Only Here for the Day: The Social Integration of Minority Students at a Majority White High School

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Abstract

This study uses qualitative data to investigate the process of social integration for minority students at a majority white high school and identifies significant gender differences in this process. At this school, integration is the result of processes that occur at two different levels of interaction. On the interpersonal level, African American and Latino/a males and females engage in very different integration strategies. Males are able to gain social status at the school through their participation in athletics and their physical embodiment of the urban "hip-hop star" and also by engaging in strategies to play down negative stereotypes. In contrast, females do not have access to similar avenues for social status and do not engage in such strategies. The organization of the school contributes to these gender differences by facilitating interracial contact for the males under ideal conditions, while providing the females with less opportunity for contact. This study has implications for future work on integrated schools and points to the understudied importance of gender and its relation to organizational context in studies of race relations.

Keywords

desegregation, race relations, gender, school context

When the Supreme Court handed down the *Brown* decision in 1954, the hope was that desegregated schools would lead to increased educational achievement for African American students as well as improved race relations for the country. Since then, hundreds of studies have examined desegregation, particularly its effects on interracial friendship and relations (see Schofield 1991 for a review). However, much of this work has focused on outcomes, with less attention paid to understanding the process of integration within schools. Therefore, we lack a deep knowledge of what the experience of integration is like for students and how the organizational and cultural context of a school affects this, particularly in contemporary desegregation programs.

In this article, I use observational and interview data to understand how the context of one school that participates in a desegregation program shapes the integration process for the African American and Latino students who are bussed in, identifying gender differences in their social experiences. I argue that the boys are more socially integrated than the girls due to two interacting processes: (1) At the interpersonal level, suburban white youth value the status characteristics attributed to African American and Latino males, which facilitates integration

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according to Blau's (1960) theory of social integration, and (2) at the organizational level, the organizational practices of the school facilitate participation for the boys in extracurricular activities, which lead to interracial contact under ideal conditions (Allport 1954), while blocking the girls from such participation. I argue that these two processes occur simultaneously on different levels of interaction, creating a cycle whereby the school provides opportunities for minority boys to make friends with whites and participate in athletics, which gives them status and positive social experiences, which makes them more likely to make more friends. In contrast, the school provides little opportunity outside of class time for minority girls to interact and make friends with white students, which makes them little known at the school, which leads to negative social experiences, which makes them less likely to make friends. Although I do not make claims as to the exact origins of these processes, I do show how they reinforce each other and result in very different experiences for males and females.

This study contributes to the work on desegregation programs and race relations in schools in a number of ways. The first is by using qualitative research methods to illuminate how the process of integration occurs, how students experience this process, and how the organizational and cultural context of a school can influence this experience. Most studies on race relations in integrated schools have relied on surveys and social network data. As a result, little is known about what interracial friendships mean to students or how they are made. In addition, the number of cross-race ties a student has tells us little about whether he or she feels like a valid member of the school community. Most existing qualitative work on desegregated schools that focuses on intergroup relations was conducted when integration was new in the 1970s (see Clement and Harding 1978; Schofield 1982). More recent work has used retrospective interviews (Eaton 2001; Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991), which makes understanding the process of integration, as students experience it at the time, difficult to conceptualize (see Ispa-Landa 2009; Wells and Crain 1997 for exceptions). To improve race relations in schools, it is necessary to understand how students view the process of integration as it occurs and how their agency in the process may interact with school structures to produce disparate outcomes.

Second, this study adds to the work on gender differences in integration by following up on

earlier work in a contemporary context and by attempting to sort out the processes whereby gender differences occur, which may help explain the mixed findings in this area. Earlier qualitative work, conducted right after schools were integrated, identified a pattern of gender and racial integration that showed that boys were better able to make cross-race friends in middle school (Schofield 1982); however, it is important to consider how these patterns may play out in a contemporary milieu and in a high school context. Some quantitative and sociometric studies have also found that it is easier for African American males to make friends across racial lines (Kitsner et al. 1993; Schofield and Sager 1977), while others have found that African American females tend to have more accepting attitudes toward interracial interaction than do African American males (Johnson and Marini 1998). While the findings are somewhat inconsistent, the reasons behind these gender differences are largely unexplored as well, and we know little about how the specific context of the school may shape these gender differences in interracial friendships.

Finally, it is important to continue the rich history of sociological inquiry into both the social and the academic effects of desegregation (see Longshore and Prager 1985; Schofield 1991 for reviews) because the experiences students have with those of other races early on in life may very well affect their future educational and occupational choices and experiences (Dawkins and Braddock 1994; Eaton 2001). It is particularly important to understand how integration within the same school may be experienced differently by males and females as this may potentially lead to gender variation in how students approach future integrated situations.

LITERATURE

Social Integration

Most studies on integrated schools use network or survey data to identify the amount of interracial contact, the interracial friendship choices, or the racial attitudes of students. Consequently, we know a great deal about the patterns of these attitudes and friendships but little about the depth of these friendships, how they play out on a day-to-day basis, or how they affect the perceptions students have of their place in a school. While other studies on diverse or desegregated schools have

used qualitative methods, they have tended to focus more on the construction of racial or gender identity within groups (Bettie 2003; Hemmings 1996; Lewis 2003; Tatum 2003) and less on how intergroup dynamics develop and affect students' feelings of integration into the school community.

As I am studying the process of integration at one school, I focus on students' subjective perceptions of the school climate, and I therefore will be looking at the social integration of students rather than friendship patterns or the development of racial or gender identities. Work among social psychologists has focused on understanding both the factors contributing to and the effect of ''a sense of belonging'' among students, which tends to be conceptualized as feeling a part of and supported by the school community (see Osterman 2000 for a review). This concept is similar to how I define *social integration* in this study, although I also consider how incorporated a student is into the social structure of the school. Therefore, while I conceptualize social integration as feeling a part of, and equally valued and supported in, a school community, I also consider the extent to which a student has social connections outside of his or her racial in-group. In this way, I build on past studies of interracial friendship by analyzing the feelings and understandings of individual students about how they fit into the community as well as their social incorporation or isolation. As such, I use Blau's (1960:546) theory of social integration as it focuses on the individual-level processes that create social bonds within groups and help individuals form a cohesive social structure. He conceptualizes social integration as a process whereby individuals must make themselves attractive to a larger group and at the same time approachable. Higher social status usually makes an individual more attractive; however, in making oneself attractive, one can also be seen as unapproachable. Blau discusses how using a self-deprecating modesty can make one more approachable.

This theory of social integration is useful because it considers two elements often left out of research on desegregated schools—status and process. Studies of friendship patterns tend to neglect the role of status as a multidimensional concept in determining a student's position in the social network. Status, when included, is usually operationalized as academic ability or racial minority status (see Kitsner et al. 1993). Status among youth can be seen as a reflection of parents' socioeconomic status (Gaines 1991; Hollingshead 1950), but many other elements can affect a student's status within his or her peer culture, such as athleticism and participation in extracurricular activities (Adams and Bettis 2003; Coleman 1961; Eder and Kinney 1995; Goto 1997; Kinney 1993) as well as attractiveness, social skills, and personality (Coleman 1961; Kinney 1993).

In considering how cultural conceptions of status may influence perceptions of African American males and females, we can see that they yield some divergent predictions. African American males may have higher social status than females for a number of reasons that are dependent on the school's context. For instance, young African American males are typically stereotyped as athletic, which may help them gain status in schools that value sports, and participating in sports typically brings more status to boys than to girls (Eder and Parker 1987). In addition, minority girls may be less likely to join high-status girls' sports, such as cheerleading, because they are so strongly associated with white girls (Bettis and Adams 2003). Many white suburban males are also increasingly listening to rap and hip-hop music and becoming fascinated with images that this music represents (see Rodriquez 2006). This may allow African American males in a majority white context to gain status. In contrast, African American females do not have the same kinds of cultural signals to trade on for status.

However, African American males also have to contend with stereotypes that paint them as violent and aggressive. Blau's (1960) theory of social integration predicts that an individual will be accepted by his peers based on both his or her attractiveness to the group and his or her approachability. Studies in the workplace have found that African American females are better able to cross cultural boundaries than males as they are less threatening (Epstein 1973). Considering this, we might then expect African American females to make more cross-race friends due to their approachability.

Therefore, it is unclear how social integration according to Blau (1960) may vary for African American males and females in terms of status valuation and approachability. However, it is important to understand how these gender differences affect social integration as this may influence a student's general social and academic experience as well as his or her experience with students of other races. This experience may

affect whether students will choose to segregate or integrate themselves in the future (Braddock 1980; Dawkins and Braddock 1994).

School Organizational Effects on Integration

Previous researchers have usually focused on two ways that the organizational structure of a school can influence race relations and friendship patterns—through the interaction opportunities available and through the conditions under which interaction takes place.

Blau's (1977) macrostructural theory posits that relations can develop only when people have the opportunity to interact. In schools, chances of interaction are largely a function of the classes students are in. Many schools engage in curricular tracking, placing students in different classes according to ability. Tracking plays an important role in students' friendship choices, with students tending to make more friends within their tracks (Hallinan and Williams 1989; Kubitschek and Hallinan 1998; Moody 2001). Furthermore, students placed into ability groups within classrooms in middle school are more likely to make friends within those groups (Hallinan and Sørenson 1985).

Other organizational characteristics of the school and classroom influence the kinds of opportunities students have to interact and form friendships. For instance, separating students by grade level in the lunchroom in middle and high school, rather than grouping all grades together (Moody 2001), and the type of classroom—open or traditional in elementary and middle school—have been found to influence the development of interracial friendships (Hallinan 1976). Other studies of within-race peer-group segregation have found that school organization influences friendship formation. For example, Levinson (1998), in studying a Mexican secondary school, identified how school practices led students to feel connected to an academically and socioeconomically diverse group, while Flores-Gonzalez (2005) showed how academic tracking and use of school space in an inner-city high school created segregated groups—the ''school kids'' and the ''street kids.''

The racial composition of both the school and individual classrooms can also affect students' friendship choices. Macrostructural theory would predict that the more diverse a school is, the more opportunity there is for cross-race interaction and therefore the more likely it is that interracial friendships will form. Some studies confirm this; for example, Quillian and Campbell (2003), in studying cross-race friendship among white, Asian, Latino, and African American high school students, found that friendships between students of different races increased with the diversity of the school. However, Moody (2001) found a ''tipping point'' of diversity in that once an individual middle or high school became racially balanced (i.e., having a racial heterogeneity score between .30 and .65), the number of interracial friendships decreased. Similarly, Hallinan (1982) found both African American and white elementary school students made the most interracial friendships in majority white classrooms. Other studies in middle schools have found that opportunity for interaction does not necessarily lead to interaction and is not sufficient to lead to friendships, changes in attitudes, or feelings of solidarity (Schofield 1979).

Contact Theory

While macrostructural theory focuses on the structural conditions that influence the opportunity to interact, contact theory specifies the conditions of interaction most likely to lead to positive racial sentiment. Allport (1954) set out specific conditions under which contact is ideal: when individuals are of equal status; they are working toward a common, cooperative goal; and there is institutional support. Multiple studies have followed up on Allport's theory (see Pettigrew and Tropp 2006) and refined and extended it (Pettigrew 1998, 2008).

The school context is important to understand to test Allport's (1954) theory under his conditions (Moody 2001; Schofield 1991). The size, population, and organization of the school are all factors that influence not only the opportunity for contact but also the conditions under which contact takes place (Khmelkov and Hallinan 1999; Moody 2001). Simple opportunity for interaction does not mean that friendships will be made when conditions that are likely to lead to positive interactions are not in place (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006; Rodkin, Wilson, and Ahn 2007).

Academic tracking influences status differences, which can lead to fewer interracial friendships if students of one race are disproportionately

assigned to a lower track (Schofield 1979). In many schools, African Americans are disproportionately placed in lower-ability tracks (Noguera and Wing 2006; Oakes 1985), which can lead to African American and white students' being of unequal academic status. Extracurricular activities fulfill Allport's (1954) first condition of equal status better than academic activities due to the ability tracking that occurs in most schools (Braddock, Dawkins, and Wilson 1995; Khmelkov and Hallinan 1999). Allport's other criteria, for both groups to be working toward a common, cooperative goal, is also better realized in a setting outside the classroom where students are concerned with the performance or product of the group rather than their own individual grades. Indeed, African American and white students who participate in extracurricular activities together usually have more cross-race friendships than those who do not (Hallinan and Teixeira 1987; Moody 2001; Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991). However, status hierarchies can still develop within teams, which may lead to racial conflict (Greenfield 2002).

Allport's (1954) last condition, that there is support by authorities, is rarely met in most studies of cross-race interaction in schools. It is usually assumed to be true in schools; however, schools can vary widely in their commitment to encouraging interracial friendship. Most past studies, in focusing on large national data sets, have failed to look at this condition. However, Schofield and Sager (1977), in studying one middle school with a high commitment to fostering diversity and integration, found that over time the school's efforts lead to more interracial interaction.

Gender Differences in Integration

Very few of the hundreds of studies on integration in schools have focused on gender differences in friendship patterns, and those that have identified gender differences have not always been able to identify the mechanisms behind them. Studies of gender differences across both races have been somewhat contradictory. Some have found that males of both races are more likely to interact across racial lines (Schofield 1982; Schofield and Sager 1977), while others have found that it is white females who are most likely to do so (Damico and Sparks 1986). Some studies have found that African American females are less likely to have interracial interactions or

friendships in comparison to African American males (Damico and Sparks 1986; Eaton 2001; Ispa-Landa 2009; Kitsner et al. 1993), while studies focusing more broadly on crossing social boundaries have tended to find that African American females are more willing and/or able to engage in different interaction styles to facilitate this crossing. African American females were found to be most likely compared to white females and African American and white males to act as ''go-betweens'' in elementary classrooms, interacting across race, age, and gender boundaries (Grant 1984). African American and Latina females are also more likely than their male counterparts to act as ''cultural straddlers,'' code switching between nondominant and dominant forms of cultural capital (Carter 2005). However, when looking at such gender differences in code switching, it is important to keep in mind that the cultural context of the school may play an important role. For example, Mehan, Hubbard, and Villanueva (1994) found that both male and female minority high school students were able to switch between a school and neighborhood identity with ease, and the authors suggest that this was due to institutional mechanisms within the school that facilitated the development of a critical consciousness.

The literature on gender differences in integration in multiracial contexts is somewhat inconclusive. While studies on interracial contact and friendships seem to find that African American females are less likely to cross racial lines than others, studies on cultural boundary crossing have found more fluidity in the cultural and interactional styles and identities of African American females, although Mehan, Hubbard, and Villanueva's (1994) study suggests that this may be influenced by the context of the school. It is necessary then to further investigate how the social and organizational context of the school may influence these gender differences. In this article, I shed light on the perceptions of African American and Latina/Latino females and males as they experience being minorities in a majority white school and identify how the organizational features of the school influence the experiences of these students.

METHOD

I use interview and observational data[1] from a majority white high school located in the

metropolitan area of a large northeastern city, Northeast Capital City (NCC).[2] Village High School (VHS) is about 30 minutes outside of the city in a wealthy, predominantly white, suburban town. VHS has approximately 1,240[3] students, of whom 84 percent are white, 6 percent African American, 5 percent Asian, and 3 percent ethnically identified as Latino. Of the students, 54 percent are female, and 46 percent are male.

The school participates in a local voluntary desegregation program (VDP) that busses in mostly working- and lower-middle-class minority students from the city to the suburban school. Nearly all African American and Latino students who attend VHS do so through this program.[4] Approximately 72 students took part in VDP at VHS during the 2006-2007 academic year, 42 females and 30 males.

Another researcher and I conducted participant observation for approximately five months at VHS. Between the two of us, we spent from two to eight hours, four days a week, in the school. We sat in on different classes and went to lunch and various school activities with students whom we would shadow for the day.[5] We talked informally with teachers and administrators while we shadowed students and observed in classes.[6] We formally interviewed the principal and the VHS VDP director. We attended school events, including a day-long diversity program, committee meetings on the achievement gap, college planning sessions, monthly open meetings with parents and the principal, and a focus group of VDP students organized by a VDP senior as part of her senior project. We both wrote detailed field notes after each day at the school that we shared with each other.

We also conducted 14 small-group interviews with a total of 43 students, 26 VDP students, and 17 VHS students. This represents 16 females and 10 males from VDP; 3 females were Latina, 13 females were African American, 2 males were Latino, and 8 males were African American. In VDP, 83 percent of the students were African American.[7] Among VHS students, we interviewed 9 females and 8 males. All were Caucasian, except for 1 Asian American male. We conducted between two and four interviews per grade. All the interviews were single-gender interviews. In the 10th and 12th grades, we conducted mixed-race interviews; all others were single-race interviews.[8] This article draws primarily from the small-group interviews with VDP students as I am focusing on their experience;

however, I do use some data from the VHS student interviews as well.

The employment of small-group interviews in qualitative research has grown in recent years (Morgan 1996; Wilson 1997) and is particularly useful when interviewing children and youth who may feel more comfortable talking in a group of their peers rather than in an individual interview with an adult (Lewis 1992:416). The group environment also allows for more natural conversation and offers youth time to think while others are talking and consider their responses (Lewis 1992:417). The group interview provided us with important data on the extent to which students' interpretations of their experience varied and allowed us to understand multiple perspectives on important issues (Frey and Fontana 1991; Gibbs 1997). The group interviews also gave us the opportunity to confirm or rethink our understandings of our observations (Frey and Fontana 1991:183). Groups were small (four to five students) so that the setting could be intimate and all students could voice their opinions. The interviewers worked to make sure that no individual monopolized the conversation and sought to elicit the opinions of all students.

Group interviews were conducted by both researchers. One researcher, the author, is a white female, the other, an African American female. Researchers were not matched by race or gender to respondents. The author conducted most interviews of both VDP and VHS students. While some respondents may have been less likely to express negative racial feelings toward an interviewer of a different race, our interviews showed similarity in the quality of data collected. We interviewed students toward the end of the school year, after spending quite a bit of time in the VDP room and in the school, which helped us gain rapport with students during our interviews. We also had shadowed some of the students or spent time talking to them (or their friends) informally, so this also helped students feel more comfortable with us. For the most part, conversations seemed to flow naturally, and students freely expressed their opinions, however critical.

Interviews were transcribed, and I coded both interviews and field notes. First, I read over all documents and engaged in ''open coding'' to identify all themes, issues, and ideas using Atlas.ti software. I then engaged in ''focused coding,'' where I recoded based on particular themes of interest I had identified in my earlier coding (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995). I wrote

multiple memos on these themes and the emerging patterns and discussed them frequently with the other researcher to elicit feedback.

FINDINGS

The Setting

The Village community. Village is a small, historically quaint, and very well-to-do suburb approximately 20 miles outside of NCC. In Village, the median home price according to the 2000 census was $453,000 compared to $191,000 in NCC. The median household income in Village was $96,000 compared to $40,000 in NCC. Of the 17,000 residents of Village, approximately 92 percent were white, 2 percent African American, 3 percent Asian, 2 percent Other, and 3 percent ethnically identified as Latino. VHS serves both Village and another smaller town demographically similar to Village.

The school. VHS is an academically successful school. Of its students, 94 percent scored proficient or above on the State Achievement Test in English, compared to 58 percent from NCC. A total of 98 percent of its students graduate, with 100 percent of those students going on to college. In NCC, 58 percent of students graduate, with 52 percent of those students going on to college. The student-teacher ratio at VHS is 14:1. Of the 88 teachers at the school, one is African American, one is Asian, and the rest are white.

Only classes in math and science are academically tracked by ability in VHS. However, this did not lead to racially segregated classes as the VDP students were such a small minority. Even in lower-tracked math classes that I sat in on, VDP students were never more than a quarter of the students in the class. Very few, if any, VDP students were in honors or advanced placement classes, so the majority of these classes were more segregated than others.

Issues of race—visible and invisible. During my time at the school, I talked to both VDP and VHS students. In informal discussions with VDP students, issues of race almost always entered the conversation. In contrast, VHS students usually did not bring up race or VDP unless explicitly asked. However, the administration and teachers of VHS were very concerned with race relations within the school, especially with the racial achievement gap. An achievement task force was set up, and meetings were conducted with VDP parents. Our

presence in the school was greatly supported by this task force for any light we could shed on the issue. During my time at VHS, I also observed the school host a special diversity program that sought to bring down race, gender, class, and status barriers among teens. On the surface then, there would seem to be support for cross-race friendships by authorities, one of Allport's (1954) conditions for positive racial contact.

While the school made visible attempts to address issues of race and had many concerned teachers and administrators with good intentions, during our observations we noted how some attempts to foster diversity only served to highlight the ambivalence of VHS students, teachers, and the community concerning integration. As part of a senior project, one of the VDP students organized a bus tour of NCC neighborhoods for VHS teachers. Later, while discussing reactions to the tour, the teacher who helped organize it mentioned that someone had said how ''surprised they were that drugs were sold so openly'' during the tour. In the same meeting, teachers involved in VDP were troubled that VHS teachers were overly concerned with having security at an event that was going to be held in NCC and that few VHS students had bought tickets to it. Also, at a ''peace'' walk held in Village in honor of a former VDP student killed by gunfire in NCC, VDP students commented that there was still racial segregation at this event by both students and staff.

In many ways, there were clear racial divides within the school—in attitudes and perceptions as well as physically in the cafeteria or in classrooms, where groups usually segregated by race. However, after conducting interviews with groups of VDP students, it was clear that there also were many internal differences among the VDP students in how they integrated into the school.

The Social Experience of Being a Minority at VHS

The experience of being a minority and a VDP student at VHS was very different for males and females. In general, the females were less satisfied with their experiences at VHS. In an interview with a group of 11th-grade African American females, when asked if there was anything they liked about school, one girl replied,

> I value my education and I like coming here because I see my friends and stuff, but

when you're in an environment that really isn't . . . you don't really feel comfortable, then it's kind of hard to focus on one thing to learn. . . . Sometimes it makes me want to just be like I don't even know why I'm here. I'd rather just go to school in NCC.

This student valued the academic advantages of VHS but struggled with an uncomfortable ''environment'' in the school. The other girls in this interview echoed a similar feeling. Later on in the interview, the girls indicated that they felt uncomfortable due to racism at VHS as well as conflicting academic pressures. They felt that there was an expectation from the Village community that they would not do well academically, but this expectation of failure was coupled with a pressure from the Village community to succeed as well as to represent all VDP students. In the same interview, another 11th-grade female commented, ''And they [the Village community] put us in a group and it's hard because they expect us all to . . . come here and goof off and not do well and or those kids who do, it's like, it's such a big surprise.'' Her friend, another 11th-grade female, followed up by saying, ''As a group, VDP, we have to live up to certain expectations that the community or Village has for us as a group of VDP kids.''

The girls felt their individual performance reflected on VDP students as a whole and discussed how they almost wished they could attend school in NCC where their own performance would not represent the group. The second African American female quoted above stated later in her interview how her performance would be seen at an NCC high school:

I'll do this on my own or I know I don't have to have like people putting me on like a contract like you know what I'm saying? . . . I know that at NCC public schools, if I perform, then that's the way I perform or whatever. Whatever. I don't have to worry about having somebody's like weight on my back. As a VDP student, there's a lot of weight on your back.

This student resented the spotlight that was put on VDP students for not doing well in school, such as instituting academic contracts.[9] She also felt that this pressure actually weighed her down when she came out to Village.

Females at VHS appeared to be very affected by the racism they perceived on the part of the community and the students. Another 11th-grade minority female described what she thought the white students at VHS were thinking about VDP students:

I'm not going to sit here and say I know what they [the Village community] say but it's like they [VHS students] basically look . . . it's like, oh, yeah, we can be friends and stuff but knowing that you're a VDP student, I probably know that you're failing all of your classes.

This student felt her academic identity was discounted at VHS and that the students and the community considered her, and VDP students as a whole, a failure.

The girls had negative associations with VHS students, and this led to limited contact with students who were not in VDP. More minority females than males hung out exclusively with other VDP students. In an interview with 10th-grade African American and Latina females, an African American female discussed being ambivalent about how integrated she felt into the school and how she did not feel the need to make an extra effort to make friends with VHS students.

INTERVIEWER: Do you feel part of the school environment?
AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE: I do but I don't. Like but I don't . . . I'm not somebody that like I'll come out here and I'll be like, okay, well, I'm going to try and be with Sarah and Jen [referring to any VHS female] all day, and I'm going to try and be with them like and fit in, like I fit in in NCC fine. Like that's my home . . . so I have some friends [in Village] but like I don't try.

In this group interview, both of the African American females felt that they had more friends in VDP, while the Latina female felt her friendships were about equally split between VDP and VHS. In a focus group with two 9th-grade females, one African American and one Latina, both females acknowledged that they had friends outside of VDP, especially in classes in which they were the only VDP students, but indicated that most of their friends were in VDP and that VDP students were whom they would choose to

hang out with socially. In an interview with 12th-grade minority females, those students felt that their true friends were in VDP and not among the VHS students. When they graduated, they thought they would keep in contact only with their VDP friends. In fact, when three of the students were asked to name one good friend from VHS, they all named the same girl, indicating how small their social circles were. The VDP girls also felt that they were not known at the school in many ways and were resentful that very few minority students were nominated for the Superlatives section in their yearbook (such as Class Clown and Class Flirt) and that the only VDP student (a female) who won was for ''Loudest Person.''[10]

Overall, the minority girls had negative impressions of the school, the community, and the students. The VDP girls felt a weight on their backs when they took the bus out to Village and felt uncomfortable in an environment where they thought that students, teachers, and the community had low expectations for them.

The males' experiences at VHS were very different from the females'. In stark contrast to the way the females felt when they headed to school each day, the males interviewed frequently described a weight lifting off of their shoulders when they took the bus ride out. For example, an 11th-grade African American male, when asked what he did and did not like about VHS, answered,

> Something I like is I like any time I come out here, I get to be normal. I can just like relax and be cool about things and back home I've got to be like, looking over my shoulder and stuff like that. You see everybody just expressing who they really are. . . . So, you know, you get to express your individuality without worrying about other people judging you [at VHS].

While the girls felt the pressure of different expectations, this young man actually felt that coming to Village, he could be in a place where he was not being judged. He felt very at ease and comfortable in the surroundings. While boys and girls were asked the same initial questions, it was girls who brought up academics[11] and boys who brought up relating to people socially. An African American 12th-grade male, in his interview, also brought up the social aspect of school

right away and mentioned how much he liked it, and other boys in his interview agreed. He elaborated by describing how sports played a role in the ''atmosphere'' at school that he enjoyed:

> People seem to know you [when you play sports]. There are definitely cliques and if you're in the right clique, you have a good time. When you're in class, you're with your friends all the time, and there's people you see every day so it's just . . . it's nice to have inside jokes and just hang with friends all of the time.

While the females felt that the atmosphere at school was uncomfortable and burdening, the males felt free and accepted by friends.

Researchers have documented that minority boys tend to spend a lot of time hanging out on the street in their neighborhoods (Clampet-Lundquist et al. 2011; Dance 2002; Lopez 2002), which can result in being more exposed to street culture, which requires a constant maintenance of respect and the presentation of a ''street'' image (Anderson 1990, 1999). As a result, boys mentioned appreciating Village because they did not have to worry about what they said or how they looked at someone. They could relax and did not have to worry about ''looking over their shoulder'' all the time. Even though the boys engaged in code-switching techniques that required them to change how they acted in Village (which I discuss later), the lack of pressure to constantly be on the lookout for potentially dangerous situations led boys to feel more comfortable in Village.

Minority males in VDP not only felt more comfortable in the school but also had more friends from VHS as well as contacts with the larger Village community. A few boys talked about going to parties in Village or coming out to play basketball with their Village friends on the weekends. For example, a 12th-grade minority male talked about the people he hung out with most as VHS students.

> For me, it's most of the parties I go to are Village kids because they're the guys who usually have the parties and they're usually out here and I stay out in Village most of the time so, I mean, I hang out with a mix of both [VDP and Village students] but most of time when I go to parties it's Village kids.

Many boys also participated in sports, which allowed them to have ''host families.'' Host families were created in a variety of ways. Sometimes coaches informally set up arrangements with Village families who had children on the team, or boys became friends with VHS students and grew friendly with the families.[12] Many students spoke about being very close with their host families. For example, a 12th-grade Latino male and a 12th-grade African American male, in their interview, both discussed how much they appreciated their host families and all they had done for them during their high school careers.

> LATINO MALE: Because there's NO way you can repay . . . like gratitude for two . . . or like four years of being here or forever like these guys like . . .
> AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE: That's right.

Host families provided the boys places to stay and also support systems. The Latino student quoted above said his host father came to the school to talk to his guidance counselor at times. Having host families also allowed the boys to stay overnight in Village, which gave them the opportunity to more easily participate in sports and go to parties with Village students. They had more time to be social with VHS students, which led to contacts with the students and their parents. In contrast, girls did not mention any relationships with host families.

Although the boys had a better impression of Village and had more white friends than did the girls, this was not because they did not experience any racism or discrimination. Males recounted incidents wherein their friends said the ''N'' word in front of them or wherein teammates automatically blamed VDP students when things were stolen and asked the boys to ''ask on their bus'' if anyone had a missing iPod. Although the boys were angered by these incidents and frustrated by the ignorance of their friends, this did not lead them to develop a negative overall impression of Village, as the girls did. The boys were aware of the stereotypes that whites might have about them but felt that this could be overcome once people got to know them. For example, the African American 12th grader quoted above about host families noted,

> I mean, I like baggy pants and I like the hip hop style because that's what I'm into, so you [a VHS student] walk in as a freshman being like 14 and you see me and you're going to think, whoa, this guy is pretty hard core, but, you know, once they get to know me because they will give me a chance, they will see that, you know, I'm just a big softy and stuff like that so I don't think they're racist. I just think it's a stereotype.

This student felt that others might have a negative view of him at first but was confident that VHS students would get past that.

Socially Integrating into the School

In analyzing integration at VHS, we can think about both the VDP students' attempting to become accepted by the VHS students and the VHS students' attempting to become accepted by the VDP students. It is important to consider that both processes may have been going on in some cases. However, in the next section, I will argue that for the most part VHS students did not attempt to integrate into the VDP students' worlds.

Integration—a one-way street. One issue that upset many VDP students was their feeling that VHS students had little interest in understanding their lives. The VDP students expressed a desire for the VHS students to be open to coming to NCC and getting to know who they were rather than just relying on stereotypes. A 12th-grade African American female said in her interview,

> I have some friends from Village and . . . they don't mind inviting me over to like dinner and like to their house so I enjoy that, but I'm also like, ''Okay, come where I live. Like it's okay. Like you won't get shot.'' And I think it should be like . . . it should be something that's shared, you know, not just I come out to your town where it's safe and secure but like just come out.

The VDP students did not think the VHS students were open to learning about other communities outside of Village, and this student wished that that were part of her friendships with VHS students. Similarly, in an interview with 11th-grade Latina and African American females, when asked what accounted for the separation between the communities, one student responded with the observation that there ''isn't enough

knowledge.'' The girls then went on to describe the ideas that the VHS students had of NCC and the VDP students' lives, assuming that they were all constantly exposed to violence, lived in the ''ghetto,'' and did not participate in traditional activities such as trick-or-treating on Halloween. The 11th-grade girls frequently referred to the ''box theory,'' which according to one African American female was the idea that ''they [VHS students] live in this box and their parents just feed them these ideas and the media is over here. It's hard and I feel like it's . . . at times, it's not their fault but there are actually some people that are just ignorant.'' For the most part, these girls felt that integration at the school was difficult because it was not up to just the VDP students to integrate into the Village community; rather, there needed to be an effort on the part of the VHS students. In another interview with 10th- and 11th-grade African American males, a 10th-grade male also expressed the idea that integration was not up to just the VDP students by saying, ''VDP is not just about coming out to suburban schools, doing the homework and going back to our own homes. VDP is about teaching suburban schools, suburban students what it's like to live in the inner city, what it feels like to be a person of color.''

Although the VDP students did not think that integration should be solely their responsibility, for the most part the process was one-sided. The interviews and observations I conducted shed light on some of the ways the VDP students attempted, or did not attempt, to integrate with the VHS students and how this varied by gender.

Strategies of social integration—status. Blau (1960) posits that to integrate into a community, one must be attractive to those in that community and that usually we are attracted to those of higher status. While status is usually associated with socioeconomic class, in the world of adolescence, many other elements can confer social status, such as athleticism, physical attractiveness, personality, or participation in extracurricular activities (Adams and Bettis 2003; Coleman 1961; Eder and Kinney 1995; Goto 1997; Kinney 1993). While most VDP students were below VHS students in socioeconomic status, they did have other kinds of status characteristics that were valued at VHS. The VDP males, in particular, were able to use their status as athletes to socially integrate with the VHS students as well as the status attributed to hip-hop and rap stars, whose style they physically represented, to gain friends.

Many of the males interviewed cited friendships formed through sports. Being a part of sports teams helped make them more known at school, and increased visibility, especially through athletics, usually increases a student's popularity (Eder 1985; Flores-Gonzalez 2005; Kinney 1993). An 11th-grade African American male explained how sports helped him make friends by saying,

> I got to know a lot of kids through sports. You know, baseball kind of boosts up a lot of your confidence, a lot of your friends and stuff like that. So just, I mean, sometimes when you're practicing with the varsity guys and, you know, that's how you know your name starts to circulate. . . . You start to meet some of their friends, and they start to meet some of your friends and then your whole fan base . . . or your whole, you know, friend base just expands.

Participating in sports teams facilitated making friends with VHS students, and it also brought social status to the boys. As the above student stated, sports made him more known among boys on the team and then later in the school as a whole. Being involved with sports and being seen as athletic (a masculine characteristic) usually brings more social rewards for males than it does for females (Coleman 1961; Eder and Parker 1987). Girls' sports in general, aside from cheerleading, tend to have less visibility than male athletics (Eder and Kinney 1995). Being involved with sports gave boys both status and the opportunity to interact with VHS students. In fact, when VHS males were asked to discuss segregation between VHS and VDP students, they frequently talked about sports as a way that they crossed those racial boundaries. In an interview with Caucasian and Asian 11th-grade males from VHS, when asked what could account for the racial separation in the cafeteria, one of the Caucasian males responded, ''I think the one thing that really does bring us together is sports, the VDP kids and Village. I mean, I think most of the friends I've made from VDP were through like track or other sports.'' As I will discuss later, females did not participate in sports to the same degree as did males.

The boys were also able to gain status and be attractive friends to the VHS males due to their emulation of the style of rap and hip-hop stars, by whom many of the suburban boys were intrigued. In an interview with 12th-grade

minority females, the females felt that the males played into stereotypes that white suburban males had of the urban ''rapper'' to gain white friends.

> AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE 1: Okay, like I was talking about earlier when they were in the halls. Like they [VDP males] hung up with . . . they try to act how . . . they play out the black stereotypes.
> INTERVIEWER: Oh.
> AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE 1: Because the white people want to see it.
> AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE 2: Right.
> AFRICAN AMERICAN FEMALE 1: They're [VHS students are] like, ''Oh. I see hip-hop on TV. This is how you guys must act.'' And they're [VDP males are] like, ''That will make you like me? All right. I'll just . . . you up in the hallway.'' They would not . . . up nobody if they went back to NCC.

The males were able to gain social status based on suburban ideas of the urban hip-hop culture. This allowed them to present a certain masculine image that gained them status (Majors and Billson 1992). The males' physical appearance and clothing personified this hip-hop image, although the males did not act in a way that might frighten or alienate the white males. The females contend that in the context of NCC, the VDP boys are not actually the tough youth but that they use that image of black male masculinity to gain status with males in suburbia. Perry (2002:109) suggests that white suburban males may listen to hip-hop and embrace aspects of the culture because they want to be associated with ''characteristics of blackness, namely being cool, tough and hip.''

The girls had fewer opportunities to participate in sports and other school activities that might have brought them status. While athleticism usually brings status to males, being friends with other popular girls, such as cheerleaders, can contribute to increasing girls' status, so popularity for females is based on not only what they do but also whom they know (Eder 1985; Eder and Kinney 1995). As I will discuss in the next section, the females in VDP had less opportunity to participate in activities and therefore less opportunity to make connections with other girls.

In addition, the females were not able to trade on stereotypes of their femininity that would have value at VHS. While we did not collect direct data on the rates of interracial dating, observations suggest that this mostly occurred between VDP males and VHS females. This mirrors the findings of other studies, which have attributed the lack of interracial dating between African American girls and white boys to the status hierarchy, which tends to put African American females in particular at the bottom (Schofield 1982). In an interview with 10th-grade African American and Latina females, the Latina female mentioned that she had had a crush on a VHS boy. When she told him he had ''nice legs'' and hung out outside his class to say ''hi,'' she felt he went out of his way to then avoid her. Her friends, somewhat jokingly, agreed that the boy was ''scared'' of her. In contrast, I observed VDP males flirting and hanging out with VHS females on multiple occasions, and at least one steady relationship occurred between an African American male and a white female during my observations. These differences in interactions with the opposite sex may also have prevented the VDP females from gaining status as girls gain status through their popularity with the opposite sex (Schofield 1982). In addition, as evidenced previously by the nomination in the Superlatives section of the yearbook, the females tended to be seen as loud, obnoxious, hostile, or having other negative characteristics associated with African American females (Fordham 1993).

Strategies of social integration—approachability. The males also attempted to socially integrate into the Village community by making themselves more approachable. VDP males appeared to change how they acted depending on whether they were at home or at school more than the females. While Blau (1960) argued that being approachable meant using self-deprecating modesty to play down one's status, I argue that for the VDP boys, being approachable meant changing their speech and behavior to play down stereotypes of minority males that painted them as aggressive, violent, and unintelligent. In a group interview of 10th- and 11th-grade minority males, students talked about how they changed some of their behaviors:

> AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE 1: They . . . I hold my speech every day.
> AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE 2: You've got to be . . . I change up.
> AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE 3: They change up to become more intellectual with the other Village kids.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE 1: It works better like . . .

AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE 3: Yeah. It does. It does. They gain more white friends.

AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE 2: It helps you interact.

Here, the males are consciously aware of what they say in VHS and note that what they say and how they say it affects how students treat them. The boys also changed their behavior in other ways. In the same interview, a student said,

Let's say a white kid called me an idiot. I'm not going to do the whole rah, rah, I'm going to try to beat you up type thing. It's just . . . you got to know when and where to do that as for if I was in NCC, I'd be like, ''Let's fight right now then.'' Compared to here [VHS] where you're just like, no.

Researchers have noted the highly aggressive and violent ''code of the street'' (Anderson 1999) that is prevalent in many inner-city neighborhoods. This code is based on respect, an element that must be maintained and defended at all costs. This student states how if he were at home in NCC, he would not be able to shrug off an insult and instead would become aggressive. In VHS, he can leave that persona behind and become a part of a culture that does not require hypervigilance of respect. In the same interview, another male commented, ''It's like, they're white people. You try not to be obnoxious because like he said, they get scared. There's just a bunch of other things you have to . . . you can't do what you would do in NCC and vice versa.''

In contrast, the females claimed they did not change how they acted when in VHS. One female stated that she did not want to change herself because this was her last year, and she just did not care anymore about the school or how people saw her. In another interview, a Latina female also indicated that she did not change her dress, her speech, her tastes, or her behavior. However, some admitted that they changed when they were at home in their neighborhoods. For example, one 12th-grade female said, ''When I get home [to NCC] I'm making sure I don't have my book bag.'' She also said that she would not tell her NCC friends that she did her homework.

The minority males who were interviewed also claimed that the females did not change how they acted. In an interview with minority males in 10th and 11th grades, when asked what sort of issues the females had to deal with in adjusting to VHS, the males stated, ''When they [females in VDP] come here, they bring that little hood mentality here as well which is 100 percent bad.'' Another male agreed, stating, ''I don't know how they feel because I haven't asked them about that, but I just know they act ghetto sometimes and it's not called for.''

From the VDP students' interviews, it appears that the VDP girls did not attempt to make themselves more approachable to the Village community. This is also reflected in interviews with VHS girls, where they seem to attribute any separation between VHS and VDP students to the VDP students' being ''hostile'' or being very close-knit and therefore not welcoming of VHS students.

In an interview with two 9th-grade Caucasian girls, when asked how students separated themselves into groups, one girl responded by stating that while both groups of students seemed somewhat unwilling to ''break the ice,'' it was mostly due to ''hostility'' on the part of the VDP students. When asked what she meant by ''hostile,'' the student stated,

WHITE FEMALE: They [VDP students] just don't really like venturing out and making friends with other people, and they kind of just stick to their own friends.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that Village students also kind of [stick] together?

WHITE FEMALE: I think a bunch of them do, but there's like those people who are just trying to be nice to everybody, and the VDP students are still rather rude to them so . . . like if somebody makes a mistake and then apologizes for it, like they'll still be like really mean about it so . . .

This student attributes the majority of the barriers to the VDP students themselves and their lack of approachability. In another interview with 12th-grade African American and Caucasian females, a Caucasian female, who was dating an African American male in VDP, discussed how intimidated she felt sometimes around VDP students since they were so close to each other and such a tight community.

Although the VHS females do not directly mention the VDP females in their responses, as students tend to make friends within their own

gender, it is likely that their ideas about VDP students were influenced by their experiences with female VDP students. In addition, when interracial dating did occur, it was between an African American male and a white female, so it is unlikely that the VHS girls viewed the VDP males as hostile. While this is evidence that the VDP females were not viewed as very approachable by the VHS community, it is difficult to interpret the sequence of cause and effect. It could be the VDP females were in fact reacting to the ignorance of the VHS students, which the VHS students interpreted as hostility, which led to a lack of social integration among the VDP females. The VDP females also may have realized that they lacked the status characteristics necessary to gain social acceptance at VHS and so may not have put in the same effort the boys did into being approachable, as it would have little effect on their social integration, thereby leading the VHS girls to interpret this as hostility.

Organizational Aspects of the School Affecting Integration

In the previous section, I discussed the gender differences in the strategies of social integration among the VDP students and also identified the perceptions of the VHS students concerning the integration of the VDP students. The perceptions of racial friendliness on both sides, however, were intricately related to the opportunities available for interaction and the conditions under which interaction did occur. In this section, I contend that the lack of social integration and the perceptions of hostility and ignorance among the VHS and VDP females were in part due to school practices that limited the amount of contact these girls had with each other and structured the contact they did have to be under less favorable conditions than the boys'.

Both macrostructural theory and contact theory suggest integration is largely a function of the organization and structure of the school day. The organization of the school affected the opportunities for cross-race interaction differently for females in VDP than for males, giving males more opportunity in general to interact and more opportunities under the conditions necessary for positive contact (Allport 1954; Pettigrew and Tropp 2006).

The school's transportation practices and host family provisions for students were set up to provide for both male and female VDP students; however, this interacted with differences in parental supervision of sons versus daughters and gender differences in students' own preferences concerning staying overnight in someone else's home, which led to differential effects. According to the interview data, parents of VDP girls worried about their daughters and were protective over them. The logistics of being a VDP student required a great deal of travel, with students getting up very early to catch the bus to school and having a long ride home in the evening. One bus left right after school at 3:15 and another left at 5:15. After the last bus, the only option was to walk to the train station in the center of Village and take a train to the center of NCC, which would then require multiple other transfers for the students to arrive at their homes. This meant that for the students to participate in many after-school activities, including sports teams, they either needed to be picked up by their parents or needed to stay with a host family. While the males embraced this idea and gained access to important contacts through their host families, females did not. In an interview, a 12th-grade minority female explained that she quit basketball, even though she was quite good, because the practices ended so late and she did not like taking the train home. When I was talking with her informally during my observations, she explained to me that she did not like to stay at other people's homes. Other females mentioned quitting sports teams with their parents' support because parents worried about how their girls would get home at night.[13] For example, a 10th-grade African American female told an interviewer about how she quit softball at her mother's behest:

> Well, the point was that the softball coach was supposed to pick me up, but then my mother got mad because I came home too late because I'm traveling, you know, so and then like sometimes the softball coach wasn't there so she couldn't pick me up. So my mother encouraged me to quit. She thought it was like hectic or whatever.

In contrast, no males mentioned a parent's worry about their whereabouts when they would stay over in Village.

Being unable to participate in sports or other after-school activities prevented the girls from forming friendships with VHS students and from feeling a part of the school.[14] Girls felt that because the

school did not attempt to make it easier for them to participate in activities, they were not valued. In an interview with 12th-grade African American females, the girls expressed anger and bitterness about the lack of attention paid to their dilemma and cited examples of trying to participate in fencing and student government with little success.

Of course, not all males participated in sports, and these exceptions help illuminate how school practices that valued the VDP students for certain characteristics, such as athleticism, served to devalue students who did not fit that ideal. For example, a 10th-grade African American male shared with me his disappointment with and anger at the school. In my field notes that day I wrote,

> He also felt like it was hard at Village to get involved in interesting clubs like the Model UN or Amnesty International because they meet at 6:30 and the last bus leaves at 5:00. If you can't find someone to sleep over with, it's hard. Most parents can't come and pick up their kids, and the [train] is unreliable. He compared it though to sports teams—if a coach needed a good VDP player to stay, he would arrange for him to spend the night with a Village student, even if the two weren't great friends. He said this showed what they valued VDP students for.

While many boys were able to use sports as a way to increase their social circles and status, this was not true for all boys, and their views of the social aspects of VHS were similar to the girls'.

The logistics of getting home after sports prevented the majority of girls from participating in activities that would have given them more opportunity to interact with the VHS students and feel more welcome at the school. Arrangements with team members' families and other provisions made by coaches after practices were informally done, so it is unclear if the boys' coaches were simply more proactive than the girls' coaches or if equal attempts were made. VDP males also connected to host families through Village friendships, which may have been facilitated by their status and participation in sports, thereby reinforcing the benefits they received and the isolation of the females from such connections. It appears that the girls also were less willing to sleep over in Village and that their parents were less comfortable with this idea.

Not being as able to participate in after-school activities prevented VDP students from having the simple opportunity to meet and interact with more VHS students and also prevented them from being in situations that fulfilled Allport's (1954) conditions for ideal contact (equal status; common, cooperative goals; and institutional support). Academic tracking can prevent interracial contact due to lack of opportunity and differences in status. While VHS did not track all of its classes, some were tracked, so general academic performance was not hard to determine. From interviews, it appeared that the girls did not think the VHS students thought of them as equally intelligent, so the VDP girls most likely did not perceive that there were equal status conditions in classes. Sports and other cooperative group activities, however, did put students on equal levels and also had them working toward a common goal. Other studies have supported the finding that participating in integrated extracurricular activities leads to improved race relations (Moody 2001; Stearns, Buchmann, and Bonneau 2009). This may partly explain why boys seemed to have a more positive view of VHS and a better social experience.

In addition to structural barriers to participation in extracurricular activities, other school practices that were in place to support VDP students academically only served to further distance the girls from the school community. The school set aside a special room for tutoring during study periods for VDP students and hired an African American woman to supervise and help the students. Although the room and the supports were intended for all VDP students, mostly female minority students took advantage of the study room. The males did not feel supported by the supervisor and felt that she gave preference to the females, so fewer males spent time in there. As a result, they interacted more with other VHS students while the girls secluded themselves in the VDP room. This resulted in disadvantages for both minority males and minority females—the males did not get the help they needed academically since they felt uncomfortable in such a feminine space, and the females were even more socially isolated in the school.

CONCLUSION

Past research on desegregation in schools has usually focused on outcomes such as number of interracial friends or racial attitudes without understanding the process by which students socially integrate into the school. Research also

has neglected differences within racial groups, particularly gender differences in how students integrate and make cross-race friendships. In this study, I investigated the process of social integration for minority students at a majority white school and identified significant gender differences in the social experiences of students. I argued that minority males were better able to integrate due to social status characteristics as well as the strategies they employed to make themselves more approachable. In contrast, I found that the minority girls had more negative social experiences at the school, potentially due to negative characteristics associated with minority females, such as being loud or hostile.

I argued that in addition to status differentials, organizational characteristics of the school influenced the social integration of the students differentially for boys and girls. Previous studies on desegregated schools have found that more interracial friendships are made among students who participate in extracurricular activities as these activities are structured under more ideal conditions (Hallinan and Teixeira 1987; Moody 2001; Zweigenhaft and Domhoff 1991). In my study, I found that the school's practices allowed the boys more opportunity to spend time with VHS students under ideal conditions of contact. At the same time, the school's practices did not allow the girls as much opportunity to interact with VHS students under ideal conditions. This lack of contact under ideal conditions, and lack of contact in general, most likely also contributed to the gender differences in social integration of the VDP students.

This work follows up on earlier qualitative work on integrated schools (e.g., Schofield 1982) by showing how the process by which males become integrated has changed over time and differs at the high school level. The valuation of African American males by white suburbanites for their urban characteristics and embodiment of rap and hip-hop stars is a more recent phenomenon, while the shift from the gendered nature of schoolyard games to formally organized sports teams, helping boys integrate and gain status, is a product of being in a high school context. In addition, I showed how the organizational practices of the school (such as the VDP study room and transportation options) differentially affected males and females.

Integration at VHS is a product of a combination of multiple, simultaneous, sometimes reinforcing processes that occur at the interpersonal and organizational levels of the school. Cultural status signals (both national and contextual to VHS) played a role in facilitating integration for the boys; however, the boys also exhibited agency in how they went about code switching to be more approachable when they were at VHS. At the same time, the organization and practices of the school facilitated more interaction between the VDP boys and other VHS students so that they could be more visible in the school and gain such status. For the VDP girls, the cultural context of VHS did not give them status and, at the same time, limited opportunities for contact under ideal conditions. It is likely that this affected how the VDP girls were viewed by the VHS girls and possibly reinforced their isolation by painting them as hostile. In addition, not all males or females followed this typical pattern— for example, boys who did not play sports were frustrated just as the girls were by the lack of transportation options and the devaluation of VDP students outside of the sports arena. From these data, it is not possible to determine which process had more effect on social integration— status valuation and approachability or opportunity for contact under ideal conditions. The data suggest that each played a role; however, future researchers may want to attempt to isolate these processes to understand their individual impacts.

These findings point to many new avenues of research. Different school and community cultures may lead other status characteristics to be valued, perhaps benefitting minority females over males. The social world of high school is complicated, and the role of certain influential or high-status individuals within a certain context may influence how groups are formed (see Hemmings 2000). Differences in the racial composition of a school and other organizational factors also may influence integration patterns. Due to their small numbers, the minority males at VHS were still ''different,'' which may have increased their status, and their lack of numbers may have made them less threatening. At a school with a higher proportion of minority students, males may not so easily gain such status. Finally, while I did not discuss academic outcomes for the VDP students, an equally important aim of VDP was to increase the overall achievement of students. How social experiences affect achievement is still unclear, so it also is important to study these linkages to determine how such programs may benefit students both academically and socially.

While limited in scope, this study does highlight the importance of considering how the context of a school may affect students differently based on gender, which may be true in other schools as well. More research is needed on the process of integration for both minority and majority students in schools with varying racial compositions and in different regions. We need to understand more about how students view their experiences and how they negotiate interactions across racial lines within the particular school structure in which they find themselves.

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NOTES

1. The data were collected as part of a larger, multimethod study on the sociocultural context of four U.S. schools conducted by Prudence Carter and funded by the William T. Grant Foundation.
2. All identifying names have been changed.
3. I rounded exact numbers when I referred to both the school and the town's demographic information to preserve anonymity.
4. There are a small number of African American and Latino students who are from Village and who attend the school; however, their experiences are beyond the scope of this article, and the results apply only to the students in the voluntary desegregation program (VDP) who are bussed in.
5. Approximately 11 students were shadowed for three to six hours during the school day, 6 VDP and 5 Village High School (VHS) students. Students were chosen based on a variety of characteristics (race/ethnicity, gender, social status, academic standing) so we would have multiple perspectives on school life.
6. These conversations ranged from a few minutes to a half hour and from gathering facts about how the school worked to eliciting opinions about the school and students. More focused conversations on topics of particular interest to the larger project were held with one social worker, two counselors, and the VDP tutor.
7. In our small-group interviews, approximately 81 percent of the students were African American and 19 percent Latino. Some researchers have found differences in the interracial friendship patterns of Latino students and African American students (Quillian and Campbell 2003); however, due to their small numbers, students in VDP seemed to bond and have very similar experiences. Our data do not suggest any differences in experiences or perceptions by ethnicity within VDP. Nevertheless, the numbers of both African American and Latino students are small, and this study is not meant to generalize about the similarities or differences between Latino and African American students outside of this context.
8. Mixed-race interviews were not conducted in all grades for logistical reasons (difficulty recruiting students, the end of the school year's approaching, etc.).
9. VDP students were put on contracts for academic and behavioral reasons, and this was handled through the VDP office. VHS students could also be put on contracts, although this was usually through the guidance office. On occasion, such as if a student were in danger of not graduating, both the VDP and the guidance offices would be involved.
10. There were 36 students chosen for the Superlatives section. Only 1 out of those 36 was a VDP student (about 2 percent), which was less than VDP students' representation in the student body as a whole (about 6 percent).
11. The VDP girls were more concerned with academics than were the boys, as noted by their focus on feeling academically inferior. Interestingly, it was the girls who were doing better than the boys academically (data available from author). While explaining these gender differences in achievement is beyond the scope of this article, this difference is of note. Although I lack data to come to a conclusion as to why girls chose to remain at VHS despite their unhappiness, their relative academic success as well as their feeling that the education they were receiving at VHS was superior to that in NCC may have been important in their decision-making.
12. Some students had been in the VHS district since kindergarten, and in the elementary grades, the district facilitated connections between VHS and VDP families. This connection might continue into high school, but informal arrangements between friends and teammates were frequently made as well.

13. VDP girls also mentioned that they did not hang out with Village friends on the weekend because their parents did not want them to stay overnight and worried about them.

14. One activity that VDP girls did participate in was Step Team as it ended early enough for them to take the 5:15 bus. However, 21 of the 24 girls who participated were in VDP, so it did not offer them the opportunity to integrate with VHS students.

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