poverty among millions of children, according to the conservative Heritage Foundation, is the lack of married fathers in the home. But as Valbrun (2014) points out, the implied failing of single mothers ignores other realities, such as discrimination in hiring practices. Nonetheless, many middle-class students enter college unaware of class structure and blame the poor for their situation (Loewen, 1995). This tendency to place blame with individuals rather than complex machinations is perhaps best seen in the fact that 94 percent of Americans blame fat people for being obese—even though obesity is classified as a disease (Weller, 2014).

There are countless other examples of scapegoating from around the world. Every culture has its ritual for scapegoating, and this practice seems to develop when someone in power can convince others that the problems of society are the sole domain of other people with less power. Any individual or group can fall victim to being a scapegoat. The main ingredient for creating a scapegoat target is to conjure an outpouring of anger and blame. Campbell (2011) makes it quite clear: "Scapegoating is suddenly no longer a ritual act, but a behavioral pattern; no longer a way of safeguarding a community, but instead one that protects one or two people" (p. 45).

Sherwood Thompson

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SCHOOL CLIMATE

Definition

School climate refers to the culture of a school. The idea of school climate rests on the notion that all organizations develop a culture that influences the members within it. Most individuals recognize that when they enter into any organization, whether as a visitor or a member, they notice a *feel* to the organization. That feel is determined by many factors and is considered the sum of the norms, values, attitudes, beliefs, heroes, and sacred stories of the organization. The feel or culture of an organization has the power to influence an individuals' behavior once they are acculturated to the environment (Deal & Kennedy, 1982). Like a corporation, a school, too, has a culture, which is referred to as school climate.

History of Research on School Climate

Although educators have recognized the importance of school climate since the beginning of the twentieth century and systematic research into school climate began in the 1950s, the issue of school climate has grown significantly since around 1980 and is now recognized as a crucial factor in determining the efficacy of a school (NSCC, 2007). The central assumption of scholars and educators interested in school climate is that children's learning and motivation to learn, development, and eventual competencies as an adult can be positively influenced by a good school climate, whereas a negative school climate can adversely affect children's learning, affect their social and emotional development, and diminish their competencies related to adult life. Recent high-profile instances of bullying in schools is assumed to be linked to school climate, and certain well-known instances, such as that of Shannon Faulkner, who tried to attend The Citadel in the 1990s, have been linked to the climate of the institution (Manegold, 1999).

Changing School Climate

Today, many educational organizations focus all or some of their attention to school climate. In 1996, the National School Climate Center (NSCC) was

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founded at Teachers College, Columbia University. NSCC has played a leading role in shaping a research agenda related to school climate and in making the importance of school climate better known. According to NCSS, a national consensus does not exist as to what should be measured in school climate. Nevertheless, NCSS stresses four major measures, with subscales, of school climate: safety, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning, and the environment (NCSS, 2014). Interest in school climate extends well beyond public education and K–12 education. The National Association of Independent Schools, the largest association of independent schools in the world, has raised awareness of school climate among independent schools (Cohen, 2007), as has the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (Cohen, Pickeral, & McCloskey, 2008/2009) and many states and other educational organizations.

In instances of hostile school climates, the importance of the issue of school climate needs little justification. Hostile environments can include schools where practices of bullying are an ingrained part of the culture, where retributions are exacted for perceived slights, or where students are ostracized for being perceived as different. In these cases, school personnel clearly have an interest in improving the climate. Changing a school climate in this context can be very difficult. In hostile environments, older students are generally those who mete out the hostile behavior. One reason for this is that they themselves have experienced the various forms of hostility, passed through it, and now believe that they have earned the right to enforce the historic rites of passage that they endured. Additionally, school personnel, who themselves can be the subject of vicious retribution by parents and school administrators, often overlook hostile behavior, either because they have grown numb to it or because they want to avoid the hassle and trouble of making the various serious charge of bullying at a student. Even when charges of bullying or hostile behavior are made, school climate will often not change. When bullying students are officially punished, they or other students often continue to torment their original victims, who are often unfairly labeled as "snitches" or "rats." Violence, whether outright or a subtler form, psychological coercion, can create a self-perpetuating cycle known as *traumagenesis* (Bloom & Reichert, 1998). Environments such as these can cause both subclinical and clinical forms of psychological distress.

More insidious is when school climates are based upon historical practices, yet current circumstances no longer match the school climate. One of the most common examples of this is when schools that were traditionally filled with middle-class Anglo students now have far more diverse student bodies. If the norms, values, practices, heroes, and sacred stories celebrate middle-class Anglos, which is often the case with older schools, minority and non-middle-class students may feel that they are not welcomed. Similarly, schools have traditionally focused many of their rites and rituals around athletics, and in particular football, which tend to norm or center males in general and football players in particular, thereby marginalizing other students—girls and any student whose interests are elsewhere. Private institutions, which depend heavily upon alumni contributions to maintain healthy finances, and especially older schools, often celebrate schools' pasts with images and stories of students and athletes of earlier eras, who were almost universally white, Protestant males. Legacy students, those who had a parent or grandparent or other ancestor attend the institution, likewise tend to be celebrated, which is another means of norming traditional students (white, Protestant male) and de facto marginalizing minorities. Even when school administrators know that norms and practices based upon historical legacies should change, they sometimes have limited flexibility to do so because of entrenched stakeholders, such as board members, alumni groups, and major donors. Though most schools have worked hard to root out obvious forms of racism, various forms of institutional racism, such as dress codes, often persist.

Changing a school climate can also face many basic practical obstacles. Classrooms that foster creativity, for example, are fun, noisy, active places where students are given considerable freedom. However, student handbooks in many school districts place a premium on what is perceived as good behavior, and school administrators generally favor quiet, ordered classrooms. As a result, many potentially creative students, in acting on their dispositions for creativity, are labeled problem students

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and punished (Kim & Pierce, 2013). One of the newest frontiers in school climate is that of sexual orientation, which many school administrators fear addressing because of opposition from parent groups and conservative religious constituencies in the communities. On the other hand, school climates that are hostile to sexually and gender-diverse students, such as lesbian, gay male, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and the like, pose a public health risks to these students, all of whom are at risk for higher rates of depression, sexually transmitted diseases, and suicide. In light of adolescents' general anxiety about sex because they themselves are discovering their sexual identity, open and honest dialogue about sex and sexual orientation would probably improve school climates, yet many schools districts are reluctant to engage in these kinds of conversations because of conservative parents.

Recent Research Findings Related to School Climate

SCHOOL CLIMATE FOR CULTURAL, LINGUISTIC, AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY WITH STUDENTS OF IMMIGRANTS Educators must be able to work sensitively and effectively with students and parents from cultures that are different from their own, in culture, language, religion, sexual orientation, and gender. However, many educators are not prepared for working effectively with immigrant parents due to their lack of knowledge and understanding of immigrant parents' sociocultural, linguistic, and religious diversity (e.g., Guo, 2012; Turner, 2007). Moreover, many North American educators have Eurocentric perspectives, standards, and values and do not have the knowledge and experiences of culturally and religiously diverse students and parents (Guo, 2012). More importantly, because they see difference as a deficiency, they ignore diversity and consider diversity as an obstacle to the learning process, instead of valuing difference and seeing diversity as an opportunity to enhance learning by using the diverse strengths, experiences, knowledge, and perspectives of students and parents from various cultures (Dei, 1996). Teacher preparation programs do not prepare new teachers for understanding and valuing minority students as individuals or valuing the environments from which they come. Immigrant parents' diverse way of engaging in their children's education is often ignored by teachers and school administrators (e.g., Jones, 2003). Currently, most schools fail to recognize immigrant parents' sociocultural knowledge, because teachers and school administrators are focused on the parents' inability to speak English and their difficulties communicating with schools (Bitew & Ferguson, 2010) and because they label immigrant parents as unwilling or uninvolved because they often do not attend school meetings or volunteer at school events (López, 2001).

Educators need to recognize and make use of immigrant parents' knowledge regarding cultures, values, first languages, and religions. Immigrant parents' knowledge can enrich the educational environments, thereby improving the school climate. Additionally, even if immigrant parents do not volunteer at school functions or attend school meetings or volunteer at school events, educators need to broaden their concept of parental involvement to recognize immigrant parents' engagement in their children's learning at home by passing on sociocultural and linguistic values, such as their first-language knowledge, connections between their home and school cultures, and guidance for their children's dealing with various forms of racism (López, 2001).

Teachers and education administrators can foster multicultural school climates by making use of immigrant parents. Suggestions include (Guo, 2012): (a) teachers can incorporate immigrant parents' home cultures into the school curriculum with projects allowing for diverse cultural interpretations, perspectives, and opinions (Guo & Mohan, 2008); (b) parents may visit their children's classroom to share their knowledge about their culture, religion, history, and other experiences; (c) teachers can give homework assignments to interview parents, grandparents, or other relatives about their community, immigration experiences, or other experiences; (d) teachers can engage immigrant parents in their children's education by validating diverse families' first languages using dual-language books with English and another languages and by having immigrant parents read books in their own language for lower-grade elementary classrooms. Other students would come to appreciate their classmates' and their parents' multilingual abilities, and immigrant parents would value the opportunity to

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share their first languages and be part of their children's learning (Guo, 2012).

Educators should learn about their students' religious practices. Religious discrimination mostly derives from ignorance and misunderstanding of certain religions (Guo, 2012). Teachers or administrators in schools should have knowledge of world religions so that they could discuss them with their students, not for indoctrination, but for understanding. Both students and teachers would overcome their fear and celebrate diversity in religion (Guo, 2012).

School Climate for Diversity with Sexual Orientation

Despite recent improvements in the visibility and social acceptance of sexual and gender diversity in the United States (Hatzenbuehler, 2011), a study with comprehensive review and synthesis of the literature (Moe, Perera-Diltz, Sepulveda, & Finnerty, 2014) reported that sexually and gender-diverse youth continue to face discrimination, harassment, isolation, and sometimes violence. They continue to face school victimization, which negatively affects their academic success and mental health outcomes (Cerezo & Bergfeld, 2013). Perceiving one's school climate as unfriendly or hostile may result in belongingness uncertainty, in which students of socially stigmatized groups are uncertain about the quality of their social bonds in school. For students from marginalized backgrounds, such as sexually and gender-diverse students, belongingness uncertainty negatively affects their academic motivation and achievement (Cerezo & Bergfeld, 2013). The belongingness uncertainty of sexually and gender-diverse students is critical due to their lack of protections and representation in most schools, which prevents them from being full citizens with the privileges and capacities to contribute to the positive school climate (Cerezo & Bergfeld, 2013). Thus, establishing a school climate that is open to, welcoming, and affirming of lesbian, gay male, bisexual, transgender, questioning, and other sexually and gender-diverse students is necessary for a healthy school climate.

Sexually and gender-diverse students hold a positive or negative view of their own diversity needs, which change depending on the school climate. Their experiences regarding diversity are positively associated with their academic achievements and with persisting and completing their education (Moe et al., 2014). Factors that affect the development of sexually and gender-diverse students include (Moe et al., 2014): peers and family's social support and connectedness, parents' reactions to their children's experiences with same-sex attractions or transgender identification, and schools' policies for addressing bullying and suicide prevention. Therefore, if sexually and gender-diverse students interact with their supportive family members and close friends who do not hold homo-prejudicial attitudes, they experience a decrease in internalized homo-prejudice and high levels of positivity and self-affirmation (Moe et al., 2014). Also, if their peers or teachers are self-affirming and other-affirming, even students who have internalized prejudice feel more comfortable and or even positive. In contrast, if other students or teachers make homo-prejudicial jokes, even highly self-affirming students feel uncomfortable (Moe et al., 2014). Thus, educators must establish school climates that are based on an affirming mind-set toward sexual and gender diversity, and suggestions include (Moe et al., 2014): (a) communicating with the student body regarding sexual and gender diversity; (b) educating students regarding the normalcy of same-sex sexual attraction or transgender experiences; (c) communicating with parents or legal guardians about sexuality and gender issues across diverse cultural perspectives and backgrounds; (d) becoming a coach, mentor, and ally for empowering sexually and gender-diverse students to advocate for their own developmental needs; (e) collaborating with sexually and gender-diverse students who are subjected to bullying and eliminating such bullying in the school; (f) training students in how to establish and operate gay-straight alliances or peer mediation and mentorship programs to strengthen resiliency of sexually and gender-diverse students; (g) establishing interactions with professionals and other students who are open and affirming across school for developing students' self-awareness and acceptance and developing sexual or gender identities; (h) establishing organizations or activities through which students can meet professionals and other students who are similar to them in sexual and gender orientation;

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(i) implementing schoolwide anti-bullying and suicide prevention programs for students to become more interested in exploring and affirming their sexual or gender identities and development; (j) addressing students' concerns such as career planning, participation in sports or clubs, and issues regarding sexuality or gender identity, such as self-identifying or self-disclosure to peers and significant others; (k) assessing for bullying and suicide risk of sexually and gender-diverse students; and (l) assessing and improving educators' competency to address students' sexual and gender diversity needs (Moe et al., 2014).

Educators need to address school climate issues also by finding ways for meaningful inclusion of these students' voices in schools and by promoting the resilience of sexually and gender-diverse students. Suggestions include (Cerezo & Bergfeld, 2013): (a) seeking out continuing education and training to fully understand and meet the varied needs of sexually and gender-diverse students in schools; (b) supporting students in establishing a focused group for improving school climate for all students; (c) supporting the focused group where sexually and gender-diverse students as well as allied students can learn about the history of sexuality and gender diversity, civil rights movements, and skills to advocate for improved school climate; (d) seeking out training opportunities for all school staff and seeking out community partnerships in bullying prevention work; (e) offering a year-long course for students on gender and sexuality using a social justice framework; (f) cultivating leadership among students, school staff, and families to promote change in school climate in a sustainable manner; (g) using bibliotherapy to provide strong and positive narratives of sexually and gender-diverse individuals; (h) introducing books with a diverse range of sexually and gender-diverse authors that is inclusive of race, ethnicity, disability, nationality, and other cultural identities that reflect the diversity of a sexually and gender-diverse community; (i) introducing students to online communities in which they can receive emotional support; and (j) hosting annual conferences that offer knowledge and skills-based training for educators to address the concerns of sexually and gender-diverse students (Cerezo & Bergfeld, 2013).

Advantages of School Climate for Diversity with Race

A meta-analysis study (Mickelson, Bottia, & Lambert, 2013) found that racial segregation and minority concentration in school is negatively associated with students' mathematics achievement, indicating that students who attend schools with high concentrations of disadvantaged minority peers experience a negative effect of segregation, poor mathematics performance, year after year. Further, the effect of attending segregated minority schools becomes more intensified as students move through the grades from elementary through high school (Mickelson et al., 2013).

These findings indicate that students who attend integrated schools tend to score higher on mathematics achievement tests than students who attend racially segregated minority schools. These findings also indicate that Latino/a and black students tend to attend schools with high concentrations of disadvantaged minority students, and the percentage of Latino/a and black students performing below proficiency increases with each grade level. The results also indicate that educators, policymakers, and parents need to reconsider the possible benefits of creating schools with diverse groups of students learning mathematics together. The overall U.S. students' mathematics performance is increased, and racial gaps in mathematics achievement are decreased through integrated education (Mickelson et al., 2013). The higher students perform in mathematics, the more rigorous courses they subsequently take, and the more likely they will go to college and succeed in science, technology, engineering, or mathematics majors. Addressing the various shortcomings in student performance in mathematics is critical for individual and societal advancement, as mathematically competent people are needed for the science, technology, and engineering jobs that are more rapidly growing than many other occupations (Mickelson et al., 2013).

Advantages of School Climate for Multiculturalism

Perceived school multiculturalism positively influences the academic achievement of Hispanic and Asian American students. Chang and Le (2010) found that Hispanic students' favorable views of

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school support for multiculturalism are associated with increased empathy for ethnic out-groups, which in turn is significantly related to their higher academic achievement. Fostering empathy toward those who are different from one's own ethnic background can enhance the relation between perceived multiculturalism and academic achievement among Hispanics, which can minimize a potential intergroup conflict (Nesdale et al., 2005). Multiculturalism also improves ethnocultural empathy in Asian American students. Asian American students' perceptions of school support for cultural diversity tend to foster higher empathic understanding of ethnic out-groups (Chang & Le, 2010). This finding might indicate that being in a social and academic climate where cultural diversity is valued may result in meaningful changes in tolerance for diversity and compassion toward ethnic out-groups among Asian American and Hispanic students and, consequently, higher academic achievement for Hispanic students (Chang & Le, 2010). Therefore, educators can play an important role in developing and implementing initiatives to foster a school climate supportive of multiculturalism. Doing so may improve students' empathy and promote their compassion and tolerance toward diverse ethnic groups, thereby improving their academic achievement (Chang & Le, 2010).

Conclusion: School Climate, Diversity, and Social Justice

School climate is a matter of crucial importance for diversity and social justice. A positive school climate can celebrate and strengthen diversity and advance social justice. A negative school climate can have the opposite effect. With globalization and the increasing migration of humans around the world, children are increasingly likely to attend a school that is racially, ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse. Generally, greater acceptance in many places around the world, especially in Europe and the United States, of lesbian, gay male, bisexual, transgender, and questioning people also means that children are more likely to encounter nonstraight people and to imagine possible sexual identities other than traditional ones. Healthy school climates allow students not merely to accept diversity but to value it. Further, positive attitudes toward others foster positive attitudes about oneself. As a matter of social justice, healthy and improving school climates allow all children, regardless of their perceived or actual differences, to feel secure about themselves, which will allow children to do in schools what they are intended to do: learn, develop a strong sense of self, and acquire competencies for adult life.

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Robert Pierce

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SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

History

Racially segregated public spaces were the norm in the United States of America before the Declaration of Independence and the American Civil War. After the abolition of slavery through the Emancipation Proclamation, the southern Confederate states continued to segregate public spaces. Many began to enact laws to dictate where people of African descent could eat, drink, ride, and even use the restroom. One such law enacted by the General Assembly of Louisiana in 1890 stated, "that all railway companies carrying passengers in their coaches in this State [Louisiana], shall provide equal but separate accommodations for the white, and colored races" (*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896). In opposition to this law, a group of African American citizens, in conjunction with the East Louisiana Railroad Company that did not want to spend the money to purchase additional railway coaches, devised a plan to test the constitutionality of the new law. According to plan, Homer Plessy, who was of racially mixed decent (one-eighth black and seven-eighths Caucasian), was arrested for not complying with the demands of the railway conductor to move to the coach designated for African Americans. Plessy filed complaints with Louisiana state courts, and after unsuccessful litigation, he appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1896, the Supreme Court delivered its landmark decision in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, noting that separating the races, as long as the facilities were equal, was not in violation of the Thirteenth or Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution (*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896). This monumental court case solidified the constitutionality of Jim Crow laws across the country, especially in southern states, and it reaffirmed separate schooling facilities for students by race through the mid-1950s.

Jim Crow laws that provided separate but *unequal* facilities and opportunities permeated all aspects of the lives of African Americans in the South. Jim Crow laws were demeaning and dehumanizing, requiring the use of separate water fountains, restrooms, taxi cabs, telephone booths, ice cream stands, entrances, seating areas, hospitals, churches, schools, and cemeteries. Some of the laws restricted interracial dating and marriages, while others restricted educating African Americans. In 1952,

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