here you'll get that, I think if you went to some of rural schools, no. You won't get that." So again, there's this idea that the approach is different in a rural area and that multiculturalism isn't valued in those areas. Whether that is true or not, the sentiment seemed to be held by most of the interviewees.

This idea seemed to also extend to states in 'the South,' meaning not just geographically in the southern U.S. but belonging to the group of states that seceded from the union during the

U.S. Civil War. A participant explained that in the South, multiculturalism and civil rights are addressed differently:

I think because we are still in the Deep South, and there's still... I don't want to say denial, I think they acknowledge what happened, but they don't want to emphasize it. And they want to... you know, I mean you've still got voter discrimination going on, and ways of disenfranchising black people, and a lot of that is still going on in [North Carolina] so they don't really want to go back and look at how it was done in the past because they are still trying to do it today. [P3-D]

The 'they' that the participant repeatedly referred to seems to be referencing the state of North Carolina. How these topics are covered, and with what emphasis, is primarily directed by the state curriculum. As mentioned before, the participants felt these standards are often politically driven, but especially in the south. Another participant charges that "we can go to places like Texas, or even North Carolina, and they standards are not always, you can tell the standards aren't created by historians exclusively, you know, politicians usually have a say in those things." Again, the participants phrase "places like" refers to southern states, suggesting that they share a common approach to social studies due to their shared history or culture. And, that politicians in these areas seek to control what is taught. One participant echoed this idea of control in their remark on rural populations—"there's a tribalism where they just don't want to hear anything that doesn't agree with their point of view." [P3-H] Through the conversations it became evident that the teachers not only view location as impacting what is taught, but that they associate rural and southern with a certain approach to social studies, an approach they view as inferior and even incorrect.

5.3.3 Not All Social Studies Teachers Are Trained Historians

One of the possible causes of the variation between teachers, according to one participant, is that not all social studies teachers are trained historians. Beyond their personal bias or the culture of the region they teach in, some teachers teach how they do because they never learned differently. The participant explained:

...the teacher's point of view, not even necessarily their point of view or bias—it's not like the teachers are trying to indoctrinate—it's much more about what's the content knowledge of the teacher. Are they, kind of up to date on the historical arguments? Are they up to date on what the research says? And there's a number, I would say there's a good number of teachers that are not. They're not trained as historians;

they're trained as teachers. A lot of people come from teacher programs, they're not coming as historians. (P4-L)

So from this participant's perspective, teachers may not be promoting a certain perspective or interpretation of history on purpose, but rather due to lack of training and content knowledge. The participant points out that if a teacher did not complete enough coursework in history during their undergraduate studies, "then they're basically having to rely on what they learned in high school or what they learned in a survey class" which "leads to repetition of certain points of view." [P4-L] This would mean relying on entry-level knowledge from at least 3 or 4 years earlier. Something mentioned throughout the interviews was that history as a field or discipline is constantly evolving. New evidence is brought forth, or a different perspective is given light, changing a narrative. To this participant's point, if social studies teachers are not educated on the latest research, their course may be seen as traditional or misguided—whether intentional or not.

One of the other participants could be a good example of this. They explained that they did not complete their undergraduate with the intention of being a social studies teacher, and did little to no course work in history. When they did become a high school social studies teacher, they shared that, "my first 6 years of teaching I was a [...] coach. The past 4 or 5 years I have really been honing my craft." They self-professed that they were not a trained historian but that when they did start to study the discipline, their teaching changed. The participant also shared that with more research, their political views changed as well which further impacted their teaching. They used to consider themselves very patriotic, but they explained that the more they learned about U.S. history, the less patriotic they became, which could then be seen in their courses. The following is an illuminating response on their perception of these changes:

I feel like I'm teaching a much more well-rounded curriculum, as opposed to like an 'America first' curriculum. [...] Not that I was ever just like "America first" but I mean, I can easily remember looking back 8 years and remember teaching Andrew Jackson as an American hero, as opposed to Andrew Jackson as this, like, horrendous human being. So I mean there's definitely differences in the way that I feel when I'm teaching, [...] so like I'm imagining that that somehow placates itself out in my classroom whether it's intentional or not. [P1]

This is pretty powerful self-reflection that demonstrates how a teacher's education and professional growth can impact their interpretation of history. Not only had the teacher's view on a

historical figure completely shifted, but their whole approach to the curriculum. Admittedly, they previously had an American-centric approach to their curriculum, but have since made their courses “more well-rounded.” They also shared that this caused a shift in the way they feel while teaching, and further, that this shift in some way impacted their courses. This teacher’s story personifies much of what the teachers spoke on in terms of variance between social studies courses due to personal bias, education, and historical interpretation.

5.4 The Traditional Approach to Social Studies Promotes a Patriotic, Mythologized History

Built into the interview questions were quotes by some of the academics that are referenced in the theoretical framework about ‘patriotic history’ and ‘mythologized history’. Many of the teachers’ responses categorized these interpretations of history—patriotic and mythologized history—as the ‘traditional perspective’ of history, or social studies. When asked to elaborate on the ‘traditional perspective’ they were referring to, a teacher explained, “Taking this approach of this idea of a patriotic history, or a shared national history, how it supports nationalistic or patriotic ideas.” The participant associates the traditional way of teaching history as one that promotes patriotism and even nationalism. It was referred to as “the old way of teaching American history” by one participant [P1-OO]. Among the participants it was often described as dated. Speaking about this approach one of the teachers said, “there are still parts of the country that, you know, they still teach it very nationalistic [P5-E].” Again they associated it with nationalism, but their use of the word “still” was particularly revealing, as if that approach was the old status quo.

When asked if they felt that the history taught in school is somehow patriotic, one participant responded:

There is a patriotic bias, I’m sure. For me [...] it’s more of a white nationalist bias than it is a patriotic bias. You know, we’re teaching that Reconstruction right, when we say Reconstruction ended, we’re saying it like Reconstruction was over, we did it, right? You know we’re teaching Manifest Destiny which sounds like this phenomenal idea and it’s like, well let’s really dive in and see what’s actually taking place throughout this. You know when I learned Manifest Destiny I was in high school, and it was like this great achievement that we have obtained all of this land and there was very

little attention to mass redistribution of land to white people, there's really little attention paid to what was actually taking place to Native Americans at this time. [P1-II]

The teacher points out popular examples of how history in school has been told from the 'white' perspective, and shared that this was what they had learned growing up as well. Only now they realize that this narrative is lacking the perspective of the minority peoples that were impacted the most by these ideas. As mentioned previously, this participant shared their own journey with how patriotism guided their view of the U.S.'s history and stance in the world:

I think I used to be extremely patriotic. I think the deeper I go into American history, the harder it is to be super... like eight years ago, 'American number one?'— 'absolutely we're number one. America should be in control of everything going on, foreign and within their borders, and they make the best decisions' and that sort of thing. [...]

The more that I learned about American history the more I personally stepped away from this idea... [P1-T]

The participant explained that their personal views on patriotism impacted their teaching, moving from a more "America first" curriculum to one that is more "well rounded [P1-T]." This personal account shows the extreme, even blind, support that a patriotic interpretation of history could create.

The participants were clear that they do not teach this traditional approach, but that they know others do. One of the teachers explained:

I don't teach it that way, and I don't think we have a large population of teachers here that do that, but I know that... I mean I know that this happens, I mean I've seen it at other schools, I've talk to other American history teachers. [P1-GG]

As mentioned before, the participants acknowledged how easily this approach can be taken by teachers without seeming too out of touch with the curriculum. Depending on how you interpret parts of history and what evidence you use, a patriotic or mythologized history can be taught. One of the participants addressed this dynamic:

You could very easily approach the curriculum as [...] sort of promoting American exceptionalism, and nationalism, or you could sort of look at the evidence and other perspectives outside of... what's the easiest way to say it.. white American perspective on history." (P2-S)

Here the teacher acknowledges the ease in which this approach could be taken, but also further elaborated on how they view this traditional perspective. Not only do they view this traditional perspective as patriotic and mythologized, but also tied to the point of view of white

Americans. This was reiterated by many of the teachers, who also referred to nationalism, American exceptionalism, and the white perspective when discussing the traditional historical narrative.

Digging deeper into the concept of patriotic and mythologized history, the teachers shared their perspectives on where this comes from, and how it persists in high school social studies. One of the participants expressed that they see this as a top down issue, in that the state and federal government want this traditional narrative to continue because it helps breed support for the country and less skepticism surrounding its past and current decisions. The following quote from the participant elaborates on that idea:

The effort is there from the top to do just that. [...] There is an effort to mythologize everything in American, you know ‘George Washington chopping down a cherry tree and couldn’t tell a lie.’ I mean, what could be more mythical? You know, the myth of Lincoln, you know there were some really nasty things Lincoln did to breaking the constitution that nobody points out, it’s always the mythology of ‘Honest Abe’ and we’ve built kind of this cult like worship of these figures that you can’t say anything negative about, and can’t recognize the failures as well, so yeah it’s done to-- exactly what she said-- to inspire your ordinary citizens to follow without question. [P3-EE]

The teacher brought up how often certain historical figures are idolized to help carry this mythologized perspective of the past. This is done so well, the participant explained, that people really push back against any negative accounts of these figures. When asked how this narrative takes shape in the classroom, the participant said it is often not so much about inaccuracies but where emphasis is put in the content. They elaborated on how they have seen this North Carolina:

I think it’s where you put your emphasis. I get the feeling that in some of the... the way North Carolina wants to do it is to really emphasize that first 100 years of America whereas I really want to emphasize the last 50. You know, they’ve split the US history course into two courses now, which is just ridiculous. You have an entire year on pre-civil war and to me—that’s the mythology part. It’s like ‘hey, look at all the great things we did killing off the Indians and everything.’ You know, a lot of the true heroes, to a much more diverse part of America today, don’t really show up until around the 1960s. [P3-JJ]

Here the teacher discussed the state’s emphasis on early U.S. history as a way to build a mythological view of the nation’s beginnings, romanticizing and glossing over the devastation

that was done in the process. Interestingly, they also addressed the lack of diversity in that early mythologized narrative, alluding to the idea that this traditional history is that of the white American perspective. The same participant spoke on how this traditional interpretation or approach can be seen in many textbooks still. Speaking about the Civics and Economics textbook that they use, the participant explained:

I think they're accurate in what they do put in, but I mean [...] it is biased a little bit, it tends to be pro-capitalist, extremely pro-capitalist-- as you might expect... I guess it's also [...] very kind of cheerleading for America. It doesn't present it as every country is equal, and we got great ideas from other places, and we failed to get great ideas too, it's very much cheerleading for the United States. [P3-E]

The teacher explained that the textbook presents things in a way that endorses certain ideals that are valued by the U.S. government, such as capitalism, and again promotes American exceptionalism—that the U.S. is extraordinary and unique in the world. So it seems that social studies courses are set up to maintain this traditional perspective in a number of ways, from the state curriculum and course structure, to the textbooks.

Upon further discussion, the teachers mentioned ways they have seen these patriotic and mythologized perspectives from students. According to the teachers, the students come into high school primed by patriotic and mythological historical interpretations. The impact of this can be seen in the students, explained a participant. “It does indoctrinate them, to question less... to believe in their own national superiority.” [P3-EE] Another teacher asserted, “I have kids come in and I can tell they're super nationalist [...] and they've been like eating it up their whole life, and then I present like the Native American history in a pretty factual way that's like ‘WOW, I've never even thought of this.’” The teacher explained that the history students had learned before entering high school was simplified and often glazed over the atrocities committed by the U.S., further feeding the patriotism and myth. So when the students arrive to high school, the teachers are faced with unraveling the students' misconceptions.

The participants shared that they feel students are becoming more politically engaged, but also that many are really embracing an “America first” point of view which has impacted social studies classes. On increased political engagement, one teacher said:

Politics the past few years have become more divisive, and I think that's affecting students, they're becoming more.. I don't think they were that divided before, but I

think that's because they weren't as engaged, you know I think they're paying more attention to it. [P2]

The participant pointed out not only the heightened awareness, but also heightened polarity among students due to the political climate. This also demonstrates how the participants have seen the impact of current issues and politics in the classroom. Another teacher spoke on how some of the political commentary they have seen from students has been centered on American exceptionalism. They shared, "I think our kids are growing with this mindset of 'America first,' 'whatever we have to do to be number one.'" [P1-D] Later in the interview, when asked about patriotism, the same participant recalled behavior they have seen from students:

When I think of patriotism, it's hard not to just kind of think of this 'rah! rah!' for your country kind of mentality. Off the top of my head, I'm just kind of picturing like the 'back to back world war champs' shirts that these kids are wearing around. [P1-S]

If one of the first things the teacher thinks of in relation to patriotism is a message their students were promoting, that must create an interesting environment in the social studies classroom. Further, the slogan referred to a historical event in which the interpretation they were promoting frames the U.S. as champions of both world wars. This behavior ties well into the "America first" mindset the participant described the students as having.

If this "America first" mindset is what students are approaching history with, it could make teaching a different perspective difficult. One of the participant spoke to this, saying:

...at a certain age they're not ready to hear anything negative about the history of their country. [...] By 10th grade, many of them are ready to hear that... but some are still not, and they will push back against anything that is negative. We are the... you know in their mind 'America is perfect and never did anything wrong. [P3-Z]

The teacher elaborated on how it was difficult at times to challenge students perspectives on issues, and that even when they thought they had exposed the students to a different point of view, it would seem they had dismissed it completely. They shared an anecdote about an assignment they had recently done, in which the students had to identify three supreme court cases they felt "the [U.S.] supreme court got it wrong" and the participant was pretty upset about the answers they received from students. Their reaction:

I was like 'wow, so burning a flag is wrong, but interning an entire race of people, is okay.' So yes, there is a definite feeling you get that they are not really thinking of a right and wrong comparison with a true nature of equivalency. They have some false equivalencies. [P3-CC]

The teacher goes as far as to say the students judgement is incorrect. The teacher seemed to believe that some of this comes from the patriotic and mythological narrative of the U.S. that has been promoted in and out of the high school social studies classroom.

I think it comes from that notion that... like we were saying, that false patriotism.

Somehow this guy is unpatriotic for burning a flag, but a guy that rounds up tens of thousands of people and puts them into concentration camps, that's okay. Because it's not as... as simple. [...] We in America, we like simple simple things, and that's kind of what Trump has tapped into with like the national anthem. You boil it down to the most simple thing and the common people can understand it. Whereas if you have to actually talk about really deep issues, people aren't going to go to that much trouble.

[P3-CC]

If this comment is related to the interviews as a whole, it would seem that 'the simple way' is to teach the traditional historical perspective, and that digging deeper and challenging that perspective, like many of the teachers claimed to be doing, is more difficult. Despite the lasting foothold of the traditional interpretation, it did not seem to deter the teachers. Overall the interviews showed that the teachers have felt success in challenging students to view history and society differently.

5.5 The Teachers Largely Had Negative Perceptions of Patriotism

Overall, on a personal level and as educators, the teachers had a relatively negative view of patriotism. When asked if they view themselves as patriotic, none of the participants directly identified as such. In fact, many of the participants thought they were somehow an anomaly among teachers for not identifying as patriotic. One participant commented, "I, being like the minority here, in terms of... if we had a scale here of patriotism and nationalism, you know I'm pretty small on that list, of course, or pretty close to zero..." And so while many of them shared similar views on patriotism, and of themselves as patriots, many of them voiced that they felt they were different from other teachers because of their views. Furthermore, the participants also shared a rather negative view of the concept all together. Many of them said this directly. One participant explained:

It's just not important to me. It's not a priority to me. It's one I guess, just being kind of a contrarian, I just reject because that's like the traditional role, that's the traditional justification for social studies. [P4-T]

The participant not only rejects patriotism personally, but holds further contempt for the notion due to how it has been leveraged in traditional approaches to history. This reinforces the point made in the previous section that often traditional history is written in a way to promote patriotism. To clarify, the participant was asked if they view patriotism as a negative word, to which they responded, “Yeah, I would say... ultimately. I would say patriotism and nationalism are ones that are pejorative[P4-U].” The teachers’ negative view of patriotism undoubtedly impacts their view of it being promoted in school.

To better understand the participants’ perspectives on patriotism, they were asked to explain how they conceptualize it. Many of the teachers associated patriotism with nationalism, which was also reflected in their diction. They often paired the words together or used them as synonyms throughout the interviews. However, frequently many of the participants explained patriotism as a spectrum, with the extreme being nationalism—and inherently dangerous—and the lesser being a patriotism they were more comfortable with—centered on love for fellow citizens and community. Many of them seemed to agree that, “there’s different definitions, and there’s definitely different ways that people could interact with it [P2-EE].” One of the teachers explained that “a good form of patriotism is when you’re supporting and helping the people of your country” such as “after the hurricane in Texas-- the guys that go around and try to rescue people with their fishing boats.” On the other side of the spectrum, where the participants claimed that patriotism becomes nationalism, the teachers described patriotism much more negatively. One of the teachers elaborated:

When patriotism moves toward nationalism, and we start feeling as if we as a people are superior to other groups of people, I think it becomes a detriment to society as a whole. I mean this idea that we as a society deserve the protection, and that Mexican immigrants don’t deserve that same thing, just because one was birthed on one side of the river, or that the Syrian refugees don’t deserve those same things. Or that somehow there are more terrorists coming out of the middle east then are coming out of the United States. These are just like these absurd notions to me that are built on this idea of American patriotism, that turns in then to American nationalism. [P1-U]

The patriotism that the participant described was one that creates binaries and “us and them” mentalities. The participant even identified stances on political and social issues that they associate this type of patriotism with, overall depicting it as exclusionary.

Another participant identified what they termed “fake patriotism.” This type of patriotism, the teacher explained, is when people drum up patriotism for their own self-interest and use it to qualify their actions. The participant explained this as such:

...Fake patriotism has been used throughout American history to cover up all kinds of things. Nixon, comes to mind.. [he hid] behind patriotism for the war while he himself torpedoed the peace conference that would have ended that war—just so that he could become president. And so, this idea that he was somehow patriotic for continuing the war in a self-serving interest... patriotism can be misrepresented and misunderstood [P3].

The participant addressed the complexity of patriotism and how it can be perceived and manipulated, even linking this idea to an example in history. The teacher’s idea of “fake patriotism” further revealed their distrust for things labeled patriotic, and the blinding power it can have on people, which could be seen in their view on a patriotic perspective of history. If patriotism can be misrepresented, a patriotic lens through which to view history, could also be misleading.

While the participants’ conceptions of patriotism, and their depictions of the spectrum they envisioned varied in minor ways, they were largely similar. Many of them identified ‘good’ and ‘bad patriotism’ and with similar descriptions. However, despite identifying a good form of patriotism, the participants still held a relatively negative view of the sentiment, particularly in relation to education and social studies.

5.6 It is Not a Teacher’s Place to Instill Values of Patriotism, Nor the School’s

In discussing these concepts of patriotic and mythologized history, the participants were asked about their own relationship with patriotism and if patriotism is something that they promote as teachers. Interestingly, none of the participants said they would describe themselves as patriotic. They also expressed that they did not feel that patriotism was something that should be promoted in school. To the point, a participant said that they are “not here to preach politics or to preach nationalism or patriotism [P1-JJ].” Some participants went further, and expressed that it is not a teachers place to instill values at all. One of the teacher’s comments really encompassed the participants’ stances:

...In terms of nationalism or patriotism... those are not for, not really for me to decide. Your experience is kind of unique as a student, or as an American, or as a person

in the world, so it's not really for me to be like 'this is how you gotta see the world. Here's how you gotta think about the world.' [P4-P]

This participant, along with the others, were clear about their perspective on the purpose of social studies courses. Social Studies courses were to build analytical skills and content knowledge, not mold student's perspectives in a specific way. This is reiterated by the participant later in their interview:

I'm not teaching patriotism and nationalism. The idea that... history should teach to be proud of your country, I don't think that I really need to do that. I can teach my kids to think and be analytical and come to the proper [conclusions on their own]. ... I give my students credit and I don't feel I have to like... present... a particular view, good or bad. I can present 'here's the arguments. Alright, let's analyze these arguments. [P4-O]

This response was centered around the respect the teacher has for their student's opinions and perspectives, as well as in students' ability to further develop their opinions on their own as they learn. The teachers agreed that their focus was on exposing students to evidence and a variety of perspectives, without promoting specific ideals.

The teachers did acknowledge that some teachers do promote patriotism in their courses, but again hinted that this was the traditional approach to social studies, and that change was happening. One teacher explained that "there are definitely regions of America in which that's true—I think probably, we're in one of them. ... [But] I think there is a shift that's happening. I think teachers are getting away from that [P1-Y]." Some of the participants shared that they reference the more traditional narratives in their teaching and have students challenge them with the available evidence. One of the teachers said they present it as "' Here is that traditional perspective, let's look at other evidence and see how that narrative fits the evidence.'" And that they "don't tell them, yes it's true or no it's not, but [they] let them decide how well it holds up to evidence [P2-Y]." This approach seemed consistent with what the other participants described doing. The teachers see themselves as providing the students with the tools and information needed for them to draw their own conclusions and develop their own perspectives—whether that reinforces students' feelings of patriotism, or challenges them.

Patriotism Should Not be a Goal in Education

Many of the teachers expressed disapproval of patriotism being involved in formal schooling at all. One of the teachers went as far as to compare patriotism with religion, asserting that neither of them have a place in the social studies classroom. Their impassioned case for this comparison went as follows:

What we're getting into, I feel like, with patriotism and nationalism, is we're getting into religion. You're building something on faith. And as a historian, it's about evidence, and it's about... interpretation of the past, but I don't get to make up that interpretation of the past. It's not historical fiction, it has to be grounded in some type of evidence. And when we talk about patriotism and nationalism, you are basically saying love of country, my faith. And just like there's no evidence that there is a God, it's 'I believe'—which I'm totally fine with that—but I don't know what place that has in a social studies classroom. [P4-U]

This comparison is particularly interesting because legally no public school can lead the promotion or practice of any religion. So if patriotism was to be treated like religion, it too would not be a part of schooling. The point the teacher was making is that patriotism is based on a feeling, a feeling of love or pride for their country, based on an individual's own values and perspective. Further, it is not based on any hard evidence, making it irrelevant in a classroom. As the teachers reiterated throughout their interviews, they did not believe it is a teacher's place to instill certain values in students, or promote a particular perspective. They aimed to provide students with an array of evidence with which they can develop their own opinions, and they viewed patriotism no differently.

When asked if patriotism is a virtue that should be taught in school, another participant made another comparison. They responded:

No. I think anytime you centralized patriotism like that, the next thing you know we're all saluting the same guy and pledging allegiance to Hitler. Forced patriotism has a very strong feel of Nazi Germany to me, where you're forcing people to do it a certain way. [P3-X]

Such a strong comparison demonstrates the seriousness of this participant's stance on patriotism being encouraged in school. They described it as 'centralized patriotism,' and 'forced patriotism,' actions that could lead to the support of a dictator. When asked if the participant saw patriotism in school as indoctrination, they explained:

Oh, it can be. I mean the pledge of allegiance itself it part of that. The pledge has been changed multiple times, and the ‘under god’ part was only put in in the 1950s because we were in the middle of the cold war and we wanted to emphasize the religious nature of America versus the agnostic nature of the Soviet Union. So we decided to force every kid in America to say ‘under god’ and there’s a strange feel of that patriotism to me. [P3-X]

Again, the teacher is referred to this as ‘forced’ and pointed out how it has been manipulated as political propaganda. Explaining that this type of patriotism, the reciting of a pledge with religious undertones in school, has a ‘strange feel’ to them.

The reciting of the pledge of allegiance was an example of patriotism in school that many of the teachers referred to, all of them negatively. At their school, the pledge of allegiance is a part of the morning announcements each day, during which the entire school is asked to stand together with their right hand over their heart and recite the country pledge. The premise of it is that the individuals are pledging allegiance to their country. Of the teachers that spoke about the pledge, many of them made a point to say that they themselves do not stand for the pledge of allegiance, and do not require students to. However, they said that this is not the norm. They explained that many students face being reprimanded by teachers if they do not stand for the pledge each day. One of the participants said, “There’s a huge portion of the education population that’s still ‘you should stand for the pledge and respect all of these things’” and that “the number one reaction of teachers, is there’s something wrong with that person not standing up for the pledge of allegiance.” [P1-KK] There is pressure from students as well. One of the teachers talked about students ridiculing other students that do not stand for the pledge. Their story:

Last year we had some of the students who wouldn’t stand for the pledge of allegiance because they were kind of jumping on the bandwagon with the NFL protest. And I understood that. I understood what they were saying with the quote about ‘liberty and justice for all,’ they felt like didn’t really apply to them. And you had some students who felt that that was unpatriotic of them. [P3-U]

The NFL protest, in which professional football players had been taking a knee during the national anthem, instead of standing with their hand over their heart, was mentioned by another participant as well. According to the teachers, the protest has inspired some of their students to stay seated during the pledge of allegiance at school as a way of participating in the protest. The protest was intended to raise awareness on racial disparities, particularly the unequal

treatment of black Americans. As the teachers explained, the students wanted to be a part of that, and they respected that. However, other students did not respect that decision and deemed the students who sat during the pledge, unpatriotic. The teachers did not approve of the pressure put on students to participate in the pledge, nor the narrow view patriotism with which people could be labeled patriotic or not based on their participation in the pledge. They expressed, that in their opinion, the students who chose to sit out in protest of the pledge were being patriotic, as they were exercising agency.

Interestingly, despite the social pressure put on participation in the pledge of allegiance, many of the teachers explained that they also do not recite or stand for the pledge. This is an interesting choice considering their claim that the majority of teachers enforce the reciting, and due to the reaction of students when people do not participate. However, it seemed teachers at their school had begun taking a different stance, one of the participants explained:

There's a huge portion of teachers here that choose not to say the pledge of allegiance, so yeah I think we're changing as an educational community, but I don't think that, I mean you're not always.. There's still districts around us where it's a big thing. [P1-Y]

So while it still remains important to some, which is reflected in its daily recitation, it seems that slowly more teachers and students are questioning the pledge of allegiance and its place in school. It is unclear what the teachers perceived the cause of this to be. For the participants in particular, many of them discussed the messy history of the pledge, which could have played a part in their tarnished their view of it. One of the teachers even does a lesson with the students on it. Here they explain:

... We do the history of the pledge. It's something that you know the kids say in 3rd period everyday, and they don't know what they say or where it came from. [...] It's like lesson... like day 2, and the whole point of the lesson is to get them to see that everything has a history and nothing is like pre-historical. Everything is created in a certain context for certain reasons, and you should be thinking about that context and those reasons. [...] It was created in 1890 during the wave of Eastern and Southern European immigrants coming to this country and the belief that these people are not American and needed to be Americanized. And so the Pledge of Allegiance was created.

And so in that context it creates a bunch of different... it creates a different understanding of the pledge, which is kind of the point. [P4]

By doing this lesson, the teacher is not promoting or bashing patriotism, or even the pledge of allegiance, but again, seeking to provide students with evidence so that they can develop more

informed opinions. Most important to the teacher was that that students understand that everything has a history, and that history should inform their opinions. With this information in mind however, the teachers had formed their opinions. It seemed clear that the teachers did not view the pledge as a true act of patriotism, but an empty ritual used as propaganda that caused unnecessary social pressure in school. The frequency with which the pledge was brought up also exposed the influence it had on the participants stance that patriotism should not be a goal in education.

5.7 Demythologized History is not at Odds with Patriotism

Once it was clear that the participants did not approve of a mythologized historical narrative—one that glazes over atrocities and missteps in the promotion of patriotism—the teachers were asked how they viewed a *demythologized history*. Further, if they thought that a demythologized history, one that exposes and analyzes the darker times in history as much as the light, could still unify a population. And, if that population could still find a sense of patriotism in a complicated and messy history. Discussion revealed that the participants did not perceive demythologized history to be at odds with patriotism, and that ultimately a more transparent narrative could create a stronger, more inclusive, unity.

At the core of the debate is the teacher’s argument that no history should be withheld, and that “we should know all of our history” [P1-Z]. This is tied to the point that the teachers continued to reiterate, that they try to present everything and then leave space for their students to form their own opinions about it. As one participant explained, “I think it’s my job, not necessarily to debunk the myths but to present the material in a way to let kids decide about American history for themselves.” [P1-HH] And while the teachers explained that they do not necessarily seek to challenge the ‘myths’ of history, they do aim to challenge students assumptions and broaden their perspectives. One participant explained that the study of history should be uncomfortable:

...I think... real historical study has to sort of, not threaten, but examine closely things that people might hold closely, especially their own historical, their national history. So, I would disagree with the idea that you should put blinders on, so to speak.” [P2-U]

While many might scare away from or feel uncomfortable discussing controversial or brutal times in history, especially when they are connected to it in some way, the participants were

encouraging of this. They asserted that you can be critical without completely condemning. As one of the teachers put it, “I think you can acknowledge the problems in America without being like ‘screw America’” [P5-AA] More pointedly, the participant continued, “I think that you can understand what we did to Native Americans, and still be proud of, like, the good things that we are today [...] I think we need to for sure face it, that’s the biggest problem...” [P5-AA] This seemed to be the common sentiment upheld by the participants— that you can acknowledge wrongdoings without developing distain or overshadowing the good.

However, the teachers also pointed out that not everyone agrees, and in the U.S. this debate is political, and it divides along party lines. When discussing whether you can be critical of your country and still patriotic, one of the participants remarked, “I think depending on what side of political spectrum you’re on, you might disagree with that, but I think it’s possible...” [P5-AA] They explained that “the far right, they come off as intolerant” and that “the far left are just so... anti-America.” [P4-BB] In regard to ‘the right,’ the teachers spoke about “the conservative push” of American exceptionalism. As a participant recalled, the national AP standards were decidedly too ‘anti-American,’ so there was a discussion of it at the national GOP convention, and ultimately the standards were revised. Speaking to that, a participant said, “this kind of conservative backlash to the AP... it’s like [they think] it’s going to take away this kind of communal aspect or shared, our shared value of the past. I don’t necessarily think that...” [P4-Z] The teacher rejects their fear that a more transparent telling of the country’s past would lead to disunity in some way. On the conservative promotion of American exceptionalism, the participant charged:

...I would challenge this idea that America is uniquely free and to quote Reagan, ‘America this last Bastion of freedom’... I wouldn’t necessarily agree with that, but what makes America exceptional is its ability to... change. It’s a system that can, or it’s a place that can, it has the opportunity to change— does it always? Absolutely not. Does it change for the good and then take 3 steps forward and 2 steps back? Absolutely. But there is this chance of progress. [P4-Z]

The participant argues that instead of rallying behind the idea of the U.S. being ‘uniquely free’ of exceptional, there can be an acknowledgment of time when that freedom was obstructed, and rally behind the country’s ability to address the issues and change.

The teachers reiterated again and again that they were not advocating for ‘America shaming’ but historical transparency. One of the teachers discussed an argument made against this less

filtered approach to history, that the study of negative aspects of the past would encourage groups to continue:

...the narrative that's out there is the idea that the more that we talk about the past, the more you're like rallying up the black community for revolt. And it's like, well— the real argument is that well maybe the revolt is justified, and maybe the injustices are not. Just because one group of people doesn't think the injustices are there, doesn't mean that they're not..." [P1-PP]

They acknowledged the complexity of this and that some students would struggle to find empowerment in a dark and messy narrative. One participant spoke about their experience with this:

...on the flip side I do have a lot of students that are like you open my eyes to how bad the United States was. And that's not really what I want to hear either... [...] we talk about principles and values of the United States but basically the takeaway that I want them to take with them is that sometimes those things are contradictory. You can't have necessarily freedom and equality, like at some point those things compete, can be kind of.. contrast against each other. [P4-Y]

The depth of this idea that there is a give and take relationship between freedom and equality, shows the complexity that this participant trusts students with. This is a much broader concept than learning people and dates in history, their goal is to “explain how humanity works.” [BQUU] And that cannot happen without confronting wrong doings and hard truths. Other teachers recommended emphasizing context. They try to help students understand that social norms evolve over time, and that not all things in history can be judged with today's standards in mind. One teacher contended, “I think where people get in trouble, is where you start applying good and bad to things.” [RQVV] The teachers seemed in agreeance that the study of history should not focus on placing judgement, but understand the cause and effect of decisions so that better ones can be made in the future.

Acknowledging the argument for a strong national history with which to unite people, the teachers discussed how a demythologized history could actually create a stronger bond, one of acceptance and amends. One of the participants speaks to this:

Yes, I think you do need a strong national history to be united, but that national history doesn't have to be egocentric. It doesn't have to be focused on not admitting things we've done wrong and not pointing out the mistakes of the past. It could be built on recognizing some of the mistakes of the past and avoiding them in the future. You

know I think of like, Germany, and some of the countries over there now who teach very admittedly the mistakes they've made and try to—and that doesn't diminish their standing now—acknowledging what they've done wrong, but we're still not to that point... [P3-DD]

Like the participant pointed out, the focus of demythologized history is not to dwell or focus on the mistakes of the past, but to analyze them in a productive way for the future. Another participant spoke to the same point, saying:

...what I'm trying to do is not necessarily turn them into fuckin'... you know... America haters. What I'm trying to do though, is get them to try to understand that people are people, and people make bad decisions. And you should kind of grapple with that, you should try and love people unconditionally in a sense. [...] Americans are just as apt to make mistakes as someone else. Getting students to realize that, and then the next step is like well okay let's not make a mistake right now in how we treat other countries. And to me the best way to do that is to kind of explain how humanity works... [P4-UU]

The teacher's argument is about humanizing history so that it can be learned from and applied in a very real, personal way. They argue that people make mistakes, and so do countries and those mistakes should not be ignored, but learned from. Insight can be drawn from the mistakes of the past, and that can help guide relationships big and small moving forward. They further argue that coming to terms with the past, and embracing its complexity, could actually develop a stronger unity. They claim that "this approach could create people that are prouder to be Americans because they can actually like say here is the evidence of what America has done..." [P4-U] Thus, more information and understanding could strengthen individuals' patriotism because they would have more evidence to support their feelings. Elaborating more on the benefits of demythologized history, the teachers discussed how it could empower individuals. Setting aside the façade of the U.S. as the just and rightful defender of democracy and freedom in the world, people could instead unite behind the country's ability to progress and furthermore, individual's power to be a part of that progress. The teachers stressed that humanizing individuals in history was a way to inspire agency in students. One teacher elaborates on this point:

...You know it's like people make choices, sometimes it's shitty choices. I mean like George Washington or Thomas Jefferson had slaves but sometimes they write a document that inspires the world. People can be multifaceted. People can be good and bad. And so that's the takeaway from history it's not that Jefferson is some deity it's that

Jefferson is it dude and I'm a dude he made should he mistakes he also make some good things happen and I can affect my particular historical moment too. [P4-CC]

A demythologized history would unite people through the possibility for progress and the agency of individuals instead of glorified historical figures and stories from the past. The participant charges that humanizing people in history by discussing their mistakes, also helps to make their achievements seem attainable to students. The take away they want for students is “that actually [they] have a lot of power to make choices that can impact history. And that the story of the United States is one of opportunity. Things can be bad, but things can change. And so that is one of optimism ultimately.” [P4-Z] To them, this is what demythologized history is, and what all social studies should be about. Ultimately, the teachers expressed that a demythologized history, one that reveals the mistakes and flaws in the US’s history, would still allow for patriotism—a different, more accepting patriotism.

5.8 Demythologized History Already Exists & it’s Multicultural

While it became clear that the participants saw value in a demythologized history, they were then asked if and how this could be accomplished. Would history need to be re-written? If it is agreed on that a demythologized history is important for inspiring knowledgeable youth, what should be done? One participant responded, “Well, I don’t think it has to be re-written, it’s really there.” [P3-II] And that was largely the consensus of the teachers—it’s already there. They pointed to the academy and revisionist history, and charged that it already exists, just maybe not in most high school classrooms. Furthermore, the teachers contented that true demythologized history is also innately a multicultural, social history, and that these narratives are what most academics focus on today. To do this, one of the teachers said, “You have to be willing to accept some of the faults of the distant past and you have to be willing to promote some of the ideas of what’s American, that include other people. [P3-II] The challenge, as they described it, is bridging the gap between high school social studies teachers and academia, and updating social studies courses to be more reflective of society today.

A point that a couple of teachers made, is that if the history being taught in high school social studies courses reflected what is taught and researched at the University level, it would be a demythologized history. Discussing demythologized history, one participant said, “I mean, that’s what revisionist history is [...] if you are studying history today, it’s gonna be revision-

ist. It gonna be. It has to be. [P5-VV] However, they were speaking to University level studies, which in their experience, they explained, had heavily impacted their approach to history as a high school teacher. To them it was simple—“If you present the facts most of these national myths iron themselves out, you know?” [P5-LL] But as another participant pointed out, not all social studies teachers are train historians at the University level. As mentioned before, the participant largely feels this is an issue due to there being social studies teachers that did not go to University to be historians. They remarked, “teacher training, particularly [...] teaching people to be historians, there is a... I think a gap there and so I don't think very many people are super up-to-date on essentially [...] the history that's going on.” [P4-LL] The participant further asserts that, “If our High School classrooms were reflective of the academy of what actual professional historians are focusing and teaching on, I don't think this would be necessarily much of an issue.” [P4-LL] If this gap to be were bridged, then high school social studies courses would be multicultural the participant contends. “if a teacher, especially trained as a historian, and is kind of up to date on the research, is going to be multicultural because that's where the profession is. It's social history right now, it's the history of different groups,” they further asserted. [P4-L] According to this participant, the issue is multifaceted then. More social studies teachers need to have history backgrounds, and more of them need to stay up to date on current research. If this is to be accomplished, they explained, the courses would naturally teach a demythologized, multicultural, social history.

Another participant claims that part of moving away from the mythology in history, is focusing less on the founding of the U.S., and more on modern history, which includes more contributions by a diverse group of people. They explained:

I think it's where you put your emphasis. I get the feeling that [...] the way North Carolina wants to do it is to really emphasis that first 100 years of America whereas I really want to emphasize the last 50. You know, they've split the US history course into 2 courses now, which is just ridiculous. You have an entire year on pre-civil war and to me--- that's the mythology part. It's like 'hey, look at all the great things we did killing off the Indians and everything.' You know, a lot of the true heroes, to a much more diverse part of American today, don't really show up until around the 1960s.”

[P3-JJ]

The participant argued that instead of focusing on a very white centric origin story of the U.S., a demythologized history should focus more on the contributions of minorities, demonstrating the positive legacy of multiculturalism in the U.S. today.

Another participant also spoke about how minority students might interact with the traditional historical narrative of the U.S. They anticipated that:

...anytime you have more eyes, more ears, more perspectives, more cultures, um, viewing what you're giving out, I think you're gonna see more criticism. You're gonna definitely need to defend and know your stuff. The more multicultural we become, the more the old way of teaching American history is going to be difficult. [P1-OO]

While viewed out of context this could be read as defensive, or as if the teacher is reluctant about the changes, but this was more of a forewarning to teachers that change is timely and they need to adapt. They argue that with an increasing number of minority students, the traditional approach to history is going to be met with resistance. And to meet these changes, teachers need to abandon their old approach and update their knowledge. The predicted that the changing population, will not let this go ignored, but will demand a multicultural history that includes more perspectives, that in turn presents a more inclusive truth.

In terms of how this approach interacts with patriotism, one of the teachers explained that just as history is constantly being revised, the curriculum has to be revised, and in turn the way that patriotism is found within it will change. They contend that we need to change how we look at history and how we find patriotism within it. The participant explains:

I think an important part of patriotism, and of history, is to understand that there are multiple perspectives and that if we think of patriotism as civic involvement, that patriotism is something that changes over time. And I mean history is living and changes, so does the makeup of the country- I think the curriculum has to adapt to that. [P2-Dd]

Thus, the teacher propounds that just as society changes, interpretations of history will change, and patriotism with them. Further, social studies curriculum must also adapt. The changes in the makeup of the country that the participant was alluding to, is the increasing diversity of the population. Like them, many of the teachers addressed this change. "We're becoming much more of a multicultural Nation. We will be a minority-majority country by 2050, California and Texas already are basically," explained another teacher. [P4-MM] Another teacher mention this exact information, and elaborated on the dynamic it will create for the study of history:

...within probably 30 years we're going to be a majority minority country where you have a large enough population of Hispanic and black people, that is actually more

that the white people. So then how do you keep ‘manifest destiny’ as part of your history, when the ‘true history’ is that we provoked a war with Mexico in order to take the western United States... um, and they will recognize that. So yeah I think it needs to be reshaped if you’re going to include, or if you want to include, those people in the story. [P3-HH]

It was clear that the growing multiculturalism was something some of the teachers had thought about, and they acknowledged that social studies courses needed to evolve to reflect that. As the participant pointed out, demythologizing history is a big part of that. The teacher used the example of ‘manifest destiny,’ pointing out that this romantic notion that has been used to justify the colonization of the American west, is not going to resonate with many minority students, as it involved the oppression of their people. The participant further asserted that, “it has to be broadened and more inclusive.” [P3-Hh] They added that, “the very nature of some of that mythology... places minority and immigrant students in a lower category, right from the start. And makes them feel as though they are second class in this story.” [P3-GG] This sentiment was echoed by another participant as well, who shared that they, “think for minority students, it’s important to see the heroes that look like them. And unfortunately American History doesn’t really allow for those people.” [P1-TT] The teachers seemed to agree that the current historical interpretation that is predominately taught in social studies classrooms is not inclusive enough for a diverse population today. If the students are to see themselves as a part of the U.S., or to find a patriotism in the country’s narrative, it must include them in a positive manner. If this is done, one of the teachers believed this new narrative could inspire patriotism in minorities. “I would think they would understand patriotism as involvement, and both understanding the nation’s history and being critical of it- critical in the academic sense,” they explained. [P2-FF] They expressed that a multicultural approach could instill a sense of agency in minority students. They contend that this patriotism, while not intentionally promoted, could actually reach more of the population than that found in the traditional historical narrative.

Ultimately, the participants built the case that demythologized history is multicultural history, and the best way to diversify the cultural perspectives in history is through social history. To have a truly demythologized history, it must be multicultural and it must include a diverse range of perspectives and voices. This is the best way to ensure that a history is not favoring of one group or country. More diversity in perspectives, the teachers pointed out, is key to demythologizing history. As one teacher said, “...the more perspectives that are laid out, the

better understanding that we're going to have of history.” [P1-QQ] This is also important, as another teacher explained, so that the historical narrative is not dominated by one group, creating a narrow understanding and lack of representation for diverse population. Social history is the best way to achieve this, the participant argued. They explained that due to power dynamics, predominately history is “about [how] white male property owners are controlling usually politics, economics and [society].” They further avow, that “by focusing on social history, the history of regular people, it allows you to bring in, basically, all different perspectives, all different experiences. [And] that is what historians are doing today.” [P4-LL] To ensure that this history is making it into high school classrooms, one participant continually asserted, teachers need to have current, high level history knowledge. “My point,” they explain, “is that there is this disconnect. And so really the solution here is if history teachers are up-to-date on what history actually is today, then that is social history, then that is Multicultural history.” [P4-LL] This was the most concise and pointed solution proposed by any of the teachers, and one that ultimately seemed achievable.

5.9 The Teachers Seek to Promote Multiculturalism Through Their Curriculum

Just as the teachers had acknowledged that the U.S. was becoming increasingly multicultural, they also discussed what they had been doing to reflect that in their classrooms. While the teachers expressed that they were largely uncomfortable promoting values in their courses, particularly patriotism, they were passionate about encouraging multiculturalism. When asked if they seek to instill morals in students, one participant said, “Yes and no. Not necessarily my personal morals or values, but sort of shared cultural values of multiculturalism.” [P2-L] It seemed, to them, that multiculturalism was not personal or somehow a preference, but essential. The teacher’s promotion of multiculturalism largely centered around in the depth analysis of the history of race relations in the U.S., tracing their lasting impact to today. As they pointed out, this is not emphasized this way in the North Carolina curriculum, nevertheless, the teachers intentionally created their own curriculum and content on these issues. They shared that this approach is not always welcomed by everyone, but that they view it as important and necessary.

5.9.1 Racial Issues are Relevant and Current

Throughout the interviews many of the teachers mentioned prevailing issues of race and segregation in North Carolina. Even when race was not directly a part of the interview questions, many of the conversations continued to center around race, prejudices, and segregation. When asked if there was anything they emphasize or promote in their classroom, one participant responded, “it’s been to point out racial injustice. That’s been a real big thing I’ve notice moving back here—that it’s still alive, still prevalent... so I point that out.” The participants also expressed that these issues are impacting classroom dynamics and what they chose to teach. It appeared to be something the teachers considered often, and at times a point of contention in the classroom that many of the teachers explained approaching with care.

The teachers reiterated throughout the interviews that society is still segregated, racially and economically, and that it makes it hard to solidify certain points in the classroom, such as the lasting legacies of slavery. The teachers explained that most of the students at their school have been separated from a lot of the issues, and that this distance has created a lack of empathy and understanding of social injustices. One of the participants spoke about this at length:

...I think a huge part of it comes down to, we’re so racially and ethnically and economically segregated still as society, that if I am living in a middle class white suburb, I don’t see the struggles of inner city black America. I can’t understand why it’s a big deal for Rita in the inner-city to go obtain an ID in order to vote, I can’t understand how when she needs to go get an ID she needs to take two hours off of work, which is \$25 of her weekly salary which may mean her kids don’t eat, and she has to buy a bus ticket, all because what? A vote that probably is not going to matter anyway. I can’t put myself in her shoes because I don’t see that on a day to day basis. [P1-CC]

Here the teacher referred to the voter ID laws that some states have enacted, and explained how these laws disproportionately inconvenienced poor and minority voters, deterring them from voting. The teacher argues that students, and people in general, struggle to understand this because they are not exposed to it themselves. They continue, explaining that even when students are presented with evidence there is still cognitive dissonance that creates a gap in understanding:

There’s still a huge population, especially at our current school, where you know here’s all the failures of reconstruction, it’s laid out for you, and you still, they’re still going to believe that enough was done at that point... You’re still never going to get

every student to believe that the white-black achievement gap in America has something to do with the black kid sitting next to you, his grandmother was in a segregated school and was unable to get any type of job outside of labor jobs [...] They don't even understand what it's like for a black person in our society to get a job [even] with a degree. They don't even understand the disadvantage when you're name is 'Jamal' and you fill out an application. [P1-CC]

The teacher explained in detail the misconceptions among their students that they are constantly fighting against as they try to show them the lasting impacts of history on different racial groups, especially Black Americans. Ultimately, they argue that is it not always due to ill intention but a disconnect created by segregation and privilege. This disconnect creates a binary of us and them, and when the 'them' is estranged it can create fear. They go on to explain:

I think that opinion comes from a lot of fear. I think that we believe equality, that achievement, that economic success is a zero sum game. That if we give to this group, that we are taking from this group. That just because my ancestors did X, doesn't mean that I should suffer because of this. I don't think that we fully understand the impacts that 400 years of decisions [had] on tremendous groups of people [...] because of the segregation we're living in. It creates a lack of empathy, lack of knowledge. There's not a whole lot of people out there that wouldn't help this person if they knew the circumstance [P1-CC]

The participants spoke on this gap in understanding of social issues many times. They depicted this mindset as being popular among their students and their parents which made teaching parts of history controversial at times. However, they seemed extremely passionate about the importance of challenging these misunderstandings by lessening students distances to these issues in hopes of creating more empathy.

Three of the five teachers said that they explicitly go out of their way to teach a thorough examination of the Civil Rights Era in the United States as a way to try to combat lasting prejudices and injustices in society. They also pointed out that this approach is not necessarily the standard and that some avoid it:

...the narrative that's out there is the idea that the more that we talk about the past the more you're like rallying up the black community for revolt and its like well, the real argument is that well maybe the revolt is justified, and maybe the injustices are not... [P1]

So while these participants acknowledged that it might be controversial to discuss, they believe it is important and relevant, and that they might be able to influence the narrative.

One of the participants remarked multiple times on the differences in how racial issues are treated in the North Carolina curriculum compared to other states. Their strong stance on the curriculum can be seen in the following quote:

...coming in and seeing the North Carolina curriculum, it seemed weak in some areas, perhaps even deliberately, and one of those was the Civil Rights era. The book had a total of like 3 pages on the total Civil Rights Movement, so I basically [...] created a new section of my own... [...] That was another one where there were strong opinions and [students] were seeing things maybe deeper than the state would want them to, because it seems like it's almost been deliberately left out here. [P3-C]

While other teachers echoed this critique that North Carolina's curriculum is weak regarding the Civil Rights Movement, this participant was the only to explicitly state that they thought the state did it deliberately. Much of the participant's argument for this seemed based on North Carolina's history and role in the Civil Rights Movement. Being a part of 'The South,' the battleground for much of the discrimination, violence, and protest during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, North Carolina has a long history of racial injustice and unrest. When asked how they address this issue in the classroom, the participant explained that they point out the state's weak coverage of the topic and how it could be due to the state's complicated relationship with racial justice, which persists today.

...like leading into studying for the final, I've told the kids— 'look let's be honest, the state of North Carolina is not gonna ask you much on Civil Rights, that was my unit. They're not gonna point out these things. They're probably not going to point out gerrymandering because that's something they do very well, and they're not gonna want you to understand it. [P3-F]

The participant does not just equate this weakness in the curriculum with a complicated state history, but with present day motives such as continued gerrymandering in the state, a hot issue even in 2019. Here the participant is alluding to a conflict of interest for the state to teach about the states past wrong doings, because many of those systemic issues are still prevalent. While making this point to their students could be seen as controversial or overtly political, this participant sees it as their duty to present these issues to students as a way of increasing awareness.

The Teachers Seek Further Diversity in Curriculum

Beyond racial issues, some of the participants also mentioned intentionally including awareness for other marginalized groups in their courses, such as women, Native Americans, and LGBTQ identifiers. As one of the teachers put it “we’re living in the middle of a civil rights movement, it’s not just based on race [P3-N].” This exposed a more intersectional approach by some of the participants, as they try to be inclusive in their teaching across the identity spectrum. This intersectional approach is explained by one of the participants:

We as a social studies department, at least in American History, intentionally are trying to take those deeper dives into what this meant for different groups of people and how these decisions, and these conflicts, and these arguments... these policies, have affected people throughout time... but I don’t necessarily think the curriculum is set up to do that, ya know? [P1-G]

In this quote, not only does the interviewee acknowledge their effort in trying to create diversity in the historical narrative they teach, but also that they feel the state curriculum does not attempt to do so. This compliments the previously mentioned charge made against the state curriculum by another participant, claiming that the state intentionally glossed over the Civil Rights Movement in the curriculum. It appears at least some of the participants feel the state lacks a multicultural perspective. The same teacher later points out, “...if you look through the first half of American History 1, there’s like 10 women, there’s like 15, 20 African Americans at most. And most of them are just like... oversights [P1-G].” Furthermore, as the quote alludes, many of the teachers in the department have taken it upon themselves to go out of their way to make their own curriculum diverse and inclusive.

While all of the teachers interviewed acknowledged the importance of a multicultural curriculum, some of the teachers mentioned feeling restricted by time and the large amount of content they are expected to teach. One participant elaborated:

I think it’s hard for [U.S. history] not to be just a bunch of white men. We’ve had 45 presidents, one of them has been black. We went a hundred years between the reconstruction and the civil rights movement where we had one black senator the entire time. So it’s hard for, when you’re encompassing so much history over such a period of time [...] it’s hard to take these deep cuts into slave heroes and the ‘Harriet Tubmans’ and ‘Frederick Douglasses’... We talk about their impacts, and we get into that, but the way the curriculum allows... it’s very difficult to do that [DQUU]

As they explained, time restraint has kept them from going further into depth on certain topics or including more diversity in the people and groups that they highlight. However, it could be

argued that despite the time restraint, this approach is allowing the ‘white men’ narrative to prevail, simply because there were more of them in power.

Like the teacher quoted previously, all of the teachers that mentioned having difficulty diversifying their curriculum were U.S. history teachers. When asked if they thought it was important for minorities to see themselves in the U.S.’s historical narrative, one participant responded:

Yeah, it's important. It's hard. In the sense that... in the terms of the pure amount of content [...] it's constrained. There is not unlimited time to like, ‘okay let's dig down into Frederick Douglass or let's dig down into Jeannette Rankin, the first female congresswoman who lives this badass life.’ ...there is definitely a deficiency... I guess what I'm trying to say is that I am hyper aware of that. [P4]

One participant suggested that due to the history of the US, namely the oppression of minorities, there are few ways to diversify the historical narrative. They explained, “I think for minority students, it’s important to see the heroes that look like them. And unfortunately American History doesn’t really allow for those people because they weren’t in existence a whole lot, right [P1]?” Another teacher echoed that sentiment, specifically on early U.S. history. When asked if they do anything to help minority students connect to U.S. history, they responded, “Well, it’s funny because I don’t teach past 1877...” This is alluding to the time before and during the Civil War, when primarily only white land owning males had leverage in society [P5]. In this statement, and the laughter it was delivered with, highlights the teacher’s perception that early U.S. history lacks diversity, whether due to the circumstances of the time or the way the curriculum is designed. Another participant gave it an even later time stamp, saying, ”A lot of true heroes, to a much more diverse part of America today, don’t really show up until around the 1960s [P3].” They make this point as part of their argument for putting more emphasis on modern U.S. history, rather than earlier, more oppressive times. So although the participants seemingly agreed on the importance of a multicultural, diverse curriculum, the teachers of U.S. centric courses still expressed some doubt or difficulty in the follow through.

5.9.2 Teaching Global Multiculturalism is Not Yet a Priority

While the teachers did value and promote multiculturalism within the U.S. context, they did not express the same endorsement for global multiculturalism, or global citizenship. Although

many of the teachers expressed that the social studies curriculum is very U.S. centric and that “kids are growing with this mindset of ‘America first,’” very few of the teachers claimed to be addressing it in anyway in their classroom [P1-D]. When asked if they thought there should be a shift in focus from national citizenship to global citizenship, one teacher responded, “Yeah, in an ideal world [P1-YY].” However, when the teachers were asked if global citizenship or global mindedness was something they promote in their own classroom, the majority of them said it is not something they really think about, nor did they think it would be received well.

The teachers descriptions of how nationalistic social studies courses are, made it clear that they view it as a problem. One teacher was speaking about how U.S. History is prioritized over World History, with U.S. History now being divided into two years and World History remaining only one year. This is controversial considering the amount of content and the time span of World History is obviously much larger. They continued:

We definitely teach from a very... nationalistic view, right?... I definitely think that, that’s just the nature of America, the way the government, the way politicians, the way policy makers think is-- American kids are worth more, American lives are worth more. We go to war and American lives are worth two in any situation, so I mean, I think it’s consistent with the philosophy of us as a nation. I mean, our president won based on “America First”, which is like, you know, the opposite of where the rest of the world is going. The rest of the world is globalizing. [P1-C]

The teacher elaborates on how the nationalistic view point from which the social studies courses project, is reflective of American society as a whole. Further, they venture that it is not the approach taken in other places in the world, which are working to embrace globalization. Even still, when that participant was asked if they integrated any global themes into their courses, they explained that they cover globalization in their Human Geography course, but not in other courses such as U.S. History. It should be noted that Human Geography is not a required course, but an elective.

A couple of the participants did advocate for a more global approach. They argued that the curriculum should not just evolve in response to the growing multiculturalism of the U.S., but to aim bigger, and address the world-wide trend of globalization. Speaking about citizenship and patriotism in social studies, one participant asserted that “as the world becomes more globalized, to teach the more global perspective, so I think they go hand in hand. I think to be

a good national citizen, you also have to be a good global citizen [P2-RR].” The participant explained that they worked toward this by providing as many perspectives as possible when teaching about different time periods and issues. Another participant spoke about their global approach, saying, “Teaching as if borders don’t exist, is not super productive. But teaching where and how and why borders exist and the impacts of those borders on people on both sides of those borders, I think is huge [P3-YY].” They made the point that they are not looking to completely ignore national boundaries or identity in the classroom, but to push their students to see perspectives on all sides, in hopes of instilling some empathy as well. Speaking on empathy, that participant remarked:

I would hope that they have as big of heart for their neighbor as they do for themselves, or they do their parents [...] or people from other countries, people of different ethnicities, people of other genders, you know they would have that same heart for those people as they would for somebody that looks like them, that speaks like them...[P3-ZZ]

Along with emphasizing empathy for those different and far, that participant also added that they strive to make their students understand that their actions matter just as much as these. This notion of global responsibility and agency, was perhaps the strongest suggestion that one of the teachers might include global citizenship education in their approach. And while others shared that they also thought a more global approach would be a positive change, none of them shared ways in which they were doing so themselves. The concepts of ‘global citizenship’ or ‘global citizenship education’ did not seem to be things they were well versed in, particularly in a pedagogical sense. Further, most of the participants had doubt that the idea of global citizenship would be received well.

While a proponent of such changes, one of the teachers did point out again that resistance is still strong toward multicultural and global emphasis in curriculum. The current historical approach seen in the state curriculum and in textbooks, “doesn’t present it as every country is equal, and we got great ideas from other places, and we failed to get great ideas too. It’s very much cheerleading for the United States,” they explained [P3-A]. And on changing this perspective to be more multicultural and global, they said:

We are not going that direction. There is fierce resistance to that. The scary thing is, that the resistance to that is organized and they hold the power and they’re not going to let it change. You look around at just the efforts this year with taking down the confederate statues and the backlash that that creates. [P3-MM]

The teacher reiterated what has been discussed in an earlier section, that the myth found in history is very political. As the teachers mentioned, those that have already attested these changes have deemed it to be “anti-American.” The example that the teacher uses is the taking down of confederate statues, which has been an on-going controversy around the south east united states. Confederate soldiers fought on the side of The South during the U.S. Civil War, the side that defended slavery, and that ultimately lost. Part of the effort to defend the legacy of The South after the war was the construction of these statues commemorating Confederate soldiers. As the U.S. has slowly been coming to terms with the lasting legacy of slavery and race relations in the U.S., people have demanded that these statues be taken down. But not without fierce resistance. The teachers brought this up multiple times, as it demonstrates the resistance to change and the resistance to a more honest history. Changing the historical narrative in schools to be less mythologized and more multicultural would not be well received by those supportive of the traditional narrative, which, according to this participant, are those with power. So it seems unlikely then that these changes will happen at a higher level, and will instead be dependent on the teacher.

One of the participants explained that the resistance to a global approach is largely due to lack of exposure due to segregation and distance from issues, which has then created fear of the unknown and lack of empathy. They commented:

...the kids should want the Syrian refugee to feel just as safe as they do, they should want that Mexican immigrant to feel just as safe as they do. But again we see it as a zero sum game. If you're taking some of the benefits that I have, then I ultimately have less, if we're helping you, I'm going to have less. If we're protecting you, I'm going to have less protection... This globalized ideology [...] I mean I do think it's ideal. [But] especially in America, it's going to be very hard to sell that to the masses. Especially in such a segregated society... [P1-YY]

This was an idea that the participant revisited multiple times during the interview, that in the U.S. right now those that are resisting multiculturalism or global cooperation and responsibility, are doing so due to disconnect. They do not feel connected to people on the other side of the world or connected to their issue, and that separation creates otherness and fear. This is the climate that the teachers are working in. And perhaps, some might argue, is the exact reason multiculturalism and global citizenship should be a focus in education.

In discussing teacher based promotion of multiculturalism and global mindedness in the classroom, the teachers explained it as “fighting a culture [P3-PP].” Many of them remarked on the polarity of the country, and described it as a ‘cultural war.’ When asked if they thought teaching a more multicultural or global approach would be controversial amid this, one of the teacher replied:

I mean I think, in a kind of polarized country where we are having serious debates about the national anthem, I think absolutely. [...] I just think that we’re in a culture war. I don’t want my classroom to be a front in that war. I’d rather.. That war is happening outside of this classroom, so let’s prepare them for it. I don’t know, I mean I guess you could argue that’s global citizenship. I don’t know, it depends on how you want to define it. [P4-PP]

So it seems, according to the participant, this approach would bring their classroom into that cultural war. They are cautious about that, and so instead of overtly promoting multiculturalism or global citizenship, they focus on skill development to better prepare students for a productive role in that cultural war. The teacher went on to stress again the importance of skill development in history education. That their focus should be teaching students how to analyze sources and build articulate arguments using evidence. This, the participant argued, is preparing them to be citizens in a globalized world today.

6 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

6.1 The Teachers’ Perceptions of the Influences and Outcomes of History Education

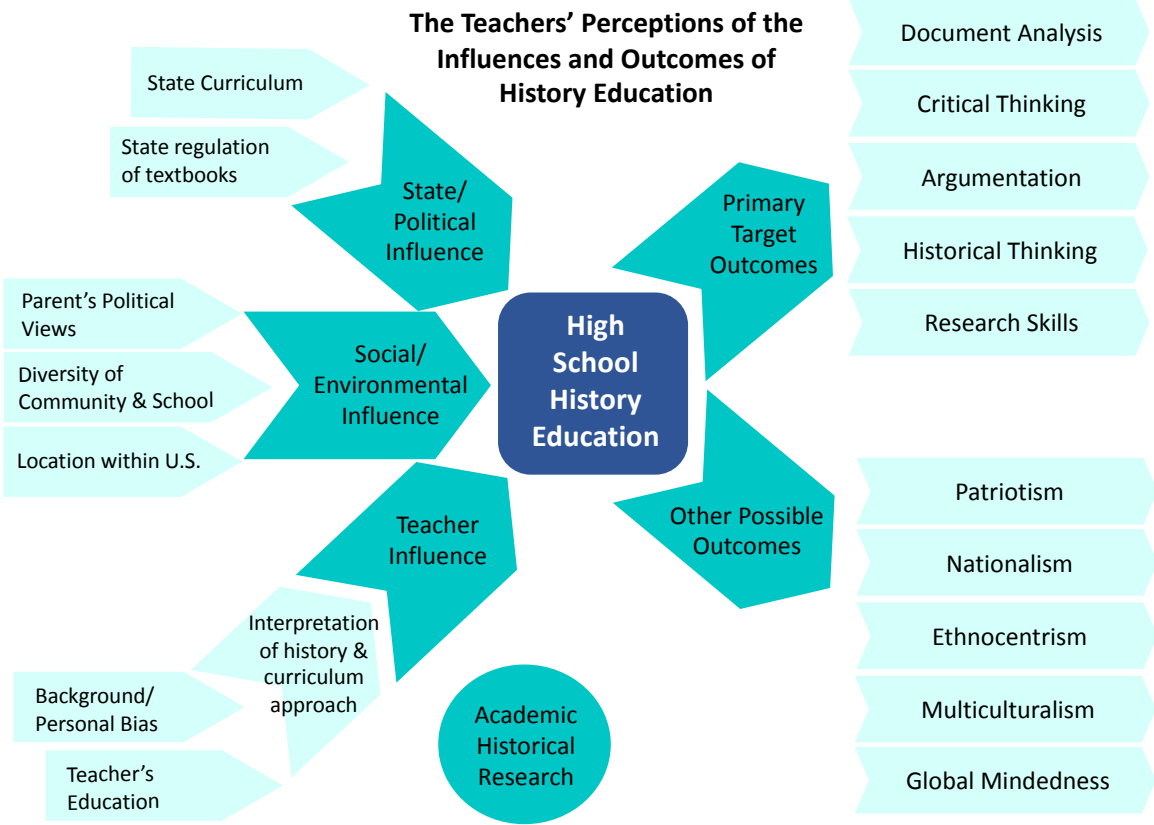


Figure 2. The Teachers’ Perceptions of the Influences and Outcomes of History Education

Patriotic history, if a new term to any of the teachers, was not a new idea to them. The teachers expressed many ways in which they have experienced patriotism in historical study and in education. As conveyed in figure 2, there are three categories of influence that the teachers identified as factoring into the presence of patriotism in history education: state and political influence, social and environmental influence, and teacher influence. While the teachers indicated that the promotion of patriotism can be present in school and in history courses, they concluded that increased patriotism in students is only a possible outcome. And though the promotion of patriotism was described as a systemic and cultural effort, the teachers did not view it as being a primary target outcome of their own. Overall the teachers agreed that the purpose of history education is the development of skills. And so while the curriculum and content may have patriotic characteristics, if the courses are taught with skill development in

mind, such as critical thinking and analysis, patriotism should not be a primary outcome. Further, many of the teachers voiced that there is a gap between academia and high school courses. The teachers argued that if high school history courses reflected the academy more, it would eliminate some of the issues with variance in historical interpretations and that the curriculum would be more multicultural and less patriotic.

6.1.1 State and Political Influence

The participants described history education as political, and explained ways in which they have seen social studies curriculum manipulated by politicians to match their own ideologies. They largely felt that patriotic history was an effort from the top down, and not often deliberately taught by teachers. Examples they used of political influence in history education included state censorship of textbooks, curriculum protests by political groups, and state curriculum that is intentionally vague on topics it deems controversial, such as civil rights.

6.1.2 Social and Environmental Influence

The teachers acknowledged heightened polarity in society, that is reflected among the students. Students have been increasingly engaged and opinionated in political discussion. Though, according to some of the teachers, the students' political views are still heavily influenced by their parents' views. The teachers also recognized that the U.S. is increasingly multicultural and that the traditional narrative, that is both patriotic and mythologized, is not inclusive enough for the diverse population. They expressed concern for how minority students interact with this narrative when very little of it reflects their experience. The participants also discussed the persistence of racial issues in society, and that in their predominately white affluent school, discussion of these issues was not always productive.

Additionally, the teachers also spoke about how location impacts schools dynamics and the approach taken in history courses. Often they alluded to rural areas as being more traditional and conservative, thus more likely to teach a patriotic history. In more populated areas, neighborhood and demographics were mentioned as indicators. Predominately white areas were characterized by the teachers as being more patriotic and more resistant to multiculturalism in and out of the classroom. They were also more resistant to accepting wrongdoings by the U.S. throughout history.

Furthermore, they characterized the students as embodying a kind of patriotic culture, treating it as trendy. They shared ways that they have seen students actively try to demonstrate their patriotism at school, such as with clothing or in ostentatious showings of their political opinions. The pledge of allegiance, which is recited daily at the school, was frequently mentioned by the teachers. Many of the teachers described it as archaic and nationalistic and shared that they did not participate in the pledge. However, they explained that there was a lot of social pressure on students to participate.

6.1.3 Teacher Influence

Though the teachers acknowledged that patriotic narratives are often taught in history courses, all of the participants refuted doing so themselves. The teachers were in strong agreement that their goal in history courses is skill development, not the promotion of values such as they viewed patriotism. Furthermore, they were very clear in their approach. They explained that they aim to present a variety of perspectives and evidence, and do not make conclusions for their students. They teach students how to analyze sources, build arguments using evidence, and ultimately develop their own opinions on issues. Overall, most of the teachers were averse to promoting any of their own ideals or opinions in the classroom.

The teachers identified that teacher autonomy leaves social studies classes open to a lot of variation. Social studies courses vary greatly because the content and approach depend on the teacher's perspective, choices, and educational background. The nature of history as a discipline is interpretation, leaving it particularly vulnerable in this autonomy. This is a major factor in the prevailing patriotic narrative taught in history education. Exasperating the issue of varying interpretations is the differences in social studies teachers' education. One of the teachers made the compelling argument that traditional or outdated history, such as patriotic history, is often taught by teachers, not intentionally as indoctrination, but due to lack of knowledge.

They explained that part of the reason teachers interpret content differently is due to their training and studies at the university level. Some social studies teachers might have studied education but not history, so their knowledge of history as a discipline could be lacking. Thus, as the participant pointed out, there is a chance that the teacher's content knowledge is out-

dated or seems biased due to their lack of experience in the discipline. Multiple teachers echoed this sentiment, arguing that if high school social studies reflected the academy more, it would eliminate some of the issues with variance, and it would be more multicultural, not patriotic. Ultimately, they concluded that demythologized history already exists, it just needs to be implemented at the high school level. It is their perceptions that some teachers, including themselves are already doing this.

One value that the teachers did admittedly promote, was multiculturalism. The teachers explained that the U.S. is increasingly multicultural and that the traditional narrative, that is both patriotic and mythologized, is not inclusive or transparent enough for the diverse population. They contended that social studies courses must intentionally be taught in a way to be multicultural and inclusive, which depends largely on the teacher. The current state curriculum has not fully progressed in this way yet. A few of the teachers mentioned that they had intentionally designed their own curriculum to be more multicultural. Largely this centered on the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S., which many of the teachers shared that they put a lot of stress on due to the lasting legacy it has in race relations today. So while the teachers do not feel that it is their place to promote patriotism, they do promote racial equality and seek to impress upon the students that more is to be done for progressing race relations. The multiculturalism that they taught toward was largely domestic in nature. Though they acknowledged the ethnocentrism of the history curriculum, and the value in a more global approach, most of the participants were doing little in term of global citizenship education. They admitted that education for global citizenship is not something that they had really thought about, nor did they think it would be well received in the U.S. currently.

6.2 Research Questions Concluded

Throughout their interviews that participants elaborated on their experience with patriotism in schooling, the various factors they see as influencing the patriotic nature of education, and their own stances on the matter. The following summarizes the findings and is organized to address the research questions directly.

6.2.1 The Teachers' Experiences with Patriotism in Education

Throughout the interviews, the participants reiterated the point that what is taught in the social studies classroom can be and has been political, and in turn controversial. The teachers highlighted that there are many parties that view themselves as stakeholders in the social studies curriculum, from politicians to parents, all with their own politicized opinions on history. The participants also discussed how at the state level, politicians have allowed their political ideologies to influence the social studies curriculum and content, even influencing national private organizations like the College Board. Texas, in particular, was mentioned multiple times as being notorious for manipulating social studies content to favor tradition. And as the participant explains, the state goes beyond just putting these values at work in the state curriculum, but also dictates what textbooks can be used in the state and uses its large population size to strong arm textbook publishers. While many of the teachers commented on the North Carolina curriculum being poor and needing work, one of the teachers even charged that the North Carolina curriculum is “weak in some areas, perhaps even deliberately.” That participant observed that the state underserves the Civil Rights Movement, and racial justice issues as a way to avoid drawing new attention to the still relevant issues. These politically motivated decisions on history education have been holding it back from progressing as well as being truly transparent and free of underlying values such as patriotism.

While the participants felt that they do not promote a singular point of view, they seemed to think that other teachers do. Their view on how much courses can change depending on the teacher revealed how teacher autonomy leaves classes vulnerable to teacher's agendas. Although North Carolina has a state curriculum for each social studies course, there are no longer any end-of-course tests administered by the state for those courses, thus no way for the state to check on the enforcement of their curriculum. The teachers pointed out this lack of regulation and accountability, but not necessarily as a critique. The autonomy experienced by teachers is typically seen as a good thing, however the space it leaves for varying interpretations of history to be taught is relevant to this research. The teachers' perspectives on the nature of biases and the promotion of ideals in the social studies classroom can be linked to the power dynamic between teacher and student and the perceived idea that teacher knows better. Due to knowledge power, often times students take what teachers say as fact. Variations in interpretation can be slight and may be leaning toward a certain perspective but could go unnoticed by those without decent content knowledge in an area. The teachers largely experienced this

covert, latent patriotism. They understood it as a virtue that motivated curriculum decisions, but rarely directly mentioned teachers promoting patriotism intentionally. For the most part, the teachers did not identify patriotism as something that was even directly addressed often, but more of an unspoken assumption that could go unnoticed by many.

Most of the teachers expressed disapproval of patriotism being involved in formal schooling at all. One of the teachers went as far as to compare patriotism with religion, asserting that neither of them has a place in social studies classrooms. This comparison is particularly interesting because legally no public school can lead the promotion or practice of any religion. So if patriotism was to be treated like religion, it too would not be a part of schooling. The point the teacher was making is that patriotism is based on a feeling, a feeling of love or pride for their country, based on an individual's own values and perspective. Further, it is not based on any hard evidence, making it irrelevant in a classroom. As the teachers reiterated throughout their interviews, they did not believe it is a teacher's place to instill certain values in students or promote a particular perspective. They aimed to provide students with an array of evidence with which they can develop their own opinions, and they viewed patriotism no differently. Another participant explained that patriotism in school, in particular, the pledge of allegiance which is recited each day, reminded them of Hitler's Germany. They described it as 'centralized patriotism,' and 'forced patriotism,' actions that could lead to the support of a dictator. The reciting of the pledge of allegiance was an example of patriotism in school that many of the teachers referred to, all of them negatively. The teachers did not approve of the pressure put on students to participate in the pledge, nor the narrow view patriotism with which people could be labeled patriotic or not based on their participation in the pledge. They expressed, that in their opinion, the students who chose to sit out in protest of the pledge were being patriotic, as they were exercising agency. Overall they identified patriotism in school as overly traditional and misguided.

Many of the teachers associated patriotism with nationalism, which was also reflected in their diction. They often paired the words together or used them as synonyms throughout the interviews. However, frequently many of the participants explained patriotism as a spectrum, with the extreme being nationalism—and inherently dangerous—and the lesser being a patriotism they were more comfortable with—centered on love for fellow citizens and community. Overall, on a personal level and as educators, the teachers had a relatively negative view of patriotism. When asked if they view themselves as patriotic, none of the participants directly

identified as such. In fact, many of the participants thought they were somehow an anomaly among teachers for not identifying as patriotic.

Upon further discussion, the teachers mentioned ways they have seen these patriotic and mythologized perspectives of the U.S. among students. The participants shared that they feel students are becoming more politically engaged, but also that many are really embracing an “America first” point of view which has impacted schooling. This also brought up how the teachers have seen a shift in classroom dynamics due to the increased polarity and political climate. They described there being a culture of patriotism among the students, where there is pressure from society and pop culture to be overly patriotic and to not speak negatively of the United States. The teachers spoke about how this has impacted students’ ability to be critical in the history classroom at times.

6.2.2 The Teachers’ Perceptions of the Promotion of Patriotism in History Education

The participants associated the traditional way of teaching history as one that promotes patriotism and even nationalism. It was referred to as “the old way of teaching American history” by one participant. The participants were clear that they do not teach this traditional approach, but that they know others do. According to the teachers, depending on how you interpret parts of history and what evidence you use, a patriotic or mythologized history can easily be taught. Digging deeper into the concept of patriotic and mythologized history, the teachers shared their perspectives on where this comes from, and how it persists in high school social studies. One of the participants expressed that they see this as a top down issue, in that the state and federal government want this traditional narrative to continue because it helps breed support for the country and less skepticism surrounding its past and current decisions. When asked how this narrative takes shape in the classroom, the participant said it is often not so much about inaccuracies but where emphasis is put in the content. Interestingly, they also addressed the lack of diversity in the traditional mythologized narrative, alluding to the idea that this interpretation of history is that of the white American perspective.

According to the teachers, the students come into high school primed by patriotic and mythological historical interpretations. The teachers explained that the history students had learned before entering high school was simplified and often glazed over the atrocities committed by the U.S., further feeding the patriotism and myth. So when the students arrive to high school,

the teachers are faced with unraveling the students' misconceptions. The teachers explained that the easy way to teach history is to teach the traditional historical perspective, and that digging deeper and challenging that perspective, like many of the teachers claimed to be doing, is more difficult. Despite the lasting foothold of the traditional interpretation, it did not seem to deter the teachers. Overall the interviews showed that the teachers have felt success in challenging students to view history and society differently.

6.2.3 The Teachers' Perceptions of Their Role in the Promotion of Patriotism in History Education

The participants consistently reiterated that the purpose of social studies was not content mastery, but skill development. The teachers seemed to share the opinion that their courses are supposed to help the students to develop skills that will assist them the rest of their lives as they interact with others and information. By teaching these skills alongside the content and historical narratives, the teachers also expressed their hope that students leave their courses being able to think historically and identify the significance of issues' historical background. While civic competence was only directly addressed by a couple of participants as one of the goals of social studies courses, all of the participants linked the skills that they teach to productive citizenship. The civic competence the participants described these skills assisting with, centered on critical thinking. As they explain, critical thinking can be applied in decision making, such as voting, qualifying media sources, and conversing about political topics.

Largely the teachers agreed that they leave space for students to form their own opinions by leaving their personal morals and political beliefs out of the classroom. The teachers acknowledged how their decisions can impact the course, but also made it clear that they allow the evidence, drawn from various sources, to speak for itself. The teachers made the point that they are careful not to tailor the argument or draw conclusions for their students. The idea of presenting evidence but not drawing conclusions for students was repeated by almost all of the participants. Many of the teachers said that they point out bias to their students and use it as a teaching point. Their responses showed the respect the participants have for their students' perspectives, as well as their trust in students' abilities to develop informed opinions independently. Overall the teachers seemed to hold the perspective that most teachers do not in-

tentionally try to influence student's opinions or views with their own biases. They acknowledged that most teachers attempt to avoid involving their own opinions in their courses, but that this has become more difficult with the heightened political tension currently.

The teachers explained that they do not necessarily seek to challenge the 'myths' of history, but they do aim to challenge students assumptions and broaden their perspectives. One of the participants argument for demythologized history centered around humanizing history so that it can be learned from and applied in a very real, personal way. They argue that people make mistakes, and so do countries and those mistakes should not be ignored, but learned from. Insight can be drawn from the mistakes of the past, and that can help guide relationships big and small moving forward. The participants further argued that coming to terms with the past, and embracing it's complexity, could actually develop a stronger unity. Setting aside the façade of the U.S. as the just and rightful defender of democracy and freedom in the world, people could instead unite behind the country's ability to progress and furthermore, an individual's power to be a part of that progress. A demythologized history would unite people through the possibility for progress and the agency of individuals instead of glorified historical figures and stories from the past. Humanizing people in history by discussing their mistakes, also helps to make their achievements seem attainable to students.

In discussing the how history can be demythologized, the teachers were in consensus that demythologized history already exists. They pointed to the academy and revisionist history, and charged that it already exists, just maybe not in most high school classrooms. One of the teachers made the compelling argument that traditional or outdated history, such as patriotic history, is often taught by teachers, not intentionally as indoctrination, but due to lack of knowledge. They explained that part of the reason teachers interpret content differently is due to their training and studies at the university level. Some social studies teachers might have studied education but not history, so their knowledge of history as a discipline could be lacking or outdated making it seem biased or traditional. Multiple teachers echoed this sentiment, arguing that if high school social studies reflected the academy more, it would eliminate some of the issues with variance, and it would be more multicultural, not patriotic. Ultimately, they concluded that demythologized history already exists, it just needs to be implemented at the high school level. It is their perception that some teachers, including themselves are already doing this.

6.2.4 The Teachers' Views on the Relationship Between Patriotism and Multiculturalism in History Education

The teachers contented that true demythologized history is also innately a multicultural, social history, and that these narratives are what most academics focus on today. The participants spoke a lot about lasting racial issues and had been purposely spending a lot of time digging into the historical roots of those issues in an effort to promote more understanding and acceptance. They did this by diversifying the perspectives they presented on issues, showing that not everyone has had the same experiences. They also acknowledged the benefit of minority students seeing themselves in the historical narrative of the country. Some of the teachers expressed that a multicultural approach has the potential to instill a sense of agency in minority students, again creating a patriotism out of the possibility of change and progress, instead of a glorified past.

7 DISCUSSION

This research sought to complement theoretical discussion in the field of education on the influence of patriotism in history education. As explored in the theoretical background, scholars have demonstrated many ways in which countries throughout history have used education to impress upon young citizens loyalty and to promote national values. Frequently, it has been seen that history education in particular has been curated to give these values a creation story. Through history courses, a patriotic national narrative is created, full of national heroes and grand feats to solidify the nation's legitimacy, and inspire its citizens' unwavering support. While this is well established in educational research, few qualitative studies have supported it with personal accounts from within schools like this one has. The interviews in this study have contributed to the discourse by collecting teacher insight on the current nature of patriotism in education, specifically history education.

The high school social studies teachers that participated identified patriotism as an underlying virtue that still influences the historical narrative taught to students today. There are four major developments of this research beyond the continued influence of patriotism in education, and the following concluding remarks will be organized as such. Firstly, in terms of the influence of patriotism, very little intentional influence comes from teachers. It is rooted more in societal pressures and politics in education. Secondly, history courses should focus on skill development such as critical thinking, argumentation, and the analysis of sources and evidence. This is not just for their practical application in civic life, but also because this approach in the classroom leaves less room for teacher bias and the promotion of values. Thirdly, there needs to be stricter qualifications for high school social studies teachers, including substantial coursework in history specifically. Additionally, more incentives for masters studies and continued education for social studies teachers would assist teachers in staying up-to-date on current historiography and develop working relationships between school teachers and academia. Lastly, race relations in the U.S. are still largely unaddressed in social studies curriculum, despite their lasting significance. State curriculum needs to be revamped to better address racial justice issues. Furthermore, I contend that this should be approached with a global framework, promoting multiculturalism on a global scale that will in turn promote more intercultural competencies domestically.

In terms of influencers, the participants largely perceived teachers' role in the promotion of patriotism as minimal and unintentional. In their experiences most teachers attempted to leave their opinions and values out of their courses. The influential factors that the participants pointed to were much larger in scale and systematic. The patriotic narratives and misconceptions that have been normalized are apart of what the teachers described as a culture of patriotism and American exceptionalism. A culture that many of them saw themselves as fighting. This culture has been brought into classrooms by the politicized nature of social studies and history. Politicians and even entire political parties have worked to control history education, particularly attempting to stop it from progressing into revisionist history like the work of many historians today. From the state curriculum, protesting AP College Board curriculum updates, textbook manipulation, to even the recitation of the pledge of allegiance every day in school, there has been great effort to keep traditional patriotic values in education and in history. This is so normalized that there is resistance from students and parents when these things are challenged or when progressive historical narratives are introduced. People are comfortable with the history that they grew up with, and do not usually understand that history is something that changes and evolves, or has multiple perspectives and interpretations. Ultimately, teachers that still follow the traditional approach presumably are not intentionally promoting patriotism, but are a part of the culture, unaware more than likely of what their curriculum bolsters.

A point that was agreed upon and stressed by all of the participants was the purpose of social studies. The teachers explained that their main focus is developing students' abilities to think critically, analyze and evaluate sources, and build arguments based on evidence. They explained it as— these are the tools they are helping students to develop, and history is the medium. In this approach, specific dates and numbers are less important, and understanding big themes and change over time is emphasized. What is also significant about this approach, which the participants reiterated, is that it is done through the analysis and comparison of sources that represent different perspectives on a topic. Teachers are not standing in front of the class delivering a grand narrative of the country's history, the students are 'doing history.' They are looking at the evidence, weighing arguments, and drawing conclusions. In this way, teachers are not telling students what is right or wrong or how to feel about events and people in the past. They give students the tools and space to develop their own opinions. This approach aligns with the arguments of scholars like Harry Brighouse (2003), that critical think-

ing is one of the key goals in the study of history and that patriotic history weakens that intellectual process. I argue that if more teachers take on the approach of skill development, not only will the skills benefit students throughout their lives, but it will also help to take the teachers' voices and personal assumptions out of the students' understanding of history. Furthermore, if the sources and information provided to the students goes beyond the textbook, including primary and secondary sources, it will also help to eliminate political influence from the state. If the students are not following a manicured account of history, from only one source, the chances of patriotism shaping students' understandings of history is minimized.

Though often academia can be described as out of touch with the true nature of what is happening in the field, most of the teachers' perspectives complimented what academics have said on the topic (Brighthouse, 2003; Callan, 2000; Nash, 2000). However, there is a gap that the participants identified which provided unique insight into a possible explanation for the lasting emphasis of patriotism and traditional historical narratives in social studies. The gap they perceived is between historians and high school teachers, not due to academia being out of touch, but high school teachers being unfamiliar with recent scholarship. The participants perceived this to be the predominant cause of teachers continuing to teach traditional interpretations of history. Thus, it is not so much on purpose, but due to lack of knowledge and research in the field. The participants argued that much of current historical research debunks patriotic myths, and is much more socially oriented and multicultural. Ultimately, this finding concludes that many of the issues identified by scholars and by the participants with the interpretations of history that are taught in high school, such as patriotic bias and lack of diversity in perspective, could be addressed with better teacher training. High school social studies teachers need to be trained historians if they are going to teach students to 'do history' as the participants described. This requires undergraduate studies in history and preferably masters studies. However, I argue that for teachers to remain current on scholarship in history, more should be done. There should be more of a relationship between academics and high school teachers. A working relationship between the two could prove beneficial for both parties. Teachers would have access to ongoing research, and professors would have a chance to influence high school history courses, resulting in students being better prepared for history at the university level. Professors could also gain insight on how high school teachers structure their courses to be more accessible and comprehensible-- something professors are not known for. Ultimately, better teacher training in history could result in an entirely different approach to courses, and more current information that includes a diversity of perspectives.

The interviews further strengthened an argument for more emphasis on multiculturalism and global citizenship education in U.S. schools. The participants built the case that demythologized history is multicultural history, and that the best way to diversify the cultural perspectives in history is through social history. To have a truly demythologized history it must be multicultural, including a diverse range of perspectives and voices. This is the best way to ensure that history is not favoring of one group or country. More diversity in perspectives, the teachers pointed out, is key to a transparent history. This is in congruence with Eamonn Callan's (2000) argument that a multicultural history is needed for inclusion and unity in a diverse nation. As the participants described, the country is currently in a 'culture war.' There is a push for progress, but then a pull to stay traditional. As the world is globalizing, and countries are diversifying, people are becoming overwhelmed and more resistant to change. This culture war is mirrored in the push and pull in history education, something elaborated on by Gary Nash (2000) in his book, *History on Trial: Culture Wars and the Teaching of the Past*. Often when people feel threatened by change, such as growing multiculturalism, they cling to traditional and familiar concepts of civic identity, such as in the traditional historical interpretations, and reject the notion that a more evolved, multicultural narrative is needed.

While the teachers did value and promote multiculturalism within the U.S. context, they did not express the same endorsement for global multiculturalism, or global citizenship. Although many of the teachers expressed that the social studies curriculum is very U.S. centric, very few of the teachers claimed to be addressing it in anyway in their classroom. I propound that the teaching of a more evolved and worldly patriotism, one that embraces diversity, and promotes democracy and justice as values that transcend national borders, would not only unite citizens at the national level, but lead to the development of global unity. This will also assist with issues of racial justice and tolerance domestically, promoting a more cosmopolitan attitude. As Martha Nussbaum (1994, p 6) explained, among a diverse population made up of immigrants, those that are outside your country are also inside of it, you cannot separate them you must accept and respect them all. A global, multicultural history could promote an organic cosmopolitan patriotism that could actually reach more of the population than that derived from the traditional historical narrative. Global education in the promotion of cosmopolitan citizenship takes global mindedness and generates agency, responsibility, and solidarity. If education today is meant to prepare students for the future, inevitably a very globalized future, then global education is an integral part of that preparation. Achieving this will require a

new approach to education, in which global education is integrated across all subjects, and teachers are provided training and resources. But with this mindset, the youth will be better prepared to navigate the issues of the future, more self-aware, and have humanity and the greater good in mind.

7.1 Reflection on the Research Process

One of the major shortcomings of this research is the small number of participants and the lack of diversity in their background. All of the participants were white males living in the same city and working at the same charter school. While this does offer interesting insight in a more focused context, it does not offer a well-rounded perspective. Although, I did find that a strength of the data collection process was my personal relationship with the school and many of the teachers. Due the depth of interviews into sensitive topics, the relaxed relationship allowed for more open and easy discussion. So while a more diverse group would have rounded out the perspectives provided in the study, it could have been at the detriment of the depth and quality of the interviews.

Starting the research process, I was interested in comparing how teachers balance the pressure of patriotism in education with the new emphasis on global citizenship. However, the interviews revealed that there is no attention on global citizenship in their experience. It was clear that they had not really heard of the concept or the pedagogy behind it, and thus had little to say about it. While I did find this to be an interesting finding it itself, and I tried to include it as so, it did cause me to narrow the focus of my research to the teachers' perceptions of patriotism in education. Overall, I feel that this study does bring to light interesting perspectives from inside schools on a topic that has been predominately discussed in theoretical research.

7.2 Further Research

Amid the current culture war and divisive political climate, understanding patriotism and the way in which it comes to be embraced by citizens, is becoming increasingly relevant. On one side there is a rise of nationalism and on the other a dismantling of American exceptionalism. Research on where these ideas take root, and how these perspectives are informed would provide insight that could promote understanding and edify a response in schools. If the situation is as it seems from this study, there are systematic efforts by politicians to control students'

information for the promotion of patriotism, which could possibly lay the foundation for nationalist ideals. If the nature of the U.S. is being falsely represented for much of student's history education, there is bound to be an impact. Further research on this could inform a response. A valuable addition to the discourse would be data on students' perspectives on history education and patriotism. Perhaps collected at the beginning of high school and four years later after completion. This would provide unique insight into how history courses impact students' perspectives on the country, as well as its position in the world.

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Liite 1 / Appendix 1

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Liite 2 / Appendix 2