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Extralegal Factors & Jurors' Perceptions:
The Influence of a Defendant's Ethnicity, Immigration Status, and Socioeconomic Status

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine how jurors' decisions and perceptions were impacted by a defendant's ethnicity (White Canadian / White Russian / Mexican / Chinese), immigration status (documented / undocumented), and socioeconomic status (low / high) in the United States. Based on a social psychological framework, participants were asked to read the case file of a defendant that included what he was charged with, his demographic information, and evidence from the prosecution and defense. They were given the jury instructions that were typical in the state of California and then asked questions related to verdict, sentencing, and perceptions of the defendant. There were no significant differences with the verdict and sentencing, but there were differences in the perceptions of the defendant. Participants had more positive perceptions towards the defendant from a low SES. The Mexican defendant from a low SES was perceived to be guiltier than the other defendants. The undocumented White Russian, rather than the White Canadian, defendant was seen as having committed a similar crime in the past. Participants were more confident in their guilt decision when he was White Russian from a low SES.

KEYWORDS: mock jurors, decision-making, defendant, ethnicity, immigration status, socioeconomic status

1   INTRODUCTION

Over the past few years, the coronavirus pandemic and geopolitical events have left indelible marks on Americans and their impression of immigrants. During the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trump administration, marred by accusations of Russian interference in the election, closed borders and restricted non-essential travel to mitigate the spread of the virus. During this period, public perception of China waned in America as 73 percent of adults in the U.S. indicated an unfavorable view of China, up 26 percentage points since 2018. Roughly two-thirds of Americans claimed China mishandled the coronavirus outbreak while approximately three-quarters felt that China's initial response in Wuhan was responsible for the global spread of COVID-19 (Pew Research Center, 2020c). Growing xenophobic sentiments fueled a surge in hate crimes as 12 percent of Asian Americans and 10 percent of Pacific Islanders reported they experienced hate crimes and hate incidents in 2020, compared to the national average of eight percent (AAPI Data, 2021). Researchers explored xenophobia and anti-immigration attitudes during COVID-19. Esses and Hamilton (2021) found that the increase in xenophobia and anti-immigrant attitudes coincided with the arrival of COVID-19. Specifically, President Donald Trump's usage of "kung flu" and "Chinese virus" were examples of dehumanizing immigrants and rhetoric used to build support for restrictive immigration policies. Additionally, U.S. Senator John Corryn's made statements blaming the Chinese for the coronavirus because of his belief that the Chinese eat bats, snakes, and dogs. This suggests that the pandemic has already had a negative impact on attitudes towards immigrants and immigration (Esses & Hamilton, 2021).

While anti-Asian grew with the arrival of COVID-19, the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 marked a dramatic shift in American perception of Russia. As of March 2022, 70 percent of Americans consider Russia an enemy of the United States, up 41 percent in January (Pew Research Center, 2022). As of 2019, two-thirds of adults in the U.S. say immigrants today strengthen the country through hard work and talent while nearly a quarter say immigrants burden the country by taking jobs, housing, and health care (Pew Research Center, 2020d). Despite these attitudes towards immigrants, nearly half (42%) of American adults believe immigrants negatively impact crime (Gallup, n.d.).

2   IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION STATUS ON JUROR'S DECISION-MAKING

 Research has previously explored negative attitudes towards immigrants in the context of America's legal system. Murray and Marx (2013) found that participants routinely reported more prejudiced beliefs, increase in perceived threats, and intergroup anxiety in response to unauthorized immigrants in comparison to authorized immigrants. Older participants routinely reported greater perceived threats, prejudice, and anxiety than younger respondents. White participants followed similar trends established by older respondents, in comparison to non-whites. These conflicting attitudes invite additional scrutiny regarding how extralegal factors impact jurors' decision making.

Further research scrutinized a defendant's immigration status as an extralegal factor in a juror's decision-making process. Alvarez and Miller (2017) explored the impact of a defendant's ethnicity and legal status on capital punishment outcomes. Defendant's ethnicity had no

significant impact on participants' punishment determining process, but immigration status did. Participants were more punitive towards documented immigrants compared to American citizens. Specifically, participants with a liberal or centrist political orientation reported harsher outcomes towards a documented immigrant defendant, compared to a U.S. born defendant. The same trend was not observed in conservative participants. In certain circumstances, extralegal factors such as political orientation or immigration status can bias jurors' perceptions of defendants who are immigrants. This bias may unfairly impact the defendant's right to a fair trial.

Additionally, the relationship between aggravators or mitigators and immigration status in death penalty trials has been studied and found that mock jurors were more likely to disregard the mitigating factors when the defendant was an undocumented immigrant (West et al., 2021). Specifically, mock jurors were more likely to report that the aggravators outweighed the mitigators when the defendant was Latinx compared to the Caucasian defendant but this was only the case when the defendant was a citizen (West et al., 2021). This furthers the notion that a potential jury is more likely to sentence a defendant harshly if they are an immigrant, regardless of mitigating factors that may have influenced the crime.

Jury members found the undocumented, Mexican defendant guilty and asked them to receive a sentence without the possibility of parole significantly more than the other defendant (Espinoza et al., 2015). Furthering this finding, researchers observed that the undocumented, Mexican defendant was believed to be more culpable and rated higher as a 'criminal type' by the jury (Espinoza et al., 2015). In terms of the verdict, the jurors who voted guilty believed that the defendant's immigration status influenced their decision significantly more than the jurors who voted not guilty (Espinoza et al., 2015). Altogether, these studies depict how crucial a defendant's immigration status is in relation to their experiences in the Criminal Justice System.

2.1   IMPACT OF ETHNICITY ON JUROR'S DECISION-MAKING

Ethnicity has been found to impact juror decision making, for example West et al. (2021) found mock jurors weighed aggravators over mitigators when the defendant was Latino compared to Caucasian, but only when the defendant was a US citizen. It was further demonstrated that ethnicity could indirectly lead to punishment in capital cases because they influenced how jurors weigh aggravators and mitigators.

In a similar study, Esqueda et al. (2008) observed that participants perceived a Mexican American defendant of a low socioeconomic status more responsible and blameworthy. Furthermore, Mexican American defendants of a low socioeconomic status were perceived as less believable, guiltier more frequently, and subject to lengthier sentences than any other comparison group (Esqueda et al., 2008). In a secondary study, the authors found that bias against Mexican Americans was exclusive to European American mock jurors. This trend was not observed among Mexican American jurors. These studies demonstrate bias against Mexican American defendants and highlight the impact of ethnicity and socioeconomic status on juror decision making outcomes.

In another study, researchers examined how a defendant's ethnicity, immigration status, and socioeconomic status (SES) had effects on verdict decisions, sentencing recommendations, culpability assignments, and trait assessments (Espinoza et al., 2015). Results indicated that the low-SES, undocumented, Mexican defendant was found guilty more often, given a more severe sentence, thought to be more culpable, and rated lower on a number of trait measures compared with European-Americans. These findings show how biases, such as racism, appear to best explain the inconsistencies in juror decisions. This is similar to another study that examined prejudicial attitudes toward immigrant defendants who vary legal status, country of origin, and ethnicity (Minero & Espinoza, 2016). The findings indicated that European-American mock jurors found undocumented, Latino immigrants from Mexico guilty significantly more often. They also found them to be more culpable and rated this defendant more negatively on various trait measures in comparison to Caucasian or Canadian defendants. In contrast, Latino mock jurors did not demonstrate ingroup favoritism or outgroup bias. This further demonstrates how extralegal factors impact the juror decision-making process.

2.2   IMPACT OF SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS ON JUROR'S DECISION-MAKING

The socioeconomic status has been heavily researched in the context of the American justice system. Devine and Caughlin (2014) conducted a meta-analytic investigation of individual characteristics and guilt judgments. Their analysis revealed that the strongest variable associated with guilty judgments was defendant socioeconomic status. Further examination illustrated that White jurors were found to exhibit substantially more outgroup bias towards Hispanic defendants than Black defendants. This study supports the idea that socioeconomic status impacts outcomes and illustrates why additional research is needed regarding the impact of a defendant's race and determinations of culpability.

In relation to juror decision making, researchers discovered that an undocumented, Mexican defendant with a low socioeconomic status was found guilty more significantly than a defendant with a high socioeconomic status (Espinoza et al., 2015). Additionally, it was found that this particular defendant also received a sentence where there was no possibility of parole and was perceived to be culpable for their actions significantly more often than the other defendant (Espinoza et al., 2015). Lastly, the defendant was perceived by the jury more negatively than the defendant who had a high socioeconomic status (Espinoza et al., 2015). This research indicates that a defendant with a lower socioeconomic status may be more likely to be perceived as selfish and culpable for their actions which can lead to a higher likelihood of being found guilty and receiving a harsher sentence.

Further, Mexican American defendants with a lower socioeconomic status were found to be more responsible, blamed more, and critiqued more than defendants who had a high socioeconomic status (Esqueda et al., 2008). Additionally, participants believed that the defendant with a low socioeconomic status would be more likely to reoffend than the defendant with a high socioeconomic status (Esqueda et al., 2008). Lastly, trait ratings were the lowest for the Mexican American defendant with a low socioeconomic status (Esqueda et al., 2008). These traits included the defendant being unlikeable, incompetent, unethical, selfish, cold, and insensitive (Esqueda et al., 2008). In relation to the criminal justice system, the socioeconomic

status of a defendant requires further research since it can significantly impact their experiences with the law.

2.3   AVERSIVE RACISM: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Aversive racism was conceptualized to account for the expressions of egalitarian values and racist traditions within the United States, such as White people that sincerely believe themselves to be non-prejudiced but simultaneously harbor negative feelings and beliefs about Black people and other historically disadvantaged groups (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). Aversive racists endorse fair and just treatment of all groups but harbor feelings of uneasiness towards Black people and other minorities and as such, attempt to remove themselves from interracial interactions as quickly as possible. Part of their discomfort is derived from acting inappropriately or appearing to be biased, and are primarily motivated to avoid wrongdoing in interracial interactions. Despite this, negative feelings surface indirectly through subtle bias, utilizing a variety of rationalizations as a proxy for their bias.

Espinoza et al. (2015) investigated the impact of ethnicity, immigration status, and socioeconomic status on juror bias. Low socioeconomic status, undocumented Mexican defendants were found guilty more often, given a harsher sentence, and thought to be more culpable than all other conditions. This study uses the aversive framework, a theory that postulates that blatant racism is no longer espoused, but subtle biases are revealed when factors unrelated to race are present to mask biased responses. These unrelated factors become proxy indicators for racism. This study is important because it accurately predicted that low socioeconomic status, undocumented Mexican defendants would be subject to more biased outcomes in accordance with the aversive racism framework, providing concrete evidence of the framework's validity.

Minero and Espinoza (2016) explored the impact of legal status, country of origin, and ethnicity on juror decision making. European American mock jurors found undocumented, Latino, immigrants from Mexico guilty more often, more culpable and rated them more negatively across a variety of traits. Latino mock jurors did not exhibit a similar trend. This study demonstrated the impact of legal status, country of origin and ethnicity and results were consistent with the theory of aversive racism, providing a theoretical framework to explore bias in juror decision making.

Phan et al. (2022) explored the impact of race, socioeconomic status, and race-stereotypical crimes on juror decision making. Mock jurors typically sentenced low socioeconomic status East Asian American defendants who committed a race-stereotypical crime more punitive than all other conditions. Mock jurors also found this defendant more responsible and rated them more harshly on a variety of traits. These results were consistent with the theory of aversive racism and provides additional evidence of the theory's validity.

2.4   THE CURRENT STUDY

The purpose of the current study was to explore the impact of a defendant's ethnicity (White Canadian / White Russian / Mexican / Chinese), immigration status (documented /

undocumented), and socioeconomic status (low / high) on a juror's decision-making and perceptions. It was expected that a documented White Canadian defendant from a high socioeconomic status would not be judged as harshly and there would be more positive perceptions of him. Conversely, it was expected that the undocumented Mexican and Chinese defendants from a low socioeconomic status would be judged the most harshly and negatively, followed by the White Russian defendant.

3   METHOD

3.1   PARTICIPANTS

There were a total of 815 participants who responded to the study. After removing participants who did not consent, had mostly incomplete data, and did not respond to the manipulation check questions, the final dataset included 718 participants. The mean age of the participants was 36.52 years old (SD = 11.15), with ages ranging from 20 to 77 years old. The participants identified as 67.4% male, 31.3% female, .3% non-binary, and 1% did not answer or preferred not to say. The racial/ethnic composition of the sample included 81.3% White, 5% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 4.5% Black, 3.5% Latinx, 3.5% Asian, .3% Middle Eastern / North African, .1% Native Hawaiian, .1% two or more race/ethnicities, and 1.7% preferred not to say or did not respond. While this was a majority White sample, it mirrors the composition of many juries in the United States because of the lack of representation of people of color (Krell, 2021).

When asked how long participants have lived in the United States, 64.6% stated all of their lives, 21% stated most of their life, 10.3% stated some of their life, 1.4% stated only a short while, and 2.6% did not respond. Participants were asked the last grade they finished or the degree they earned and .8% were up to grade 8, .8% some high school, 8.5% high school diploma / GED, 7.8% some college, 62.1% college degree, 6.8% some post-graduate work, 12.4% post-graduate degree, and .7% did not respond. When asked their political party affiliation, participants were 47.5% Democrat, 35.5% Republican, 10.7% Independent, 1.9% Libertarian, 1.5% Green Party, .4% Working Families party, 1.5% stated they had no political affiliation, .3% stated they were affiliated with one not listed, and .6% did not respond.

3.2   MATERIALS

Case File Summary about the Defendant

Participants read a criminal court trial transcript that was adapted and expanded from Minero and Espinoza (2016) about a murder that was committed. The transcript included a summary of the case, what crime the defendant was being charged with, the defendant's background and plea, and closing arguments from the prosecution and defense. The transcript was 958 words long and also included the defendant's demographics. This listed his age, sex, ethnicity (White Canadian / White Russian / Mexican / Chinese), citizenship status (documented / undocumented, and socioeconomic status (low / high). In addition to the defendant's demographics being listed at the beginning of the transcript, his name reflected his ethnicity, the transcript stated what city he was born in based on this ethnicity, explicitly described his

immigration status as being documented or not, and his apartment was described to reflect his socioeconomic status.

The following dependent variables were evaluated after the mock jurors read the case file transcript of the defendant.

Juror Verdict and Sentencing

Participants were asked if they believed the defendant was guilty or not guilty (Minero & Espinoza, 2016). If their verdict was guilty, they were then asked to select an appropriate sentence among 4 options, including: a ten-year prison sentence with the possibility of parole after 20 years, life in prison with the possibility of parole after 30 years and time for good behavior, life in prison without the possibility of parole, death by lethal injection (Minero & Espinoza, 2016).

Juror Opinion Form

Participants were to rate their opinion on different aspects of the defendant's case on a 7-point scale, with higher numbers indicating greater endorsement of that opinion. This included how guilty they thought the defendant actually was, how long of a sentence he should actually receive, how responsible he is, how confident they are in their decision of guilt, likelihood for recidivism, how much they believed the defendant's version of the crime, how much blame should he receive, how likely he was to commit a similar crime in his past, how likely it was he lied to the police, and if the viciousness of the attacks impacted their decision (Minero & Espinoza, 2016). For participants who indicated he was guilty, they were asked to what degree they thought the defendant intentionally meant to kill the victim (Minero & Espinoza, 2016).

Personal Evaluation of the Defendant

Personal evaluations about the defendant were assessed by asking participants to rate them on a variety of dimensions, including trustworthiness, likeability, competence, ethics, consideration, attractiveness, intelligence, warmth, sensitivity, industriousness, and aggression. All dimensions were rated on a 9-point scale, with higher numbers indicating greater endorsement of the particular dimension being assessed (Minero & Espinoza, 2016).

Participants were also asked to evaluate the defendant by indicating their overall perception, along with how dangerous and cooperative they perceived him to be. All items were answered on a scale ranging from 1 to 5, with higher numbers indicating greater endorsement.

Emotional Reactions towards the Defendant

For the purposes of the current study, participants were asked how scared, anxious, angry, sad, and empathetic they felt towards the defendant. All responses were answered on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating greater endorsement of that emotional reaction.

Manipulation Check Questions

Participants were asked to indicate the ethnicity, immigration status, and socioeconomic status of the defendant they read about.

Demographic Questions

Participants were asked to indicate their age, the gender they identify with, their race/ethnicity, how long they have lived in the United States, the last grade/degree they finished/earned, and their political party affiliation.

3.3   PROCEDURE

Participants were recruited from Amazon's Mechanical Turk. Once participants consented to participate in the study, they were randomly assigned to read one of the case file summaries adapted from Minero and Espinoza (2016) that varied by the defendant's ethnicity (White Canadian / White Russian / Mexican / Chinese), immigration status (documented / undocumented), and socioeconomic status (low / high). Once participants finished reading the case file, they were given general juror instructions that explained how the state of California defines proving the charge of murder. Then, participants responded to the dependent variables, including the verdict and sentencing, opinion form, personal evaluation of the defendant, perception of the defendant, and their emotional reactions towards the defendant. Finally, participants responded to the manipulation check questions and the demographic questions. Participants were then debriefed, thanked for their participation, and were instructed on how to receive their payment of 50 cents.

4   RESULTS

A 4 (ethnicity: White Canadian / White Russian / Mexican / Chinese) x 2 (immigration status: documented / undocumented) x 2 (socioeconomic status: low / high) between-subjects ANOVA was performed on the dependent variables. The Bonferroni correction was used for post hoc analyses.

Juror Verdict and Sentencing

There were no significant differences in the verdict based on the defendant's ethnicity, immigration status, and socioeconomic status, $\chi^2(15)= 16.64$, $p = .34$.

For the participants who found the defendant guilty (n = 413), they were asked to recommend a sentence (ten year prison sentence with the possibility of parole after 20 years, life in prison with the possibility of parole after 30 years and time for good behavior, life in prison without the possibility of parole, or death by lethal injection). There were no significant differences in sentencing recommendations based on the defendant's ethnicity, immigration status, and socioeconomic status, $\chi^2(45)= 42.84$, $p = .56$.

Juror Opinion Form

There was a significant main effect of immigration status on how much the viciousness of the attack impacted the mock jurors' decisions, $F(1, 699) = 4.97$, $p = .026$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$. Mock jurors reported that the viciousness of the attack impacted their decisions more when the defendant was undocumented ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 1.69$) rather than documented ($M = 4.47$, $SD = 1.77$) .

There was a marginally significant main effect of immigration status on the degree to which it was believed that the defendant lied to the police ($F(1, 698) = 3.37$, $p = .067$, $\eta_p^2 = .005$), such that the undocumented ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.6$) defendant was believed to have lied to a marginally higher degree to the police than the documented ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.68$) defendant.

There was a significant main effect of immigration status on perceived likelihood to recidivate, $F(1, 693) = 4.72$, $p = .03$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$. The defendant was perceived to be more likely to recidivate when he was undocumented ($M = 4.71$, $SD = 1.64$) versus documented ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.73$).

There was a significant main effect of immigration status on how likely it was that the defendant committed this same crime in the past ($F(1, 695) = 4.17$, $p = .041$, $\eta_p^2 = .006$), such that it was believed that the undocumented ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 1.69$) defendant was more likely to have committed this crime before when compared to the documented ($M = 4.22$, $SD = 1.75$) defendant. There was a significant ethnicity by immigration status interaction on this dependent variable, $F(3, 695) = 3.29$, $p = .02$, $\eta_p^2 = .014$. For the undocumented defendant, mock jurors believed it was more likely for the White Russian ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.36$) rather than White Canadian ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.81$) to have committed a similar crime in the past. For the White Russian defendant, he was believed to have been more likely to commit the same crime in the past if he was undocumented ($M = 4.78$, $SD = 1.36$) rather than documented ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.8$). Figure 1 displays this interaction.
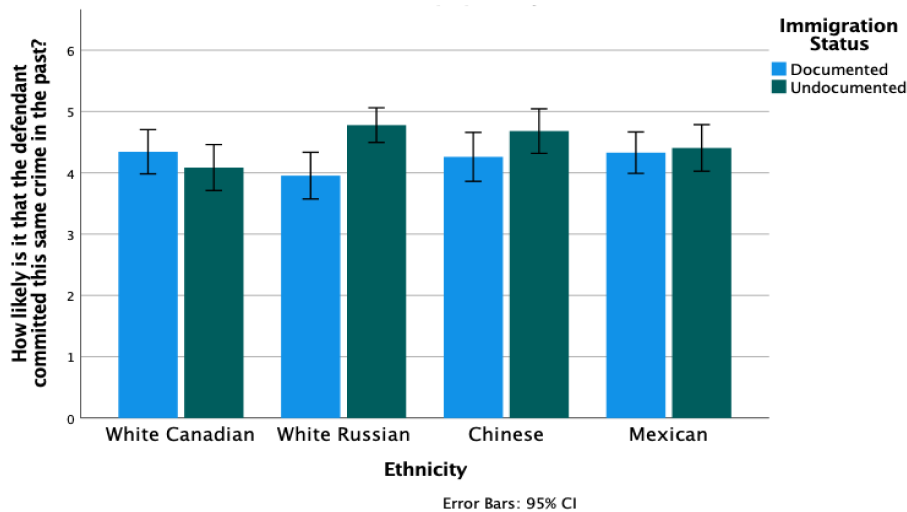

Figure 1: Likelihood that the Defendant Committed the Same Crime in the Past based on his Ethnicity and Immigration Status

There was also a significant ethnicity by socioeconomic status interaction on this dependent variable, $F(3, 695) = 2.87$, $p = .036$, $\eta_p^2 = .012$. For the White Russian defendant, it was believed he was more likely to have committed this same crime in the past if he was from a low ($M = 4.72$, $SD = 1.62$) rather than high ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.6$) socioeconomic status. Figure 2 displays this interaction.
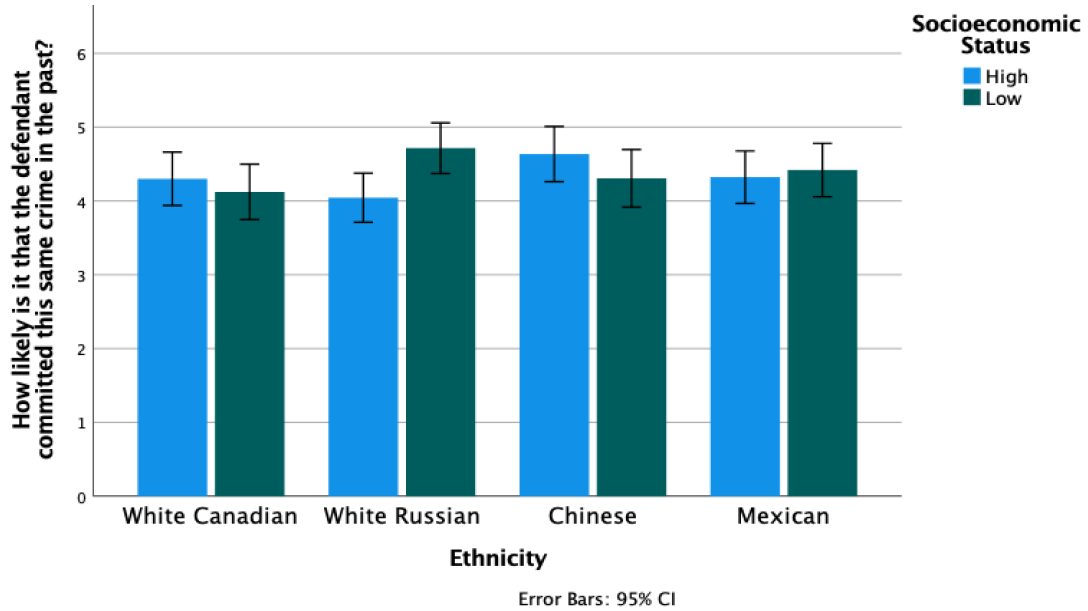

Figure 2: Likelihood that the Defendant Committed the Same Crime in the Past based on his Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status

There was a significant ethnicity by socioeconomic status interaction on how much the situation influenced the defendant's behavior, $F(3, 695) = 2.98$, $p = .031$, $\eta_p^2 = .013$. When the defendant was White Canadian, it was believed that the situation influenced his behavior more when he was of a high ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.55$) socioeconomic status rather than low ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.51$). Conversely, when the defendant was White Russian, the situation was believed to influence his behavior more when he was from a low ($M = 4.93$, $SD = 1.61$) rather than high ($M = 4.44$, $SD = 1.77$) socioeconomic status. Figure 3 displays this interaction.
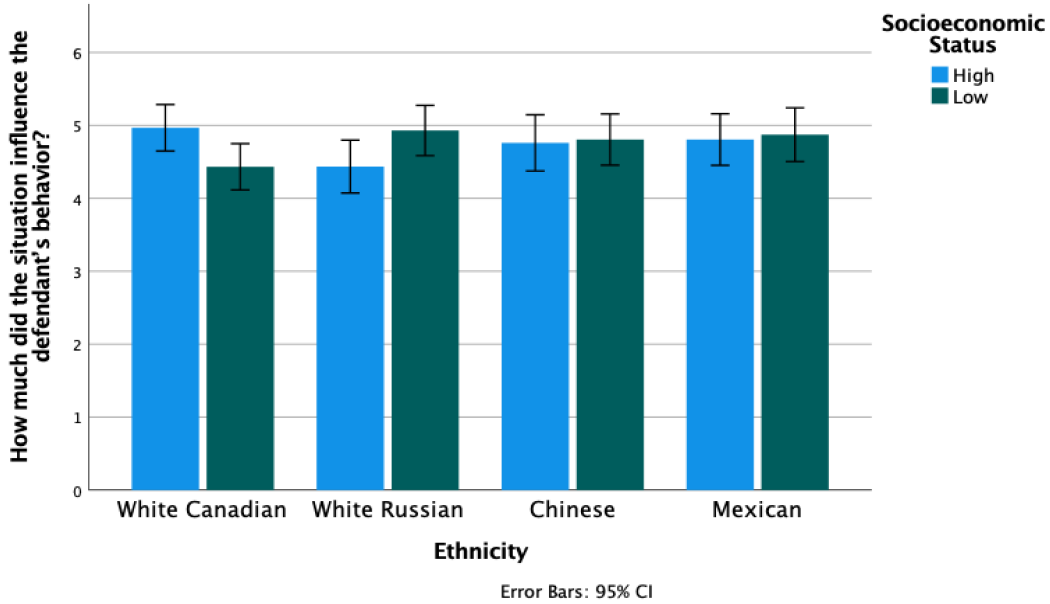
Figure 3: Influence of the Situation on the Defendant's Behavior based on his Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status

There was a marginally significant main effect of immigration status on how guilty the defendant was, $F(1, 693) = 3.47$, $p = .063$, $\eta_p^2 = .005$. The undocumented ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 1.69$) defendant was rated as marginally more guilty than the documented ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 1.71$) one. There was also a marginally significant two-interaction of the defendant's ethnicity and socioeconomic status on perceived guilt, $F(3, 693) = 2.22$, $p = .085$, $\eta_p^2 = .009$. When the defendant was Mexican, he was perceived to be significantly more guilty when he was from a low ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 1.55$) rather than high ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 1.66$) socioeconomic status. Figure 4 displays this interaction.
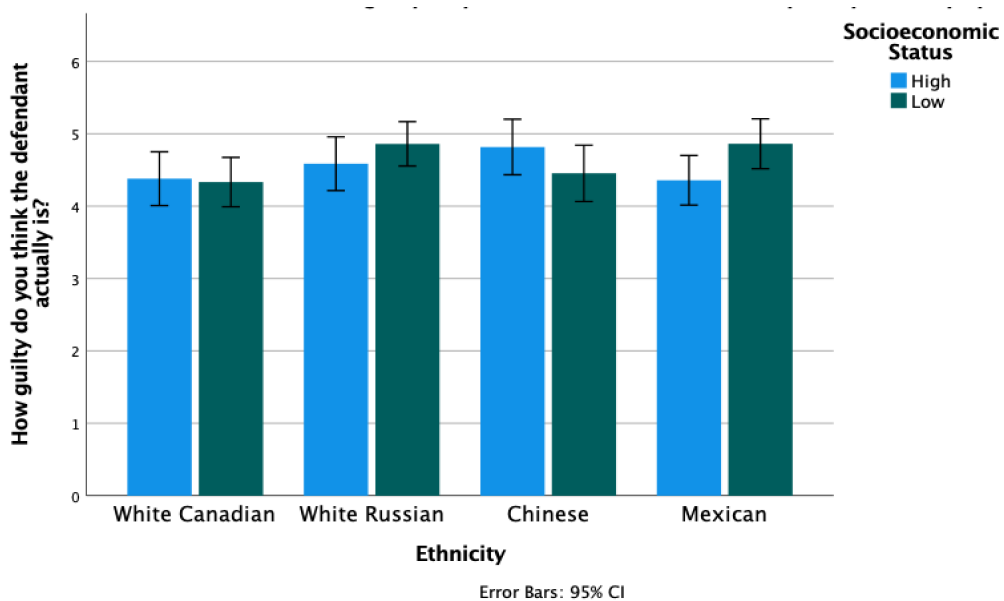
Figure 4: How Guilty the Defendant is Perceived to be based on his Ethnicity and
Socioeconomic Status

There was a significant main effect of immigration status on how confident the mock
jurors were that they made a correct guilt decision ($F(1, 689) = 6.51$, $p = .011$, $\eta_p^2 = .009$), such
that there was more confidence in this decision when the defendant was undocumented ($M =
4.96$, $SD = 1.56$) versus documented ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 1.65$). In addition, there was a marginally
significant ethnicity by socioeconomic status interaction on the mock jurors' confidence in
making the correct guilt decision, $F(3, 689) = 2.2$, $p = .087$, $\eta_p^2 = .009$. When the defendant was
White Russian, mock jurors were significantly more confident in making the correct guilt
decision when he was from a low ($M = 5.07$, $SD = 1.54$) rather than high ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.74$)
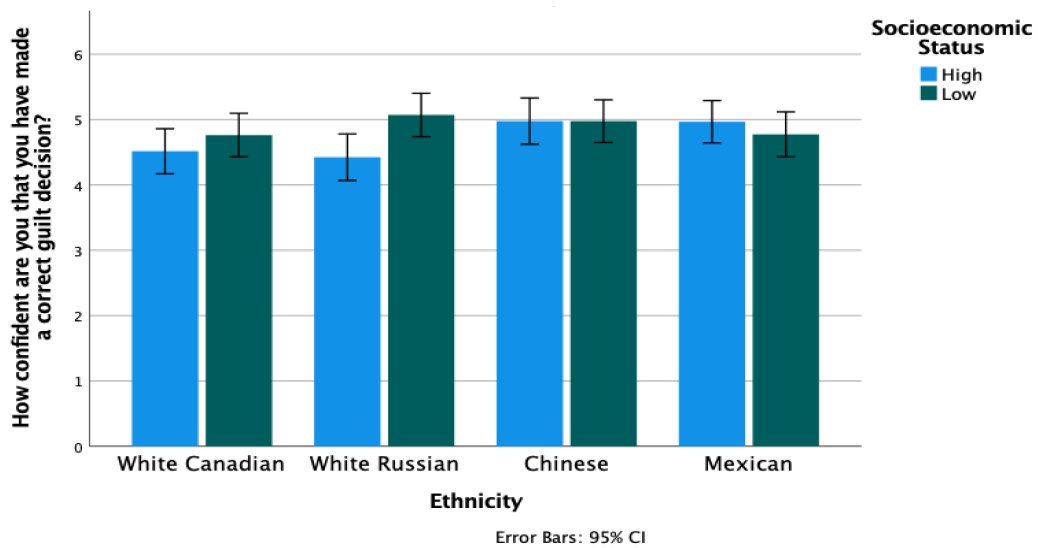socioeconomic status. Figure 5 displays this interaction.

Figure 5: Confidence in the Guilt Decision based on the Defendant's Ethnicity and
Socioeconomic Status

For those who found the defendant guilty, there was a significant interaction of the
defendant's ethnicity and socioeconomic status on the degree to which the mock jurors believed
the defendant intentionally meant to kill the victim, $F(3, 399) = 4.93$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .036$. When
the defendant was from a high socioeconomic status, the Chinese ($M = 5.87$, $SD = 1.48$)
defendant was believed to be more likely to have intentionally killed the victim than if was
White Russian ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 1.82$). When the defendant was White Russian, he was believed
to have been more likely to intentionally kill the victim when he was from a low ($M = 5.54$, $SD =
1.25$) rather than high ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 1.82$) socioeconomic status. The opposite was found for
the Chinese defendant, such that there was greater intentionality perceived when he was from a
high ($M = 5.87$, $SD = 1.48$) versus low ($M = 5.02$, $SD = 1.55$) socioeconomic status. Figure 6
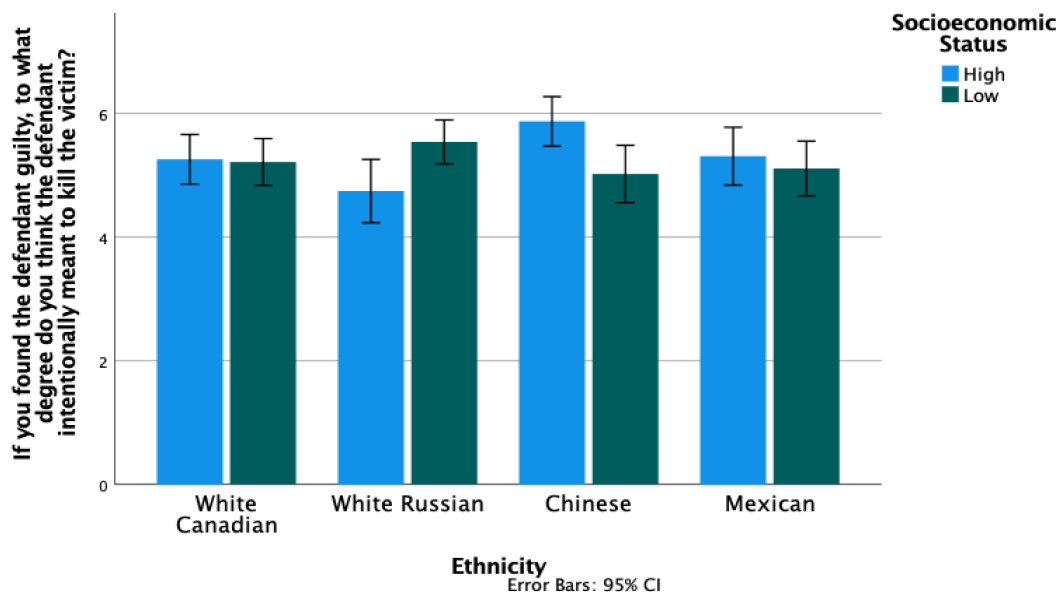displays this interaction.

Figure 6: Degree to which the Defendant Intentionally Killed the Victim based on his Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status

There were no significant main effects and interactions on believing the defendant's version of the crime, how much blame the defendant should receive, the likelihood of finding oneself in a similar situation to the defendant, length of the sentence, and how responsible the defendant is for committing the crime.

Personal Evaluation of the Defendant

There was a significant main effect of the defendant's socioeconomic status on how ethical he was rated, $F(1, 699) = 7.94$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .011$. The defendant was rated more ethical when he was from a low ($M = 5.72$, $SD = 2.38$) rather than high ($M = 5.2$, $SD = 2.55$) socioeconomic status.

There was a significant main effect of the defendant's socioeconomic status on how sensitive he was perceived to be, $F(1, 698) = 5.5$, $p = .019$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$. The defendant was perceived as more sensitive when he was from a low ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 2.35$) rather than high ($M = 5.29$, $SD = 2.59$) socioeconomic status.

There was a significant main effect of the defendant's socioeconomic status on how trustworthy he was perceived to be ($F(1, 701) = 5.88$, $p = .016$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$), such that he was seen as more trustworthy when he was from a low ($M = 5.58$, $SD = 2.28$) socioeconomic status versus a high ($M = 5.15$, $SD = 2.4$) one.

There was a marginally significant main effect of the defendant's socioeconomic status on how considerate they believed the defendant was, $F(1, 698) = 3.83$, $p = .051$, $\eta_p^2 = .005$. When the defendant was from a low socioeconomic status ($M = 5.62$, $SD = 2.44$), he was perceived as marginally more considerate than if he was from a high one ($M = 5.24$, $SD = 2.53$).

There was a marginally significant main effect of the defendant's socioeconomic status on how warm they were rated ($F(1, 694) = 3.62$, $p = .057$, $\eta_p^2 = .005$), with the defendant from a low ($M = 5.63$, $SD = 2.32$) socioeconomic status being perceived as more warm than when he was from a high ($M = 5.28$, $SD = 2.56$) socioeconomic status.

There was a marginally significant three-way interaction of the defendant's ethnicity, immigration status, and socioeconomic status on how likable they were perceived to be, $F(3, 699) = 2.32$, $p = .074$, $\eta_p^2 = .01$. When the defendant was Mexican and from a low socioeconomic status, he was seen as significantly more likable when he was undocumented ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 2.41$) rather than documented ($M = 4.69$, $SD = 2.11$). Figure 7 displays this interaction. Further, when the Mexican defendant was undocumented, he was marginally more likable when he was from a low ($M = 6.00$, $SD = 2.41$) rather than high ($M = 5.04$, $SD = 2.54$) socioeconomic status. Figure 8 displays this interaction.
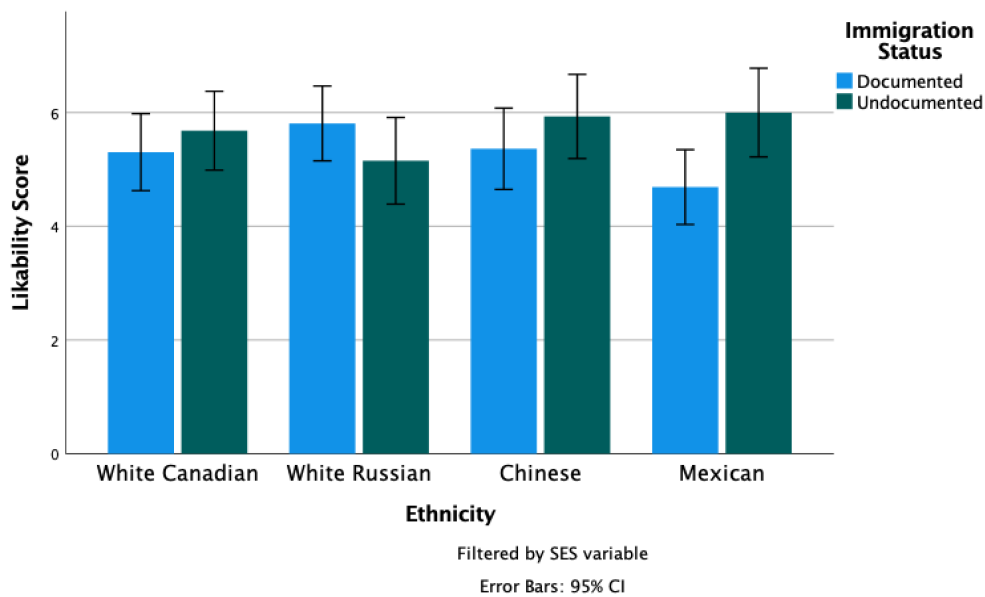

Figure 7: Likability of the Defendant based on his Ethnicity and Immigration Status when he was from a Low Socioeconomic Status
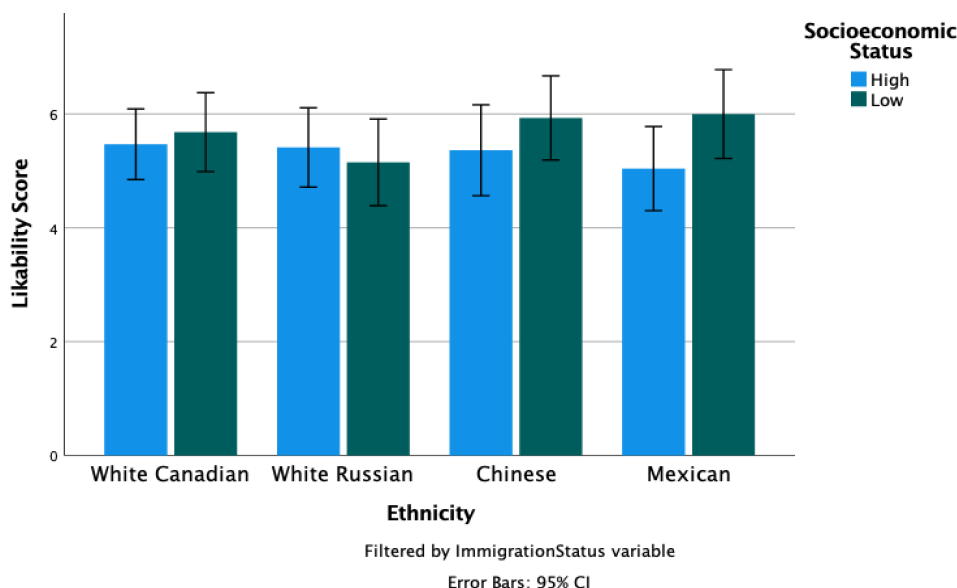
Figure 8: Likability of the Defendant based on his Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status when he was Undocumented

There were no significant main effects or interactions on how aggressive, attractive, competent, industrious, and intelligent the defendant was perceived to be by the participants.

There was only a significant main effect of the defendant's socioeconomic status on their overall perception, $F(1, 701) = 4.66$, $p = .031$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$. Participants evaluated the defendant more positively when he had a low socioeconomic ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.13$) status rather than a high one ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.22$).

There were no significant main effects or interactions on how dangerous or cooperative the defendant was perceived to be by the participants.

Emotional Reactions towards the Defendant

There were no significant main effects or interactions on how angry, anxious, empathetic, sad, or scared the participants felt towards the defendant.

5   DISCUSSION

The purpose of the current study was to examine how jurors' decisions and perceptions are impacted by a defendant's ethnicity (White Canadian / White Russian / Mexican / Chinese), immigration status (documented / undocumented), and socioeconomic status (low / high). The hypotheses were partially supported, such that immigration, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status had no significant effect on mock juror verdicts or sentencing outcomes but did impact jurors' opinions of the defendant and the overall case.

5.1   JUROR OPINIONS

Immigration status affected the juror's opinions on a number of different measures - from the perceived severity of the crime, the defendant's propensity to lie to police, the perceived guilt of the defendant, the likelihood the defendant had committed the same crime previously or would do so again in the future, as well as the mock juror's confidence in their guilty verdict. These findings support the idea that mock jurors' implicit biases against undocumented immigrants predisposed them to form more negative opinions. With their judgment clouded by bias, mock jurors confidently reached a guilty verdict. This study illustrates the need to account for this bias in courtroom proceedings - including informing and educating juries prior to deliberation and assisting lawyers in making intelligent decisions during jury selection.

Significant interactions between immigration status and ethnicity were also observed during analysis. Among undocumented defendants, mock jurors considered the White Russian to have been more likely to have previously committed similar crimes than the White Canadian. Furthermore, when considering the White Russian defendant, mock jurors considered an undocumented White Russian more likely to have a history of similar prior incidents. Similarly, a significant interaction between ethnicity and socioeconomic status emerged on the same measure. Among White Russian defendants, mock jurors considered those with a low socioeconomic status more likely to have a history of similar violent crimes.

Similarly, significant interactions were observed between ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Specifically, among the White Canadian defendants, mock jurors believed that those from a privileged background were more influenced by their circumstances compared to those from a low socioeconomic status. In contrast, mock jurors found that White Russian defendants from a low socioeconomic status were more likely to be victims of circumstance compared to those from a high socioeconomic status. Mock jurors also perceived White Russian defendants from a low socioeconomic status more likely to have intentionally murdered the victim and mock jurors were more confident in finding these defendants as guilty.

While these results seem contradictory, evaluating these findings through the lens of the average American's favorability of foreign countries provides necessary context. Ninety-four percent of Americans view Canada favorably while 25 percent regard Russia similarly (Gallup, 2018). This perception of Canada seems to allow mock jurors' to give White Canadians the benefit of a doubt in regards to recidivism and the significance of circumstantial impact while White Russians do not receive similar treatment. American favorability may also explain why significant interactions were observed among Mexican and Chinese defendants on two metrics - guilt and intention to kill. Among Mexican defendants, mock jurors found low SES defendants to be more guilty than those from a high socioeconomic status. Among Chinese defendants, mock jurors perceived high SES defendants intentionally meant to kill the victim compared to low SES defendants. America's overall perception may account for lack of significant interactions - 61 percent of Americans view Mexico favorably. Similarly, 53% of Americans view China favorably (Gallup, 2018).

5.2   PERSONAL EVALUATION OF THE DEFENDANT

Socioeconomic status affected how mock jurors evaluated the defendant on multiple measures. Regardless of ethnicity or immigration status, mock jurors found defendants with a

low socioeconomic status to be more ethical, sensitive, trustworthy, considerate, and warm. Mock jurors perceived defendants with a low socioeconomic status more positively than those with a high socioeconomic status.

The only significant interaction observed among ethnicity, immigration status, socioeconomic status and the defendant's perceived likeability. Undocumented, Mexican defendants with a low socioeconomic status were perceived as more likeable than those who were documented. Furthermore, undocumented Mexicans with a low socioeconomic status were considered more likeable than those with a high socioeconomic status.

Prevailing attitudes about the wealthy and how wealth is obtained may explain mock juror's overall positive perception about defendants with low socioeconomic status. Most Americans say that billionaires are neither good nor bad for the country, but a growing share of Americans claim such personal wealth is bad for the country. It has increased from 15 percent to 19 percent between 2020 and 2021 (Pew Research, 2021). Additionally, most Americans state there's too much economic inequality in the United States (Pew Research, 2020a) and recognize life circumstances are more responsible for wealth as opposed to working harder than most other people (Pew Research, 2020b). This shift in attitude may account for why mock jurors' views of low socioeconomic status defendants are typically more positive than those from a high socioeconomic status.

5.3   AVERSIVE RACISM

Aversive racism is a theoretical framework that attempts to explain human behaviors as expressions of egalitarian values and racist traditions in the United States (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). In essence, aversive racists desire not to be perceived as overtly racist or bigoted towards Black people and other marginalized groups. and attempt to use a variety of rationalizations to support negative feelings that often come across as subtle bias. The significant interactions support this framework more often than not.

Specifically, a White Russian defendant was perceived more likely to have committed the same crime in the past compared to a White Canadian defendant. Among White Russian defendants, mock jurors considered those undocumented more likely to have previously committed a similar crime than undocumented defendants. A similar trend was observed in socioeconomic status. Mock jurors perceived low socioeconomic status White Russians more likely to have committed a similar crime previously compared to their high socioeconomic status counterparts. This trend regarding low socioeconomic White Russian defendants was not limited to criminal history, but also observed in how likely the defendant was to be influenced by their situation, how culpable the defendant was, and to what degree did the defendant intentionally mean to kill the victim. Similarly, mock jurors found Mexican defendants from a low socioeconomic status more guilty than their high socioeconomic counterparts and Chinese defendants from a low socioeconomic status more likely to have intended to kill their victim compared to high socioeconomic Chinese defendants.

The aversive racism framework did not account for all significant findings - mock jurors found Chinese defendants with a high socioeconomic status more likely to have intended to kill

their victims compared to low socioeconomic defendants. Additionally, among Mexican defendants, a low socioeconomic status was associated with greater likeability regardless of immigration status. Furthermore, undocumented low socioeconomic status Mexican defendants were perceived as more likeable than their high socioeconomic compatriots. According to the aversive racism framework, a low socioeconomic status or undocumented immigration status should provide adequate rationalizations for bigoted expression of feelings to occur. One potential explanation in regards to immigration status may be the usage of "documented vs undocumented" versus "legal or illegal." In Minero and Espinoza's (2016) study, the concept of immigration was framed in terms of legality whereas the present study framed immigration in terms of documentation. This slight change in wording may have activated behaviors to avoid appearing racist and bigoted in asking the initial question.

In conclusion, this research can be utilized as a way to train jurors about extralegal factors that could potentially impact their perceptions and decision-making when evaluating the case of a defendant, particularly those from historically marginalized groups. Suggestions have been previously made to train jurors in basic legal competencies in order to make better decisions (Koehler, 2006), but in addition to this, jurors should also be trained to be aware of how explicit and implicit biases could also impact their legal decisions. The current research could be used as a way to train jurors on instances when the demographics of a defendant could potentially bias their perceptions or judgements about them. Additionally, lawyers can also use this type of research during the voir dire process to identify and remove jurors who might be disproportionately biased against their client because of their demographic background.

5.4   LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

In the current study, most of the participants were White. While this reflects the racial/ethnic composition of many juries across the United States, it is still emphasizing the issue of the lack of diversity when being judged by a group of your peers (Krell, 2021). However, this lack of diversity in the sample made any analyses to include the participants' race/ethnicity impossible because the sample sizes of the participants of color were too small. Future studies should use a stratified random sampling approach to recruit more participants of color. As such, analyses could then be conducted to see how judgments and perceptions of the defendant could change depending on the defendant's and participant's race/ethnicity.

Another limitation of the current study is that the jurors made all of their judgments about the defendant in isolation of each other rather than deliberating as a group. While it is important to study the outcomes of an individual's decision-making because the distribution of predeliberation verdicts is a strong predictor of the jury's overall verdict, the group decision-making process and outcome must also be studied (Bornstein & Greene, 2011). Future studies should explore the decisions and perceptions of jurors individually, but also collectively as a jury. Therefore, future studies should explore how the decisions and perceptions of a jury as a whole are influenced by a defendant's race/ethnicity, immigration status, socioeconomic status, and other key demographic variables.

Future research should also further explore the interaction of the defendant's ethnicity and country of origin, as Minero and Espinoza (2016) originally conducted with a Mexican

defendant from Canada or Mexico. This should be expanded upon in future research to study historically disadvantaged ethnic groups individually to assess how country of origin could impact jurors' decisions and perceptions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Feed Scarborough - "A Journey From Driveway Food Drive To Systemic Poverty Reduction"

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ABSTRACT

The Scarborough Food Security Initiative (Feed Scarborough) has emerged as a leader in addressing poverty through an innovative and systematic approach. Originating from a grassroots food drive during the pandemic, Feed Scarborough has evolved over the course of three pandemic years into Scarborough's largest food security organisation. It has implemented a range of programs aimed at promoting resilience and self-sufficiency. Recognizing the limitations of conventional methods such as food banks and community kitchens being a temporary and band-aid solution, Feed Scarborough strategically shifted its focus to long-term solutions, introducing initiatives such as business incubators, career development programs, and youth mentoring. The organisation's commitment to holistic well-being extends inclusively across diverse equity groups, encompassing wellness programs, food-focused certifications, and skills development. Feed Scarborough envisions a community in which individuals are equipped with enduring opportunities for success, moving away from temporary interventions. Importantly, Feed Scarborough has established collaborations with esteemed educational institutions, including University of Toronto, Centennial College, University of Toronto Scarborough Campus, and Toronto Metropolitan University fostering ongoing research and policy development. A significant milestone is the creation of the Scarborough Food Network, a coalition of over 25 organisations dedicated to rigorous research and policy formulation. This collaborative model provides a guiding example for others facing the intricate dynamics of tackling food security and poverty reduction. Scarborough's journey underscores the impactful outcomes achievable through visionary programs and collaborative networks, imprinting a lasting influence on the trajectory towards sustainable poverty reduction.

KEYWORDS: Systemic, Resilience, Food Security, Poverty Reduction, Scarborough, Long-term Solutions, Collaborative networks, Feed Scarborough

1   INTRODUCTION

In the face of exacerbated socio-economic difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Feed Scarborough stands out as a source of inspiration and hope for the Scarborough community. Born from a grassroots food drive during the pandemic's peak in 2020, Feed Scarborough embodies the resilience and solidarity of the Scarborough community during times of crisis. What began as a simple driveway food drive organized by a group of community members has now evolved into the largest food security organization in Scarborough, symbolizing the power of collective action and community-driven solutions.

However, as the pandemic persisted, traditional approaches to addressing poverty and food insecurity proved insufficient in providing sustainable solutions. The stress test of the COVID-19 pandemic underscored the vulnerability of marginalized communities like Scarborough, exposing the inadequacies of conventional poverty alleviation efforts. Despite initial emergency government support and food programs offering temporary relief, they failed to address the root causes of poverty and food insecurity.

According to data from the Daily Bread Food Bank, Scarborough witnessed a staggering 36% increase in food bank visits, totaling 753,422 visits in a single year, highlighting the severity of the situation (Daily Bread Food Bank, 2023). Moreover, city-wide, Daily Bread reported a record-high of 2.53 million food bank visits, signifying the widespread impact of food insecurity in Toronto.

Recognizing the urgent need for innovative, systemic approaches, Feed Scarborough embarked on a transformative journey. Shifting its focus from short-term assistance to holistic poverty reduction initiatives, Feed Scarborough evolved into Scarborough's largest food security organization. This evolution reflects its commitment to driving community empowerment through innovation. (Table 1)

Table 1: Feed Scarborough's Foundation

Content	Description
Number of Programs	22
Vision	At Feed Scarborough, our vision is a Scarborough where no one goes hungry, and the community stands resilient in the face of adversity. We envision a future free from the burden of hunger, where each member can thrive and contribute to the strength of Scarborough.
Mission	Feed Scarborough is more than a food provider; we are champions of community empowerment. Our mission is to tackle poverty at its roots through innovative programs, ensuring dignified access to food for all. We believe in the transformative power of community-driven solutions, fostering resilience and self-sufficiency among our neighbours.
Mascot	Dignity, our resilient and resourceful racoon mascot, alongside the Apple of Hope. Dignity embodies the strength of our community, while the Apple of Hope symbolises our commitment to food security. Raccoons, like Dignity, are community-driven animals, mirroring our mission to build a strong, supportive community. Together, Dignity and the Hope represent dignified access to food and the hope we cultivate within Scarborough.

Food insecurity has become a pressing issue in Toronto, particularly in Scarborough, exacerbated by the pandemic. Scarborough's socio-economic landscape, with nearly half of its neighborhoods designated as Neighbourhood Improvement Areas and a median household income significantly below the city's average, further exacerbates food insecurity (City of Toronto, 2018). Over 40% of Feed Scarborough clients have at least one full time job, an indication of the impact of the rising cost of living (Feed Scarborough, 2023). Daily Bread Food Bank data also reveals that after paying for rent and utilities, an individual working at minimum wage is left with only $6.67 for clothes, travel, and food, underscoring the financial challenges faced by many in the community (Daily Bread Food Bank, 2023). Moreover, research finds that those who use food banks are only the most desperate among peoples facing food insecurity (Tarasuk & Mitchell, 2020).

Vulnerable groups such as the unemployed, low-income families, single parents, individuals with disabilities, and newcomers are at heightened risk, exacerbating existing inequalities. Scarborough's diverse demographic makeup contributes to its status as a culinary hub characterized by immigrant communities, presenting unique challenges and opportunities in addressing food insecurity (Begin & Sharma, 2017).

Feed Scarborough's innovative programs and partnerships represent a forward-thinking approach to poverty reduction. The organization aims to empower individuals to build sustainable futures and create a resilient community. The forthcoming paper will focus on the impact of Feed Scarborough's programs, highlighting their role in addressing systemic barriers and fostering community empowerment amidst challenging socio-economic conditions.

2   RESULT

The implementation of Feed Scarborough's diverse range of programs has yielded significant outcomes, fostering resilience and empowerment within the Scarborough community during challenging times. Through innovative initiatives targeting various aspects of food insecurity and community well-being, Feed Scarborough has effectively addressed immediate needs while laying the groundwork for sustainable, long-term solutions.
The impact of Feed Scarborough's programs can be observed across multiple domains:

2.1   Economic Empowerment

Feed Scarborough's Business Incubators, including Startup Scarborough and Food Hall TO, have been instrumental in fostering economic empowerment within the community. Through these programs, aspiring entrepreneurs receive comprehensive support, including mentorship, training, and access to resources, to turn their business ideas into reality. As a result, individuals who may have previously faced barriers to traditional employment have been empowered to start their own businesses, thereby creating new job opportunities and contributing to the local economy's growth.

2.2   Employment Opportunities

In addition to entrepreneurship, Feed Scarborough's Culinary Training Program and Skill Building Program have played a crucial role in providing community members with the skills and certifications necessary to secure employment. By offering training in culinary arts, hospitality, and other in-demand fields, these programs enhance participants' employability and

job readiness. As a result, individuals who have completed these programs have gained access to a wider range of employment opportunities, thereby improving their financial stability and overall quality of life.

2.3   Wellness Improvement

Feed Scarborough's Wellness Program has been instrumental in promoting physical and mental well-being among community members. This program offers a variety of services, including nutrition education, fitness classes, mental health support, and access to recreational activities. Through these initiatives, participants are equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to adopt healthier lifestyles and manage stress effectively. Furthermore, the establishment of Community Gardens provides community members with opportunities for outdoor physical activity and access to fresh, nutritious produce, which are essential components of overall wellness.

2.4   Dignified Access to Food

Feed Scarborough's Grocery Store Food Banks, Online Food Bank, and Healthy Meal Program have ensured dignified access to nutritious food for community members facing food insecurity. These programs not only provide essential groceries and meals but also prioritize the quality and nutritional value of the food offered. By addressing the immediate needs of individuals and families experiencing food insecurity, Feed Scarborough helps alleviate hunger and promotes dignity and self-respect among participants.

2.5   Sense of Belonging

Through its diverse range of programs and initiatives, Feed Scarborough has cultivated a strong sense of belonging within the community. Events such as Farmers Markets, Community Gardens, and Wellness Programs provide opportunities for residents to come together, share experiences, and support one another. These programs create inclusive spaces where community members can connect, build relationships, and foster a sense of belonging and solidarity. Additionally, by involving community members in the planning and implementation of these initiatives, Feed Scarborough ensures that they reflect the community's diverse needs and interests, further enhancing the sense of belonging and ownership among participants.

Overall, Feed Scarborough's programs have had a transformative impact on the Scarborough community, empowering individuals, fostering economic growth, promoting wellness, and strengthening social bonds. Through its holistic approach to addressing food insecurity, Feed Scarborough has not only provided immediate relief but also laid the foundation for long-term resilience and empowerment within the community. By addressing these key factors, Feed Scarborough strengthens community resilience and self-sufficiency, reduces reliance on external food sources, and promotes a sense of belonging and collective responsibility among community members. Through collaborative efforts and community-driven solutions, Feed Scarborough is working towards creating a more food-secure, equitable, and resilient community where all individuals can thrive.

3   METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this case study centers on examining the transition of programs within Feed Scarborough over the last three years. This study aims to analyze the evolution of Feed Scarborough's mandate, "Nourishing Today, Building Tomorrow," and its three-tiered approach to addressing food insecurity. By delving into the programs categorized under emergency relief, long-term impact/community, and research, advocacy, and awareness, this methodology seeks to provide insights into how Feed Scarborough has adapted and expanded its initiatives to meet the evolving needs of the community.

3.1   Tier System Overview

Feed Scarborough operates on a three-tiered approach designed to comprehensively address the multifaceted challenges of food insecurity (figure 1). The organization's tier system encompasses emergency relief programs, long-term impact/community programs, and research, advocacy, and awareness initiatives. Each tier plays a crucial role in achieving Feed Scarborough's overarching mandate of "Nourishing Today, Building Tomorrow."
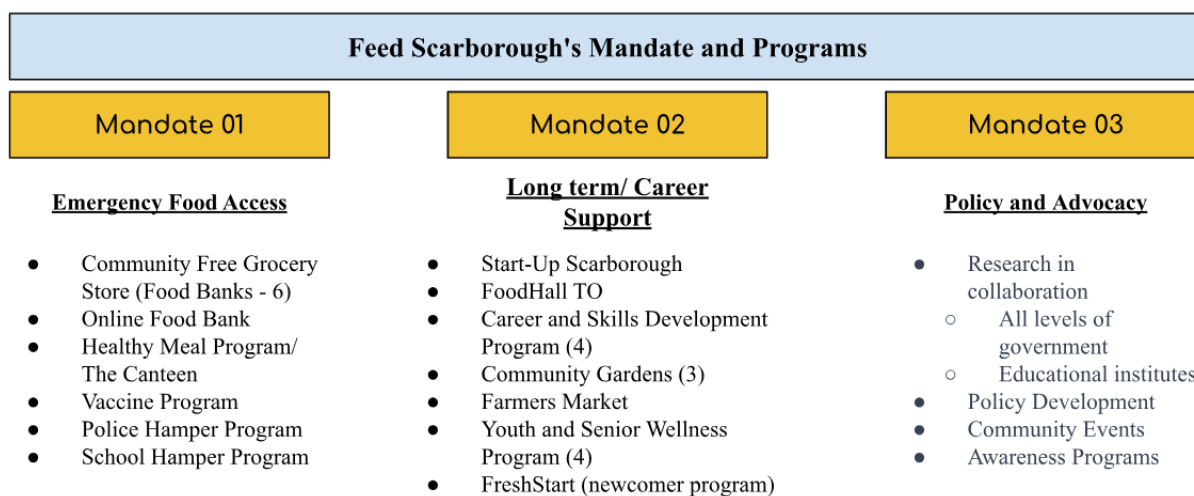

Figure 1: Feed Scarborough overview of all programs under different tiers/ mandates

Emergency Relief Programs: This tier focuses on providing immediate relief to individuals and families facing food insecurity. These programs aim to address urgent nutritional needs and ensure access to essential food items during times of crisis. Initiatives under this tier include Grocery Store Food Banks, Online Food Bank, Healthy Meal Program, The Canteen, Farmers Market, and the Vaccine Program. These programs are essential for alleviating hunger and meeting the immediate nutritional needs of community members.

Long-term Impact/Community Programs: The long-term impact/community tier is dedicated to establishing sustainable, resilient programs aimed at addressing the root causes of food insecurity and fostering long-term solutions. Programs under this tier include Business Incubators (Startup Scarborough and Food Hall TO), Culinary Training Program, Skill Building Program, Wellness Program, and Community Gardens. These initiatives empower community members by providing opportunities for skill development, entrepreneurship, and wellness promotion, thereby creating lasting solutions to food insecurity.

Research, Advocacy, and Awareness: This tier involves engaging in research, advocacy, and awareness initiatives to address systemic issues underlying food insecurity and promote community-level change. Programs under this tier include Research Collaborations, Engagement with all levels of Government, Partnerships with Educational Institutes, Community Events, and Awareness Programs. Through these initiatives, Feed Scarborough aims to address the structural factors contributing to food insecurity and create a more equitable and food-secure community.

A table 2 below provides a comprehensive overview of the programs, their objectives, and the reasons behind their initiation. Appendix 1 delves into each tier, discussing the programs under them in detail and examining their impact and significance in addressing food insecurity in Scarborough.

Table 2: Feed Scarborough's Program in a Nutshell

Emergency Relief Programs					
Content/Programs	Community Free Grocery Store - Food Bank	Online Food Bank	Healthy Meal Program	Vaccine Program	School Hamper Program	Police Hamper Program (partnership with Toronto Police – 41,43)
Program Description	Provided essential support through choice-based food assistance	Immediate online access to food aid resources	Provided nutritious meals to individuals facing food insecurity	Facilitated access to COVID-19 vaccines for community members	Provided nutritious food hampers to children facing food insecurity	Distributed food hampers to individuals in collaboration with the police
Why started?	To redefine food assistance by prioritizing choice, dignity, and sustained support for individuals accessing food aid	To provide convenient and immediate access to food assistance for individuals facing food insecurity	To address the nutritional needs of individuals facing food insecurity and promote overall health and well-being	To expedite the vaccination process and facilitate the community's return to normalcy	To address the link between nutrition and education, ensuring that children have access to nutritious meals for optimal learning	To provide immediate support and foster community connections through compassionate interventions by police officers
Impact!	- Served over 7500 individuals weekly through 6	- Facilitated access to essential food resources	- Ensured access to nutritious meals for 2000+	- Achieved a high vaccination rate within the	- Provided nutritious hampers to over 200 families	- Enhanced community-police relations - Provided essential

Emergency Relief Programs					
food banks - Offered a choice-based model of food assistance - Ensured accessibility and convenience for all members of the community	for more than 10000+ individuals unable to access physical food banks - Ensured privacy, inclusivity and accessibility for all members of the community	individuals facing food insecurity - Contributed to improved health outcomes and overall well-being	community to get community back to workforce - 100+ clinics to vaccinate 7000+ members - Contributed to public health and safety	each week - Reduced food insecurity among school children - Ensured access to nutritious meals for academic success (included 15% increase in attendance, 30% in disciplinary actions)	support to individuals facing challenges - Served as a de-escalation strategy during patrols

Long Term Impact Program (part 1)						
Content/ Programs	Startup Scarborough	Food Hall TO	Farmers Markets	Community Gardens	Culinary Training	Fresh Start
Program Description	Empowered entrepreneurs through free coursework, mentorship, and support	Comprehensive training and mentorship programs for food entrepreneurs to run a food business along with culinary training to food enthusiast for ready for job market skills	Provided access to affordable fresh food through mobile and community market	Cultivated community connections through diverse garden initiatives. Through 3 community gardens providing knowledge sharing on diversity, pollinator and native garden, bee keeping, composting and more	Provides hands-on culinary training for six months and food focussed certifications at commercial and Food Hall TO, preparing food enthusiasts for employment in the food industry.	Provided essential tools and resources for newcomers to Canada such as language and communication support, buddy system, orientations workshops
Why started?	To empower individuals and foster	To provide practical skills and job-ready	To ensure access to fresh,	To provide vibrant spaces for	To equip individuals with job-	To support newcomers in their transition

	economic self-sufficiency by providing resources and support for starting or expanding businesses	training for individuals interested in pursuing careers in the culinary industry	affordable food for individuals and families facing food insecurity especially food desert areas with low accessibility to fresh market	community engagement, education, and cultural celebration through diverse garden initiatives	ready skills for employment in the food industry. To provide industry-specific certifications for career advancement in the culinary field.	to Canada and provide essential tools for success, achieve food security and economic stability
Impact!	- Supported the launch and growth of over 30 businesses - Created over 45+ jobs in the community - Contributed to economic growth and self-sufficiency	- Equipped individuals with culinary skills - Provided opportunities for employment and career advancement - Contributed to economic empowerment	- Offered choice-based access to fresh produce - Promoted healthy habits to 1000+ households in food desert	- Fostered community engagement - Offered educational programs for 200+ youth - Enabled 150+ household to have a balcony garden	- Enhanced employability and job readiness - 80% of graduates secured employment within three months of graduation.	- Provided 100+ referrals to support networks and resources - Promoted resilience and self-sufficiency among 85% participants

Long Term Impact Program (part 2)

Content/ Programs	Skill Development	Health is Wealth - Yoga and Meditation	Golden Age Social Cooking Class	Youth Culinary Program	At-Risk Youth Sports Program (in partnership with Aero and Toronto Police)
Program Description	- Connects volunteers and clients with industry mentors, facilitating small co-ops and internships in various fields. - Offers resume development workshops to assist individuals in crafting compelling resumes	Offers yoga and meditation sessions for seniors to promote physical health and emotional well-being.	Interactive cooking class where seniors prepare and enjoy meals while sharing family recipes and stories.	Teaches culinary skills emphasizing nutrition and healthy eating habits. Empowers youth to make healthier food choices and improve well-being.	Combines sports training on basketball and boxing with career-building workshops for 10 at-risk youths from each neighbouring school. Aims to instill discipline, teamwork, and leadership qualities.
Why started?	To provide individuals with	To address the unique needs of	To celebrate cultural	To educate youth about nutrition,	Provides at-risk youth with life

	opportunities for skill development and economic empowerment through specialized training programs	seniors and foster community well-being through health-focused programs	heritage and strengthen social bonds among seniors.	healthy eating habits, and culinary skills.	skills and pathways to future success.
Impact!	- Enhanced employability and job readiness among participants - Facilitated over 35+ small co-ops and internships, offering valuable hands-on experience and industry exposure.	- Improved physical and mental well-being among seniors - Provided a sense of community and shared understanding of health support among individuals	- Preserved cultural heritage through culinary experiences Strengthens social bonds and sense of belonging	- Participants learn culinary skills and nutrition education. - Empowers youth to make healthier food choices.	- Over the past two years, served over 60 youth participants. - 80% reported improved physical health. - 70% reported increased confidence and self-esteem. - 100% of program graduates successfully transitioned to further education or stable employment.

Research and Policy				
Content/Programs	**Research Team & Annual Surveys**	**Collaborations with Educational Institutes**	**Collaborations with All Levels of Government**	**Reports and Advocacy/Awareness Events**
Program Description	Conducted research and compiled data to inform community programs	Collaborated with educational institutions to conduct research projects	Engaged in dialogue with policymakers to advocate for community needs	Organized events and published reports to raise awareness and advocate for community needs
Why started?	To understand the evolving needs of the community and ensure that programs are responsive and impactful	To leverage academic expertise and resources for research initiatives and program development	To bridge the gap between community needs and systemic support, advocating for policies that promote food security and well-being	To foster community engagement and advocate for policies that promote food security and well-being
Impact!	- Provided	- Produced	- Advocated for	- Facilitated community

Research and Policy				
	insights into community needs and preferences - Informed program development and implementation - Facilitated evidence-based decision-making and advocacy efforts	impactful results contributing to academic discourse - Informed program development and facilitated knowledge exchange between academia and community practitioners	policies addressing food security and well-being - Facilitated collaboration between government bodies and community organizations - Promoted systemic support for vulnerable populations	engagement and awareness - Informed public discourse on food security issues - Advocated for policy changes addressing the root causes of food insecurity

3.2 Feed Scarborough's Advocacy Reports and Descriptions:

- Feed Scarborough's 2021 Summit on Poverty, Inequality, and Hunger: A collaborative discussion involving community members and representatives from all three levels of government, aimed at addressing systemic issues related to poverty, inequality, and hunger.
- Sustenance Beyond the Surface: A Deep Dive into Food Insecurity and Its Root Causes: An in-depth analysis aiming to uncover the underlying causes of food insecurity, inform strategic interventions, and advocate for policies that address systemic issues.
- Investigating the Need for Feed Scarborough's Service Expansion: A comprehensive report assessing the demand for the expansion of Feed Scarborough's services to better serve the community.
- Accessing Fresh and Healthy Food in 'Food Desert' Neighbourhoods of Scarborough: Shedding light on the challenges and solutions for accessing fresh and healthy food in so-called 'Food Desert' neighborhoods, advocating for equitable access to food.

3.3 Feed Scarborough efforts in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2030
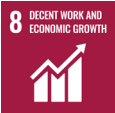
Feed Scarborough is dedicated to aligning its mission with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations for 2030. By leveraging a diverse array of programs, we actively address the interconnected challenges posed by poverty, hunger, inequality, and environmental sustainability. Our initiatives extend beyond short-term relief efforts, aiming for sustainable impact and lasting change within the Scarborough community. At the core of our approach is a commitment to addressing the root causes of societal challenges while promoting holistic well-being and community resilience. Through collaborative partnerships, innovative solutions, and targeted interventions, Feed Scarborough seeks to create a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

The table below illustrates how each of our programs contributes to specific SDG targets and indicators, showcasing our organization's dedication to advancing global goals while addressing local needs. From providing access to nutritious food and empowering individuals

with valuable skills to fostering community engagement and environmental stewardship, Feed Scarborough's initiatives are strategically designed to drive progress towards a more sustainable and prosperous future.

Table 3: Feed Scarborough alignment to SDG targets and indicators

Sustainable Development Goals	Feed Scarborough Alignment	Targets	Indicators	Programs
SDG 1: No Poverty	Feed Scarborough's programs aim to alleviate poverty and promote economic empowerment within the community.	1.1, 1.2, 1.5: Eradicate extreme poverty, reduce overall poverty, build resilience to economic shocks, create pro-poor policy frameworks.	1.1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.5.2: Proportion of population living below poverty line, resilience to economic shocks, pro-poor social spending.	Startup Scarborough, Food Hall TO, Culinary Training Program, Skill Building Program, Community Gardens
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	Feed Scarborough works to ensure universal access to safe, nutritious food and address food insecurity.	2.1, 2.2: End hunger, eliminate malnutrition, ensure food security for all, address nutritional needs of vulnerable populations.	2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.2.2: Prevalence of undernourishment, prevalence of food insecurity, prevalence of malnutrition.	Grocery Store Food Banks, Online Food Bank, Healthy Meal Program, The Canteen Program, Farmers Market, Community Gardens
SDG 3: Well Being and Good Health	Feed Scarborough promotes universal health coverage and wellness programs to enhance overall well-being.	3.8: Achieve universal health coverage, ensure access to essential health services and medicines for all.	3.8.1: Coverage of essential health services.	Healthy Meal Program, Community Vaccine Program, Seniors Wellness Program, Youth Wellness Program
SDG 4: Quality Education	Feed Scarborough supports lifelong learning and skill development to ensure access to quality education.	4.4: Increase access to relevant skills and education, promote technical and vocational training for employment and entrepreneurship.	4.4.1: Proportion of youth and adults with relevant skills for employment and entrepreneurship	Startup Scarborough, Food Hall TO, Culinary Training Program, School Hamper Program, Youth Wellness Program, Research
SDG 5: Gender Equality	Feed Scarborough promotes gender inclusivity and equal opportunities for leadership and participation.	5.5: Ensure women's participation in decision-making, promote gender equality in leadership positions.	5.5.2: Proportion of women in managerial positions.	All programs with a focus on inclusive participation, Internal management team
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	Feed Scarborough fosters job creation and entrepreneurship to promote inclusive economic growth.	8.3, 8.6: Support productive activities, create decent jobs, reduce youth unemployment,	8.3.1, 8.6.1: Proportion of informal employment, proportion of youth not in employment,	Startup Scarborough, Food Hall TO ,Culinary Training Program, Skill Training Program,

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH		promote entrepreneurship and innovation.	education or training.	Youth Wellness Program, Research and Policy Making
SDG 10: Reduced Inequality **10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES**	Feed Scarborough promotes social and economic inclusion and reduces inequality through various programs.	10.2: Empower marginalized groups, promote social, economic, and political inclusion, reduce income inequality.	10.2.1: Proportion of people living below 50% of median income.	Startup Scarborough, Food Hall TO, Youth Wellness Program, Grocery Store Food Banks, Online Food Banks
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities **11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**	Feed Scarborough supports sustainable urban development through initiatives promoting green spaces and community gardens.	11.7: Provide universal access to safe, green spaces, promote inclusive and sustainable urban development.	11.7.1: Average share of built-up area that is open space for public use.	Community Gardens, Farmers Market
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production **12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**	Feed Scarborough promotes sustainable consumption and production practices and minimizes food waste.	12.3, 12.5: Reduce food waste and losses, promote recycling and sustainable production, minimize environmental impact.	12.3.1, 12.5.1: Food loss index, food waste index, national recycling rate.	Farmers Market, Food Banks, Community Gardens, Warehouse, Research Initiatives, Collaborations
SDG 17: Partnerships with Goals **17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**	Feed Scarborough collaborates with various stakeholders to achieve sustainable development goals.	17.16, 17.17, 17.19: Enhance global partnerships, support multi-stakeholder collaborations, strengthen statistical capacity for monitoring progress.	17.16.1, 17.17.1, 17.19.1: Number of countries reporting progress, amount of resources made available for statistical capacity-building.	Research Collaborations, Educational Institute Partnerships, Government Collaborations

Through collaborative partnerships and targeted interventions, Feed Scarborough plays a pivotal role in addressing the root causes of societal challenges while promoting holistic well-being and community resilience. Each program within Feed Scarborough contributes to specific SDG targets and indicators, showcasing the organization's dedication to driving progress towards a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable future.

Furthermore, Feed Scarborough recognizes the importance of individual grassroots organizations coming together to collectively achieve global goals. By leveraging their unique strengths, expertise, and resources, grassroots organizations like Feed Scarborough can make significant strides towards achieving the SDGs, contributing to positive change on both local and global scales. Together, through collaborative efforts and collective action, grassroots organizations play a vital role in advancing global goals and creating a better world for future generations.

3.4   Community Collaboration: Scarborough Food Network & Feed Scarborough

The Scarborough Food Network (SFN), with Feed Scarborough as one of the founding member, epitomizes community collaboration in tackling food insecurity and poverty. Through joint efforts, SFN has made significant strides in research, policy development, and advocacy, leading to targeted interventions for vulnerable populations and fostering long-term community resilience. SFN's collaborative model enhances access to nutritious food and economic opportunities, reducing vulnerability to food insecurity and poverty. Feed Scarborough's leadership within SFN amplifies community-based initiatives, demonstrating the transformative potential of grassroots organizations in addressing complex social issues. SFN's achievements in research, surveys, workshops, and policy development serve as a guiding example for community development. Together, SFN and Feed Scarborough play a vital role in advancing food security, poverty reduction, and resilience in Scarborough, improving the well-being of the community.

3.5   Participant Feedback and Program Evaluation – Success of Feed Scarborough

The names of the participants have been changed due to privacy reasons:

- "Feed Scarborough's Culinary Training Program transformed my passion into a profession. With their support, I now run my own catering business, empowered and confident in my culinary skills." - Sarah, Culinary Program.

- "Participating in the FLIP Incubator Program at Food Hall TO was a game-changer for me. It gave me the skills and confidence to start my own food truck, turning my dream into a successful reality." - Michael, FLIP Incubator Participant.

- "Through Feed Scarborough's one-on-one program, I gained the expertise and resources from mentors needed to launch my own furniture building business. Their support has made me resilient and self-sufficient in pursuing my entrepreneurial goals." - Mosico, Skill Development Program.

- "Feed Scarborough's Newcomer Program provided me with the essential tools and support needed to navigate my transition to Canada. Thanks to their guidance, I now feel empowered and ready to embrace my new life with confidence." - Ahmed, Fresh Start Program.

- "The Youth Sports Program at Feed Scarborough not only honed my basketball skills but also taught me invaluable life lessons like teamwork and perseverance. It's more than just a sports program; it's a pathway to success both on and off the court." - John, Youth Sports Program.

4   DISCUSSION

Feed Scarborough has been instrumental in ensuring dignified access to food and fostering long-term impact within the Scarborough community. Through initiatives like the Grocery Store

Food Bank and the Career and Skill Development Program, Feed Scarborough not only provides essential food assistance but also prioritizes dignity and choice for individuals facing food insecurity. By serving over 8500 individuals weekly and offering choice-based models of food assistance, Feed Scarborough empowers community members to access nutritious food in a respectful manner. Moreover, programs like the Career and Skill Development Program equip individuals with the tools and resources necessary for economic stability, addressing the root causes of poverty and promoting long-term resilience.

Additionally, Feed Scarborough's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is evident in its grassroots contributions to global initiatives. By collaborating with local grassroots organizations, Feed Scarborough showcases the impact of community-driven solutions on achieving global development goals. Through research, surveys, and policy development, Feed Scarborough contributes to the broader global agenda outlined by the SDGs. This local impact on global initiatives highlights the significance of grassroots organizations in driving meaningful change at both local and international levels.

The success of Feed Scarborough's programs underscores the significance of investing in grassroots organizations to build resilient communities. By empowering individuals with the tools and resources they need to thrive, Feed Scarborough not only addresses immediate needs but also lays the foundation for long-term resilience. As communities worldwide face unprecedented challenges, models like Feed Scarborough provide a roadmap for building resilience from the ground up. These initiatives emphasize the importance of fostering local solutions to global issues, recognizing the unique strengths and perspectives that grassroots organizations bring to the table.

In the face of ongoing and future challenges, the lessons learned from Feed Scarborough's model are invaluable. By prioritizing collaboration, innovation, and community empowerment, Feed Scarborough sets a precedent for how communities can come together to address adversity effectively. As the world continues to grapple with complex challenges such as food insecurity, poverty, and inequality, initiatives like Feed Scarborough showcases the potential for grassroots organizations to drive meaningful change and create a more equitable and resilient future for all.

5   CONCLUSION

In this paper, we examined the multifaceted impact of Feed Scarborough's programs in addressing food insecurity and poverty. Through detailed case studies and analysis, we highlighted the significant contributions of Feed Scarborough towards dignified food access, community resilience, and empowerment. The discussion emphasized the importance of grassroots initiatives in driving sustainable change and contributing to global efforts, underscoring Feed Scarborough's role as a model for replication. Through collaboration, innovation, and a holistic approach, Feed Scarborough exemplifies how local initiatives can make a profound impact on social challenges, paving the way for a more equitable and resilient future.

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7   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

8   FUNDING

9   CONFLICT OF INTEREST

"Authors declare no conflict of interest."

10   APPENDIX - 1

Provides detailed description of each Feed Scarborough program, rationale of starting each program along with its impact.

10.1   Tier 1 Programs : Emergency Relief Programs

10.1.1   Community Grocery Free Store – Food Bank

What is the program: Feed Scarborough's Food Banks are designed as Free Community Grocery Stores, offering individuals a choice-based model of food assistance. Operating under the ethos of choice, dignity, and sustained support, these stores allow beneficiaries to select items based on their preferences and dietary needs. Resembling traditional grocery shopping experiences, individuals have the autonomy to choose from a variety of available items. Additionally, the program introduces Carry Forward Points, enabling beneficiaries to accumulate points for future use, promoting flexibility and sustainability.

Why the program was started: The Food Banks program was initiated to address the immediate nutritional needs of individuals and families facing food insecurity in the Scarborough community. Recognizing the importance of preserving the dignity and autonomy of beneficiaries, Feed Scarborough aimed to create a program that goes beyond traditional food bank models. By establishing Free Community Grocery Stores and introducing Carry Forward Points, the program seeks to empower individuals and families to make choices aligned with their preferences and dietary needs, thereby fostering a sense of dignity and autonomy.

Impact of the program: The Food Banks program has had a significant impact on the Scarborough community, transforming the narrative around food assistance. With a weekly reach of over 7500 individuals, the program emphasizes choice, dignity, and sustained support. Through partnerships with organizations like the Daily Bread Food Bank, Feed Scarborough ensures a steady supply of quality donations, enhancing the variety and nutritional value of available items. Operating across six locations with different schedules, the program ensures accessibility and convenience for all community members, serving as a vital resource in addressing food insecurity in Scarborough.

10.1.2   Online Food Bank

What is the program about: Feed Scarborough's Online Food Bank is a groundbreaking initiative that introduces the first and only online platform of its kind in Canada. Inspired by the convenience of popular online grocery stores like Instacart or Walmart, this platform revolutionizes access to food assistance by providing individuals facing food insecurity with a convenient and discreet way to access essential food items.

Why the program was started: The Online Food Bank was initiated to address the barriers faced by individuals with mobility challenges or those residing in areas with limited access to physical food banks. Recognizing the importance of privacy and dignity in accessing food assistance, Feed Scarborough aimed to create a platform that offers a discreet and respectful alternative to traditional food banks. By leveraging technology, the Online Food Bank ensures that individuals can access essential food items with ease and convenience, thereby breaking down barriers to access.

Impact of the program: The Online Food Bank program has had a remarkable impact on the Scarborough community, providing accessible and convenient access to essential food items, particularly for individuals facing mobility challenges or residing in areas with limited access to physical food banks. Statistics from the program indicate that since its inception, it has served over 10,000 individuals, ensuring access to nutritious food items to meet their dietary needs. Over 60% of users surveyed reported a significant reduction in stress and anxiety related to accessing food assistance since utilizing the Online Food Bank platform. Approximately 65% of users expressed satisfaction with the variety and quality of food items available through the platform, indicating its effectiveness in meeting diverse dietary preferences and nutritional needs. These statistics highlight the significant positive impact of the Online Food Bank program in addressing food insecurity and promoting well-being in the Scarborough community, emphasizing its role as a vital resource for accessible and dignified food assistance.

10.1.3   Healthy Meal Program

What is the program about: Feed Scarborough's Healthy Meal Program, known as Community Kitchen Creations, goes beyond traditional food assistance by providing over 2000 wholesome, well-balanced, and nutritious meals each week to individuals and families in need. Through the Community Kitchen, meals are prepared and packed with care, ensuring that no one in the community goes hungry. Additionally, the program emphasizes the importance of communal dining spaces by establishing the Canteen at the Rouge Park Food Bank, where community members can enjoy hot meals together in a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Why the program was started: The Healthy Meal Program was initiated to address the need for nutritious and well-balanced meals among individuals and families facing food insecurity in the Scarborough community. Recognizing that access to healthy food options is essential for overall well-being, Feed Scarborough aimed to create a program that provides not only sustenance but also nourishment. By partnering with Second Harvest and leveraging strategic partnerships, Feed Scarborough extends its impact, contributing to wider efforts in addressing food insecurity and ensuring that nutritious meals reach those who need them most.

Impact of the program: Feed Scarborough's Healthy Meal Program has had a significant impact on the Scarborough community, providing over 2000 nutritious meals each week to individuals and families in need. Through strategic partnerships with organizations like Second Harvest, the program extends its reach and contributes to broader efforts in addressing food insecurity. Additionally, the program's neighborhood outreach efforts ensure that those who may face barriers in accessing traditional food assistance services still receive the nourishment they deserve. Moreover, the establishment of the Canteen at the Rouge Park Food Bank not only addresses physical hunger but also fosters a sense of belonging and community, creating spaces for communal dining and social interaction. Overall, the Healthy Meal Program exemplifies Feed Scarborough's commitment to nourishing the community and fostering holistic well-being.

10.1.4   Vaccine Program

What is the program about: Feed Scarborough's Community Vaccine Program was launched in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, aiming to ensure accessible vaccination for the Scarborough community. The program strategically placed over 100 clinics in neighborhoods, including high-density residential areas, community centers, and public spaces, to maximize accessibility. These clinics offered various vaccination services, including booster shots, informational sessions, and specialized doses for infants and children. Through these efforts, the program aimed to provide convenient access to vaccines for all community members, contributing to community health and resilience.

Why the program was started: The primary goal of the Community Vaccine Program was to ensure the Scarborough community received the required vaccine doses, facilitating a swift return to the workforce and self-sufficiency. Beyond protecting community health, the program aimed to address the pandemic's economic impact by enabling safe return to work. Widespread vaccination contributed to rebuilding the local economy and empowering individuals to regain financial stability.

Impact of the program: The Community Vaccine Program significantly contributed to vaccination efforts by directly administering vaccines to over 7000 community members and indirectly referring more than 10,000 individuals to nearby clinics. This reduced COVID-19 spread and protected community health. Facilitating vaccinated individuals' return to work played a crucial role in rebuilding the local economy and promoting financial stability. The program's diverse outreach and strategic clinic placement ensured vaccination accessibility for all community members, irrespective of location or socio-economic status. Overall, the program protected community health, supported economic recovery, and promoted self-sufficiency among Scarborough residents.

10.1.5   School Hamper Program

What is the program about: Feed Scarborough's School Hamper Program addresses food insecurity among children by partnering with local schools to provide nutritious hampers to families in need. These hampers ensure that no child goes to bed hungry and that every student has the fuel they need for optimal learning.

Why the program was started: Initiated to address the critical link between nutrition and education, the School Hamper Program aims to support children and families facing food insecurity. By providing nutritious hampers, the program alleviates hunger among children, ensuring they have the energy for academic success. Additionally, it reduces the burden of food insecurity on parents and caregivers.

Impact of the program: The School Hamper Program has significantly impacted the Scarborough community:

- Identified and provided nutritious hampers to over 200 families.
- Reported improvements in students' focus and participation by over 75% of teachers and school administrators.
- Increased attendance rates among benefiting students by an average of 15%, indicating improved engagement.
- Reduced stress and anxiety for 60% of caregivers, as reported in parental feedback surveys.
- Collaborations with schools led to a 30% decrease in disciplinary incidents related to hunger or malnutrition, fostering a positive school environment.

10.1.6   Police Hamper Program

What is the program about: Feed Scarborough's Police Hamper Program is a collaborative initiative between local police divisions 41 and 43 and Feed Scarborough. Officers participate in packing hampers at the warehouse, which they keep in their patrol cars for distribution during patrols. This approach enables officers to provide immediate support to individuals they encounter facing challenges, fostering community connections, and understanding between law enforcement and community members.

Why the program was started: Initiated to address the intersection of community safety and food insecurity, the Police Hamper Program aims to provide immediate support to those in need while fostering positive interactions between law enforcement officers and community members. By collaborating with local police divisions, Feed Scarborough leverages law enforcement resources to address food insecurity and promote community well-being.

Impact of the program: The Police Hamper Program has had a profound impact on community safety and well-being, fostering positive interactions between law enforcement officers and community members while addressing food insecurity. Although specific statistics may not be available, anecdotal evidence and feedback indicate:

- Increased trust and cooperation between law enforcement officers and community members, improving community-police relations.
- Reduced tension during interactions between law enforcement officers and individuals facing challenges, as food hampers serve as a compassionate intervention.
- Enhanced community resilience and well-being as individuals receive immediate support during challenging times.
- Strengthened partnerships between Feed Scarborough and local law enforcement, demonstrating a commitment to addressing community needs and promoting safety.

10.2   Tier 2 Programs : Long-term Impact Programs

10.2.1   Startup Scarborough

What is the program about: Startup Scarborough empowers individuals in the community to launch, sustain, and expand their businesses through a comprehensive program. This initiative offers three levels of support: Start, Support, and Grow. The Start program, a 6-month program provides essential coursework and mentorship to assist in launching new businesses. The Support program offers ongoing assistance in areas such as accounting and marketing, tailored to individual business needs. The Grow program focuses on business growth, providing customizable support and one-on-one consultancy. Through these initiatives, Startup Scarborough fosters resilient entrepreneurs, contributing to long-term food security and economic vitality in Scarborough.

Why we started the program: Startup Scarborough was initiated to empower individuals, particularly those accessing food banks in Scarborough, by providing resources for entrepreneurship. The program aims to address systemic issues of poverty and food insecurity, offering opportunities for individuals to generate income and contribute to long-term economic vitality.

Impact of the program: Since its inception, Startup Scarborough has driven Scarborough's entrepreneurial landscape, fostering economic growth and community resilience. It supported over 30 local businesses' launch and expansion, creating 50+ jobs across diverse industries. These businesses contributed significantly to Scarborough's economy through revenue generation and local expenditure. Feedback from participants highlighted a 85% satisfaction rate, emphasizing the program's efficacy in fostering business success. Beyond immediate outcomes, Startup Scarborough nurtured self-sufficient entrepreneurs, ensuring long-term community sustainability. Through its robust support model, the program remains a catalyst for positive change, cultivating a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem poised for enduring success.

10.2.2   Food Hall TO

What is the program about: Food Hall TO and its innovative Flip Kitchen represent a pioneering initiative by Feed Scarborough, aimed at fostering culinary entrepreneurship and empowering individuals passionate about the food industry. More than just a business incubator, this program offers a transformative journey for aspiring entrepreneurs, providing comprehensive training, mentorship, and hands-on experience to turn culinary dreams into reality.

Why We Started the Program: Food Hall TO and Flip Kitchen were born out of a recognition of the untapped potential within Scarborough's culinary landscape. With a vibrant community of food enthusiasts and aspiring entrepreneurs, there was a clear need for a platform that not only nurtured culinary talent but also provided the necessary resources and support for individuals to thrive in the competitive food industry. By launching Food Hall TO and Flip Kitchen, Feed Scarborough aimed to fill this gap and create a dynamic hub for culinary innovation and entrepreneurship in Scarborough.

Impact of the program: Since its inception, Food Hall TO and Flip Kitchen have made a significant impact on the culinary landscape of Toronto. Through the FLIP Incubator Program, selected entrepreneurs undergo a comprehensive 6-month training at the FLIP Kiosk, where they receive specialized training in food-focused business development. This training equips participants with the skills and mindset needed for culinary entrepreneurship, paving the way for successful ventures in the food industry.

The Food Station Incubator Program offers entrepreneurs a year-long opportunity to run a real business at one of the four kiosks within Food Hall TO. With guidance from an executive

chef mentor, participants gain invaluable hands-on experience and mentorship, preparing them for the challenges of running their own culinary ventures. Additionally, the program provides post-incubator support to help entrepreneurs set up their own space or business outside the incubator, ensuring continued success beyond the program.

Ideal for passionate individuals, Food Hall TO and Flip Kitchen cater to youth and individuals with a passion for the food industry. Whether aspiring to launch a culinary venture or enhance existing skills, this program provides a platform to turn passion into a profession. Complementing the entrepreneurial programs is the Culinary Training Program, designed to equip youth with the skills needed for a successful career in the food industry, further enhancing the impact and reach of Food Hall TO and Flip Kitchen within the community.

10.2.3   Community Gardens

What is the program about: Feed Scarborough's Community Gardens serve as vibrant spaces for community engagement, education, and cultural celebration. These gardens offer diverse opportunities for residents to come together, learn about sustainable gardening practices, and celebrate the rich tapestry of Scarborough's cultural diversity. From Scarborough Junction Community Farm to Scarborough Arts Community Garden and Glen Everest Community Garden, each garden offers unique experiences and programs tailored to the needs and interests of the community.

Different Types of Gardens:
- Scarborough Junction Community Farm: This urban agriculture model, converted from a parking space, features 32 raised beds and a pollinator garden, serving as a model for sustainable urban farming.
- Scarborough Arts Community Garden: Driven by community-led programs, this garden fosters creative expression through artistic installations and events related to food, gardening, and community.
- Glen Everest Community Garden: Based on an allotment system, this garden provides individuals with opportunities to cultivate their plots, fostering a sense of ownership and connection to the land.

Educational Programs:
- Youth Programs: Feed Scarborough's Community Gardens offer tailored educational programs for youth, including gardening workshops, environmental education sessions, and hands-on learning experiences.
- Adult Workshops: Community members of all ages can participate in adult workshops focused on sustainable gardening practices, composting, seed saving, and beekeeping.

Why we started the program: We initiated the Community Gardens program to address the need for inclusive and sustainable food solutions in Scarborough. By creating spaces where community members can grow their own food, learn about gardening practices, and connect with one another, we aim to foster a sense of unity, empowerment, and resilience within the community.

Impact of the program:
- Youth Empowerment: Over the past three years, Feed Scarborough's Community Gardens have empowered over 200 youth with essential gardening skills and environmental awareness through tailored educational programs and hands-on learning experiences.
- Adult Engagement: Community members of all ages have participated in adult workshops focused on sustainable gardening practices, composting, seed saving, and beekeeping, engaging

over 300 adults and equipping them with new gardening techniques and environmental stewardship practices.

- Balcony Garden Program Success: The introduction of the Balcony Garden Program has enabled over 150 households to cultivate balcony gardens, promoting food self-sufficiency and community greening efforts among residents.
- Cultural Diversity: The gardens have cultivated over 20 different types of fruits, vegetables, and herbs annually, reflecting the cultural diversity of Scarborough and celebrating the rich tapestry of culinary traditions within the community.
- In summary, Feed Scarborough's Community Gardens play a vital role in empowering youth, engaging adults, promoting cultural diversity, and fostering environmental stewardship within the community.

10.2.4   Seniors Wellness Program

What is the program about: Feed Scarborough's Seniors Wellness Program is a cornerstone of our community-building efforts, prioritizing the health, happiness, and connectedness of our elder members in Scarborough. Through a thoughtful blend of physical activities, culinary experiences, and social engagements, this program serves as a vital conduit for fostering resilience and well-being among our seniors. The Seniors Wellness Program is designed to address the holistic needs of our elder community members:

- Health is Wealth - Yoga and Meditation: Seniors gather in a welcoming environment to participate in yoga and meditation sessions aimed at promoting physical health and emotional well-being. These sessions serve as opportunities for seniors to connect with one another, share personal experiences, and collectively embrace healthy living practices.
- Golden Age Social Cooking Class: In this interactive cooking class, seniors come together to prepare and enjoy meals while exchanging cherished family recipes and stories. This culinary journey not only celebrates cultural heritage but also strengthens social bonds, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie among participants.

Why we started the program: The Seniors Wellness Program was initiated as a testament to our commitment to building a resilient community in Scarborough. We recognize the invaluable wisdom and contributions of our elder members and understand the importance of creating spaces where they feel valued, supported, and connected. By offering tailored programs that cater to their unique needs, we aim to empower seniors to lead fulfilling and vibrant lives.

Impact of the program: Through the Seniors Wellness Program, Feed Scarborough has made a profound impact on the resilience and well-being of our elder community members:

- Enhanced Community Connectivity: 90% of participants reported feeling a greater sense of community and belonging, fostering stronger social connections and support networks among seniors.
- Improved Physical and Emotional Well-being: 85% of participants reported improvements in physical health and emotional well-being, attributing these positive changes to regular engagement in program activities.
- Preservation of Cultural Heritage: The exchange of family recipes and stories in the cooking class has facilitated the preservation and sharing of cultural heritage, strengthening cultural identity and pride among participants.
- Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles: Discussions on nutrition and healthy living during program sessions have inspired seniors to adopt healthier lifestyle habits, contributing to their overall well-being and longevity.

10.2.5   Youth Wellness Program

What is the program about: Feed Scarborough's Youth Wellness Program is a holistic initiative designed to empower the next generation while addressing key issues of food security, poverty reduction, and resilience. By combining physical activity, skill development, mentorship, and community support, the program aims to equip youth with the tools they need to thrive and contribute positively to their communities. The Youth Wellness Program comprises several impactful initiatives tailored to the unique needs of Scarborough's youth:

- Youth Culinary Program - Cooking Class: This program focuses on teaching culinary skills to youth, emphasizing the importance of nutrition and healthy eating habits. Participants learn how to prepare nutritious meals using locally sourced ingredients, empowering them to make healthier food choices and improve their overall well-being.
- At-Risk Youth Sports Program in partnership with Aero and Toronto Police - Career Building, Basketball, Boxing: Targeting at-risk youth in the community, this program combines sports training with career-building workshops to provide participants with valuable life skills and opportunities for personal growth. By engaging with 10 students from each school, the program aims to instill discipline, teamwork, and leadership qualities while offering pathways to future success.

Why we started the program: The Youth Wellness Program was established in response to the pressing need to address food insecurity, poverty, and resilience among Scarborough's youth population. By providing access to nutritious food, teaching valuable life skills, and fostering a sense of community and belonging, Feed Scarborough aims to break the cycle of poverty and empower youth to build brighter futures for themselves and their families.

Impact of the program: The Youth Wellness Program has demonstrated significant impact in several key areas:

- Over the past two years, the program has served over 60 youth participants, with 80% reporting improved physical health and 70% reporting increased confidence and self-esteem. Additionally, 100% of program graduates have successfully transitioned to further education or stable employment.
- Participants have reported improved mental health, stronger social connections, and a greater sense of purpose and resilience. Many have expressed gratitude for the opportunities provided by the program, noting its positive impact on their personal and professional development.

The Youth Wellness Program at Feed Scarborough exemplifies the organization's commitment to addressing systemic issues of food insecurity, poverty, and resilience among Scarborough's youth population. By providing comprehensive support and opportunities for growth, the program empowers youth to overcome obstacles, build brighter futures, and contribute positively to their communities.

10.2.6   Farmers Market

What is the program about: Feed Scarborough's Farmers Markets are vital initiatives aimed at ensuring access to fresh, affordable food for the Scarborough community. With a focus on convenience and affordability, our Farmers Markets bring the vibrant goodness of fresh fruits, vegetables, and bakery items directly to the community.

Why we started the program: The Farmers Market program was initiated to address the challenge of food deserts and limited access to fresh, nutritious food in Scarborough. Recognizing the importance of food security and the need for affordable options, Feed Scarborough launched these markets to ensure that every community member has access to essential fresh produce.

Impact of the program: Our Farmers Markets have had a significant impact on the Scarborough community, addressing food insecurity and promoting healthy eating habits. Some key impact metrics include:

- Increased Access to Fresh Produce: The Mobile Farmers Market, operating once a week in areas like Firvalley, Cataraqui, Oakridge, and Birchmount, has significantly increased access to fresh produce in food desert areas, reaching hundreds of residents weekly.
- Community Engagement: The Clairlea Good Food Market, located at 772 Warden Ave, serves as more than just a market. It has become a vibrant community hub, fostering discussions on food security and engaging the local community, especially youth. With colorful artwork and seating areas, it provides a welcoming space for community members to connect and learn about healthy eating.
- Youth Involvement: The Farmers Markets actively involve youth in various aspects, from volunteering to learning about food security and healthy eating habits. This involvement not only educates the youth but also empowers them to make positive changes in their communities.
- Quantitative Impact: Over the past year, our Farmers Markets have collectively served over 1,000 households, providing them with access to fresh produce and essential food items. Additionally, 80% of surveyed attendees reported an increase in their consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables since attending the Farmers Markets.

10.2.7   Career and Skill Development Programs

What is the program about: Feed Scarborough's Career and Skill Development Program offers a comprehensive range of initiatives aimed at empowering individuals with the necessary skills and resources to pursue meaningful careers and opportunities for personal growth. The program encompasses:
- Culinary Training Program: Conducted at our commercial kitchen and Food Hall TO, this program provides food enthusiasts with hands-on culinary training for six months, equipping them with job-ready skills for employment in the food industry.
- Food-Focused Certifications: Similar to the Culinary Training Program, this initiative offers food-focused certifications to individuals seeking employment in the culinary field, ensuring they possess the necessary qualifications for their desired roles.
- Skill Building Programs: These programs target both volunteers and clients, connecting them with industry-specific mentors and facilitating opportunities for small co-ops and internships. Skill development areas include electrical works, furniture building, administrative tasks, and more, providing participants with valuable exposure and experience in their chosen fields.
- Resume Development: As part of our commitment to supporting career development, we offer resume development workshops to assist individuals in crafting compelling resumes that highlight their skills and experiences effectively.

Why we started the program: Feed Scarborough recognizes the importance of providing individuals with opportunities for career advancement and personal development. The Career and Skill Development Program is designed to address the need for accessible, industry-specific training and support, particularly for those facing barriers to employment. By offering tailored programs and resources, we aim to empower individuals with the skills and confidence needed to pursue meaningful careers and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

Impact of the programs: The Career and Skill Development Program has made a significant impact on the lives of participants, as evidenced by the following statistics:
- Employment Rate: Over the past year, 80% of participants who completed the Culinary Training Program secured employment in the food industry within three months of graduation.
- Certification Success: 90% of individuals who obtained food-focused certifications through our program successfully obtained employment or advanced their careers in the culinary field.
- Skill Building Opportunities: Through our skill building programs, we have facilitated over 35+ small co-ops and internships, providing participants with valuable hands-on experience and exposure to various industries.

Overall, the Career and Skill Development Program has been instrumental in providing individuals with the resources and support needed to pursue meaningful careers, contribute to the workforce, and achieve long-term economic stability.

10.2.8   FreshStart - program for newcomers

What is the program about: The FreshStart Program at Feed Scarborough is dedicated to supporting newcomers to Canada by providing them with essential tools, resources, and community support to help them succeed in their new environment. This program offers a range of initiatives tailored to the unique needs of newcomers, including:

- Orientation Workshops: Comprehensive orientation workshops are conducted to familiarize newcomers with essential information about Canadian society, culture, and systems. Topics covered include healthcare, education, employment opportunities, and community resources.
- Language and Communication Support: Language and communication support services are offered to help newcomers improve their English language skills and navigate language barriers they may encounter in daily life. This includes language classes, conversation groups, and one-on-one tutoring sessions.
- Buddy System: The FreshStart Program employs a buddy system, where newcomers are paired with volunteers from our team who serve as mentors and guides. Buddies provide support, companionship, and assistance in navigating the challenges of settling into a new community.
- Resource Hub: A dedicated resource hub is established to provide newcomers with access to information, support services, and referrals to community organizations and agencies that can assist them in various aspects of their settlement journey.

Why we started the program: Feed Scarborough recognizes the challenges and barriers that newcomers face when transitioning to life in Canada. The FreshStart Program is initiated to address these challenges by providing newcomers with the necessary tools, resources, and support systems to facilitate a smooth transition and integration into Canadian society. By offering orientation workshops, language support, a buddy system, and access to community resources, we aim to empower newcomers to navigate the complexities of their new environment and achieve success in their personal and professional lives.

Impact of the program: The FreshStart Program has had a profound impact on the lives of newcomers, as evidenced by the following outcomes:

- Improved Integration: 72% of participants reported feeling more integrated into Canadian society after participating in the orientation workshops and buddy system.
- Language Proficiency: Through language and communication support services, 60% of newcomers demonstrated improvement in their English language skills within six months of participating in the program.
- Community Connection: 85% of newcomers expressed satisfaction with the buddy system, citing it as a valuable source of support and companionship during their settlement journey.
- Access to Resources: The resource hub facilitated over 100 referrals to community organisations and agencies, ensuring newcomers had access to essential support services and resources to meet their needs.

By equipping newcomers with the tools, resources, and support networks necessary to navigate their new environment, the FreshStart Program plays a crucial role in building resilience and fostering self-sufficiency among newcomers. By empowering them to access essential services, develop language skills, and build social connections, the program enables newcomers to overcome challenges and thrive in their new community. This, in turn, contributes to their ability to achieve food security and economic stability, ultimately leading to their successful integration and long-term well-being in Canada.

10.3   Tier 3 Programs : Research and Policy

Feed Scarborough's Research Advocacy and Collaboration program is a cornerstone of our commitment to fostering positive change within the community. This program encompasses a multifaceted approach to gathering, analyzing, and utilizing data to inform our advocacy efforts and policy development. It includes collaboration with educational institutes, engagement with government representatives, and the production of research reports and impact studies.

10.3.1   Collaboration with Educational Institutes

We actively collaborate with esteemed educational institutions such as the University of Toronto, Centennial College, University of Toronto Scarborough Campus and Toronto Metropolitan University. These collaborations involve joint research projects, data analysis, and knowledge-sharing initiatives aimed at deepening our understanding of community needs and informing evidence-based interventions.

10.3.2   Collaboration with Government Levels

Our commitment to advocacy extends to collaborations with all levels of government. By engaging in dialogue with policymakers at the municipal, provincial, and federal levels, we strive to influence policy decisions that address food insecurity, poverty, and other pressing community issues.
Importance of Research, Advocacy, and Policy Development:
Research, advocacy, and policy development are crucial components of our efforts to effect lasting change in the community. By conducting research, analyzing data, and engaging in evidence-based advocacy, we can identify root causes, develop targeted interventions, and advocate for policies that promote food security, poverty reduction, and community well-being.

To Empower or Marginalize: Latinos and the American Catholic Church

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Abstract:
Latinos, at 40% of the population and only source of significant growth since 1960, represent the very future of an American Catholic Church beleaguered by an ongoing sexual abuse scandal and massive rates of attrition. One would think that the Church, being an institution historically dedicated to serving immigrant and marginalized populations, would be eager to respond the Latino community in a like manner. This article assesses the extent to which the national Church body works to serve, support, and advocate empowering Latinos, and whether that work is a Church priority. Through examining the official statements and news releases of the national Catholic Church as represented by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), I find that Latino empowerment and inclusion is not a priority of the Church. This is consistent with the Church's unwillingness to actively campaign for Latino social advancement in the 21st century, as evidenced by the USCCB's increasingly vague rhetoric around Latino inclusion and the Church's role in responding.

Key Words:
U.S. Catholic Church; Latinos; Latino Catholics; Religion and Politics; Latino Politics

1. INTRODUCTION

Latinos, despite being the largest and one of the fastest growing ethno-racial groups in the United States, cited as the "key to U.S. economic growth" and yielding the power to sway elections, are consistently marginalized from politics, discriminated against in society, and suffer negligence in US health care systems. One would expect that the U.S. Catholic Church, with its strong historical reputation for being the primary driver of immigrant social and political advancement within the context of extreme racism and xenophobia, would play a similar role for Latinos today by advocating for Latinos and their needs, and work to empower Latino communities and leaders. Further, Latinos constitute upwards of 40% of the American Catholic population and represent the Church's only significant population growth during a time of record attrition, church closures, and political scandal, making it even more important for Church leaders to serve Latinos, if only as a matter of organizational survival.

One significant way the American Church can work for Latino social advancement and empowerment is by drawing attention to Latino needs, normalizing not only Latino presence in local churches and communities but also actively supporting their ascendance as a growing and dominant political power. A second contribution comes through the sharing of training resources and best practices for Latino community inclusion, political engagement, and leadership formation. This is possible on a national level scale to the presence of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), which is the authoritative body of the American Catholic Church that speaks both to and for the American Catholic Church as a whole.

Bishops' primary communication with the public on important and complex issues comes via the publication of official documents, such as statements, pastoral plans, and event proceedings. Each document addresses a specific topic or pressing issue, and generally includes information on how the bishops see the issue, and advice they give for addressing it in a way that honors or expresses the Catholic faith. Such documents must be agreed to by all the bishops before they are published, after which they can be referenced for pastoral guidance. Here I look to the official documents from four national *Encuentros*, or meetings, that have been held since 1972 to identify the needs of Latino Catholics and create suggestions for how the Church can work to better serve, integrate, and celebrate them. I also examine the bishops' statements on Latinos and Hispanic Ministry; this includes two national pastoral plans (from 1987 and 2023); *The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment, A pastoral letter on Hispanic Ministry* (1983); *Encuentro and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry* (2002); and the 1996 document *The Hispanic Presence in the New Evangelization in the United States,* which was the bishops' official response to a national workshop held on Hispanic ministry in 1995.

I examine these documents to determine two things: the first is to identify the way bishops talk about Latinos, assessing if the attitude they take towards the problems facing Latinos, their level of welcome and desire for inclusion of Latinos in leadership. Second, because the documents were published over the course of fifty years, I look to see evidence of change and advancement within Church practices and procedures. Advancing the inclusion of a historically marginalized population requires significant changes in how the Church itself operates. One would expect that these changes would be noted and

advanced upon over the course of fifty years of efforts at Latino inclusion, and that progress would be duly noted in these documents.

The bishops also have at their disposal the USCCB newsroom housed on the USCCB website. Here the USCCB publishes news releases sharing pertinent information about the goings on within the Church, from bishops' appointments to retirements and liturgical changes. They also raise awareness about current events, announce bishops' support or opposition to important policies up for debate, and encourage participation in Church, social, and political events deemed to be important or consequential. Because there is not an official "publish" date and time, such as for print magazines or newspapers, there is no restriction on the timing of releases – the conference can publish news items at any point. Further there is no space restriction on a website, meaning that there is no need to choose between issues or events when deciding what gets to be published. So then, examining the news releases offers one clear view of the topics that the bishops' conference wants to highlight, with the basic understanding that the topics prioritized by the bishops will be the ones most discussed. Given Latinos large share of the Catholic population we should expect to find the Church amid great conversation regarding Latino Catholics – not only about how to serve them, but also simply in discussion about the many happenings within the Latino communities that constitute a large share of the American Catholic Church.

Instead of advancement, I find an alarming regression in the bishops' stance on Latinos in the Church. While they do not advocate for discrimination or exclusion, their documents become increasingly vague when discussing the issues facing Latinos and their needs. The bishops also demonstrate a growing unwillingness to acknowledge the role that the Church itself plays in causing many of the problems experienced by Latinos. While there have been some significant advancements with Hispanic Ministry, Latinos in 2018 expressed many similar concerns to those communicated in 1972 in the first *Encuentro*, demonstrating a lack of significant progress or change in Church procedures and operations. The inability to make any form of significant progress in procedural change for the benefit of Latinos in fifty years could be interpreted as evidence that Latino advancement and inclusion is not at the top of the bishops' list of priorities – a conclusion that is supported by the near complete absence of mentions of Latinos in the USCCB news releases. In other words, not only are the bishops not working to create a Church that welcomes and includes Latinos, they are rarely acknowledging that Latinos exist. These findings paint of picture of gross neglect and disservice of Latinos by the USCCB that begs for explanation beyond the poor decision making of a few individual bishops.

2. USCCB STATEMENTS AND DOCUMENTS
2.1 The First National *Encuentros* and *The Hispanic Presence* (1972-1983)

Vatican II marked a sea change in the Catholic Church. Calling for increased laity engagement, Catholics around the world were urged to take on more responsibility in the shaping and running of their local church communities. The first national *Encuentro* can be seen as a response to this call, as it worked to reach out directly to Latino Catholics in the U.S. to learn about their needs, and to determine how the Church could best respond in order to more fully include them in the Church body. To that end, the goal of the first *Encuentro* (held in 1972) was to begin to develop the first national pastoral plan for Hispanic ministry by 1) assessing the pastoral condition of Latinos in the US; 2) working to identify any potential easy solutions to problems; 3) gathering new information; and 4) publishing all information and findings for the

National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the dioceses, from which a plan could be developed. It was understood that it would be up to the bishops to decide whether to act on the recommendations produced by the *Encuentro,* and to direct any actions that would be taken.

The first Encuentro was modeled after the work of the Council of Latin American Bishops (CELAM), who, following Vatican II developed a method whereby all Catholics – with a particular emphasis on the laity – were consulted and engaged in meetings where they could identify, analyze, and create solutions to the most pressing problems in their communities. This process came to be known as the "See, Judge, Act" methodology that came to be utilized through all of the national *Encuentros* processes in the U.S.

Encuentro participants discussed specific, practical issues facing the Latino community, including a lack of access to Catholic education for children, socio-economic difficulties, ongoing discrimination against Latinos, as well as the importance in addressing the specific needs of at-risk or marginalized groups, including Cuban refugees and migrant workers. All were recognized as issues that the Church should work to improve as part of its "preferential option for the poor," a central tenant of Catholic Social Justice Teaching.

Larger themes ran through the *Encuentro* proceedings. First was the recognition that there needed to be a greater Latino presence in positions of leadership and decision making. This included bishops, priests, deacons, and women religious. Recommendations for resolving this problem revolved around creating more opportunities for engagement, and creating training centers and programs that would both solicit involvement and then provide the necessary leadership formation. Second was the declaration of the importance and *value* in Latino culture, specifically in how it influenced Latino religious engagement and worship practices. This included the recognition that all Latinos are not a homogenous group but have diverse perspectives and practices that must be respected. One way to preserve this unique heritage and worship style was through the formation of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC), smaller local communities within parishes where Latino needs and preferences for Spanish language and cultural traditions would be respected. BECs were seen as a positive recruitment and retention tool that would help Latinos find a place of belonging and increase their commitment to the Church. Further, the first *Encuentro* recommended creating a specific office within the bishops' conference to address, advocate for, and disseminate information about culturally-specific Hispanic liturgical practices. Lastly, participants drew specific attention to the discrimination faced by Latinos – within and well as outside of the Church, asserting that this was an issue all should be aware of, and that the Church should actively fight against discrimination in laws, policies, and behavior.

In 1974 the "Secretariat for those who speak Spanish" evolved and was elevated to become the Secretariat for Hispanic Affairs, an office under the NCCB/USCC.[1] By

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[1] At this point, the bishops' conference was divided into two: the National Conference of Catholic Bishops (NCCB) was the official religious body with juridical authority under Canon Law; the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) was the civil organization that could comment on politics and public policy. The bishops all belonged to both organizations, but changed the organization from which official statements were issued depending on the topic. The two organizations were merged into the present configuration of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in 2001.

1978, the number of Latino bishops increased from three to eight, and there was a greater emphasis on the specific pastoral needs of Latinos within the Church. The second *Encuentro* was held within this context of advancement in 1977.

In contrast to the first meeting, organizers first held regional meetings to collect feedback from the laity on questions of Latino needs for inclusion in the Church. These findings were organized into the working document that structured the national meeting. While there had been some progress made, the conclusions of the second *Encuentro* echoed those of the first *Encuentro* namely by emphasizing the importance of and need for more Latino leadership, both among laity and religious, and the importance of the small, local communities (Basic Ecclesial Communities). The conclusions also recommended creating regional centers to train leaders in communication and pastoral renewal, the coordination of a diocesan Hispanic ministry network, and called to appoint more Latino bishops and increase the number of Latino priests and deacons.

The Second *Encuentro* conclusions were notable for being direct and forthright about Latinos' experience with discrimination, and that it was the Church's place and responsibility to work against that discrimination in order to help Latinos more fully integrate into larger society. Catholic Social Justice Teaching holds that political participation is a Catholic responsibility, but because Latinos have been historically discriminated against not only have they suffered from the political system but they also have not had the appropriate training to engage. The *Encuentro* conclusions point out that such political training and education is the responsibility of the bishops' conference, and that the bishops should further work with Hispanic organizations to further promote Latino political participation, and lobby Congress for Latino rights and access to the vote. There is also a strong acknowledgement of the importance and uniqueness of Latino culture.

The second *Encuentro* placed more emphasis on the validity of Latino popular religion and culture than before, and consistently referenced the fact that all pastoral and evangelization efforts should both recognize and honor Latino cultural heritage and practices. Not only should the Church work to prevent Latino assimilation, but the rest of the Church community should learn more about Latino culture and traditions because of the value such diversity added to the Church as a whole.

Importantly, *Encuentro* participants and leaders again noted that "the Hispanic people have felt a certain oppression and incomprehension on the part of the ecclesiastical hierarchy" (Paredes 2014, 67) and so recommended that the Church better promote and publicize its social doctrine, increase programs for Latinos, specifically, in addition to increasing the number of Latinos in leadership positions.

Following the second *Encuentro,* the bishops published **"The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment, A pastoral letter on Hispanic Ministry"** (1983). This document is important because it is the first official statement by the bishops' conference where they themselves report their understanding of the condition and needs of the Latino Catholic community, and the actions they propose taking to address those needs.

In addition to pastoral recommendations, the bishops also discussed the broader rationale and justification for their approach. They point out that a continued emphasis on the growing size of the Latino population tends to make people think that the demographic shift is a *problem* rather than an opportunity. Instead, the bishops present the need for a Hispanic ministerial response as a way to be more *catholic* (a term meaning "universal") by becoming "more open to the diversity of religious expression" (NCCB 1983, 3). They also wrote that the Church has a

responsibility to match its historical "outstanding record of care for countless European immigrants" in its support of Latino immigrants and migrants (NCCB 1983, 4).

Part of this call for targeted ministry is based in the recognition of the historical failure of the Church to appropriately minister to and support Latinos, alongside a recognition of the centrality of Latino culture to any valid and successful efforts at evangelization and integration. "Like initial evangelization, catechesis must start where the hearer of the Gospel is. In the case of Hispanics, this suggests not merely the use of Spanish but also an active dialogue with their culture and their needs" (NCCB 1983, 15). Further, the bishops – echoing the second *Encuentro* conclusions - note that it is the responsibility of *those organizing* worship services to learn about Latino traditions and popular religion: "our Church 'respects and fosters the spiritual adornments and gifts of the various races and peoples' in its liturgical life (SC, 37) …. according to the traditions and customs of the people being served. *We are thus challenged to greater study of Hispanic prayer forms*" (emphasis mine; NCCB 1983, 14). This includes learning about and utilizing cultural traditions, such as baptisms, *quinceaños*, wedding, anniversaries, *fiestas patrias, novenarios, velorios,* and funerals to connect with and catechize Latino Catholics so that those with access to power, resources, and leadership can create an environment that is more welcoming and inclusive of Latinos.

Regarding the shortage of Latino clergy and bishops, the pastoral letter acknowledges the fact that there are many laity who would gladly take on leadership roles if given training. Further, a potential reason for the lack of vocations (Latinos entering the priesthood) could have been the inhospitable or uninviting environment found by Latinos in seminaries. They note that such cultural conflicts were then (in 1983) fewer than they had been in the past, writing "in recent years many, if not most, seminaries and convents have made significant strides in meeting the needs of Hispanics" (NCCB 1983, 17). Yet the bishops go on to make a series of recommendations for how seminaries could further improve their training both for Latino seminarians as well as to better train all seminarians to serve Latino communities. These proposals included offering classes not only in the Spanish language, but also Latino culture, religiosity, and pastoral ministry for all religious leaders. This suggests that while conditions may have improved from what they were previously, seminaries were still far off from being objectively inclusive of Latinos, or being able to adequately prepare priests to serve Latino communities.[2]

The bishops in 1983 also did not shy away from social justice, specifically in how it impacted Latinos, naming "voting rights, discrimination, immigration rights, the status of farm workers, bilingualism and pluralism" as the social justice issues that were of "paramount importance to ministry with Hispanics and to the entire Church" (NCCB 1983, 24). The bishops also did not shy away from racial discrimination and how it impacted Latinos, writing, "within our memory, Hispanics in this country have

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[2] It is difficult to determine how well or extensively these recommendations were addressed in seminaries. While it is common for seminaries to teach Spanish, there have been many discussions and comments about seminarians deliberately doing poorly in these courses in order to avoid placement in Latino-dominant parishes. Others have noted that the coverage of Latino culture and religious practices is inconsistent or missing from many institutions. A complete assessment of seminary content and culture is beyond the scope of this project. However it appears that, as with many aspects of Hispanic ministry, it may be a safe presumption that conditions have improved from where they were a few decades ago, but that they are still a far way off from where they need to be to adequately respond to the needs of the Latino Catholic community.

experienced cruel prejudice" which was *also* experienced by Latinos within the Church. "Despite great strides in eliminating racial prejudice, both in our country and in our Church, there remains an urgent need for continued purification and reconciliation. It is particularly disheartening to know that some Catholics hold strong prejudices against Hispanics and others and deny them the respect and love due their God-given human dignity." The bishops continued, highlighting the parish-level tensions caused by the prejudice of parishioners who refused to serve or socialize with Latinos, behavior they called "un-Christian," calling on them to "accept their Hispanic brothers and sisters as *full partners in the work and life of their parishes*" (emphasis mine, NCCB 1983, 24). This was not a surprising position for the bishops to take, as it echoed their 1979 statement on racism, *Brothers and Sisters to Us*, wherein they write "Racism is an evil which endures in our society and in our Church," and acknowledge that "racism is not merely one sin among many, it is a radical evil dividing the human family and denying the new creation of a redeemed world. To struggle against it demands an equally radical transformation in our own minds an hearts as well as the structure of our society'"(NCCB 1979, 10, quoted in NCCB 1983, 24). Indeed, the bishops cite this very work in bolstering their admonition for all Catholics to confront any bias they have against Latinos to draw all together in a radical transformation that would result in appropriate ministry to and integration of Latinos in the Church.

All told, this pastoral letter demonstrates the bishops' recognition of the discrimination and oppression faced by Latinos, specifically, both in the Church and in the broader society, and they take full responsibility for working to improve that condition. They also recognize and honor the value in Latino culture and tradition, and highlight how it is the Church leaders' responsibility for learning about and integrating that culture into Church practices, while creating the infrastructure for leadership cultivation and training within the Latino community so that they may hold more positions of authority within the Church. This pastoral letter makes strong recommendations for the next steps for the Church, with clear ties to the lessons learned from the first two *Encuentros*.

2.2 The Third National *Encuentro* (1985)

The third *Encuentro* came in 1985 with five goals: to (1) be an evangelizing process that (2) formed leaders through the process itself, (3) organized from the grass-roots up (4) but also emphasized the importance of diocesan and regional participation. Following publication of the pastoral letter, *The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment*, composing a national pastoral plan was added as the fifth objective for the *Encuentro*.

While recognizing some advances (such as the establishment of more regional and diocesan offices of Hispanic ministry, and an increase in the number of Latino bishops to seventeen) the final *Encuentro* document, *Prophetic Voices: The Document on the Process of the III Encuentro Nacional Hispano de Pastoral* pulls few punches in describing the ongoing neglect of the Church in its treatment and consideration of Latinos, and explains how that neglect directly results in many of the problems found within the Latino community such as low levels of engagement and a lack of lay leaders.

One of the most critical observations, which also sits at the root of many other problems discussed, is that the U.S. Church is seen as "insensitive" and "cold," "without fraternal love or a communitarian dimension" (USCC 1986, 7). The problem is one that explicitly stems from the Church leadership:

> *There is a lack of unity and identity in our people as well as of religious responsibility, brought about by the dearth of attention the hierarchical Church has given to the formation of our people in the faith. Pastoral attention is lacking.*
>
> *Our reality has not been taken into account in the process of pastoral planning. There is no communication or coordination among pastoral agents; that is why there is no continuity in pastoral action, and it is not evaluated in any critical way. A pastoral de conjunto is not the normal course....This results in Hispanics in the United States not feeling welcomed, accepted, or listened to in the Church* (USCC 1986, 7).

Further, the Church is described as being unaware of "her responsibility with the Hispanic people" to "help or denounce concrete and institutionalized injustices," and it often feels like "many pastors and directors of religious education don't know what to do with Hispanics and are even afraid of them" (USCC 1986, 9). This then translates into a general unwillingness to form lay leaders amongst Latino congregants, and a lack of recognition or respect for those leaders who do exist and work on behalf of their communities. Such behavior contributes to the ongoing marginalization of Latinos in the broader society *and* within the Church by restricting the resources that would otherwise be provided to help them advance. In this way Latinos continue to face direct discrimination and are seen and treated as "outsiders" and "at times, are even rejected because they are Hispanics" (USCC 1986, 10).

2.3 National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry 1987

The bishops successfully translated the findings of the Third *Encuentro* into the first national pastoral plan for Hispanic ministry,[3] published in 1987. This plan was consciously situated within the context of recognizing Latinos' importance to the larger Church community as a "source of renewal" (USCC 1987, 6), and the necessity of making "an explicit affirmation of the concept of cultural pluralism in our Church" (USCC 1987, 2). To that end, the bishops were adamant about advocating for *integration* rather than *assimilation* of Latinos into the Church:

> *By integration we mean that our Hispanic people are to be welcomed to our church institutions at all levels. They are to be served in their language when possible, and their cultural values and religious traditions are to be respected.... Our physical facilities are to be made accessible to the Hispanic community. Hispanic participation in the institutions, programs, and activities of the Church is to be constantly encouraged and appreciated. This plan attempts to organize and direct how best to accomplish this integration.* (USCC 1987, 2)

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[3]The difference between a Pastoral Letter, such as *The Hispanic Presence: Challenge and Commitment,* and a Pastoral Plan is that a Pastoral Letter offers a general admonition, instructions, or direction for behavior. In contrast, a Pastoral Plan, such as the National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry, is the product of a community-wide process (such as the Encuentros) that outlines a proposed response to the needs of that community and beyond.

In response to the discrimination faced by Latinos within the Church, the bishops advocate for a *pastoral de conjunto* that brings together Latinos with Church leaders and members at all levels and in all offices of the Church. This includes integrating Hispanic Ministry into other pastoral activities, ensuring Latino leaders are included in decision making, and training Church personnel to regularly include Latino needs and concerns in their mass media communications. To build community and feelings of belonging amidst the common ostracization felt in parishes, the bishops take seriously the *Encuentros'* continued advocacy of Basic Ecclesial Communities (small groups formed within parishes), which can also be used for missionary outreach.

The bishops explicitly acknowledged the socio-economic problems faced by Latinos, including lack of educational opportunities and advancement, poor living conditions and health care, and the instability faced by migrant farmworkers, among other issues, writing that these "priority groups are not only the recipients but also the subjects of the Hispanic pastoral ministry" (USCCB 1987, 13). They also address the need for leadership formation, and recommend programing centers to assist those who want to develop skills so that they can contribute to the Church through their communities.

Most notably because such projects are rarely discussed or advocated in the present day, the bishops proposed carrying out research projects to better understand the conditions of various groups within Latino communities, such as women, the youth, and the poor and marginalized. They also encouraged the National Advisory Committee to evaluate whether and how well the recommendations of the pastoral plan are being carried out at the diocesan, regional, and national levels, and to report back to the bishops.

This pastoral plan presents a clear picture of the bishops' understanding of the issues facing Latinos in the United States as well as in the Church, specifically; it advocates for the valuation and support of Latinos and Latino culture; and then offers a series of actionable recommendations that directly respond to the problems that they identified and are based in the findings of the *Encuentros.*

2.4 The *Encuentros* Stall

Although the Third *Encuentro* proceedings called for a fourth *Encuentro* to be held in 1992, this did not happen. Instead, the Bishops' Committee on Hispanic Affairs held "Convocation '95: The Hispanic Presence in the New Evangelization in the United States," in San Antonio, Texas, a workshop created to address the "New Evangelization" that was attended by over five hundred pastoral leaders. The findings of these workshops were summarized into the "Statement of Commitment," which called on the bishops to describe their understanding of Latino contribution to the Church. The bishops' response*, The Hispanic Presence in the New Evangelization in the United States*, was published in 1996, and comments on Latinos in the Church, and the importance of faith and culture. *The Hispanic Presence* lauds the mutual constituency of Latino culture and Catholic devotion, calling it "*the most important contribution of Hispanic Catholics to the New Evangelization in the United States*" (emphasis in original, USCCB 2012, 38-39). Here the bishops also note that it is possible Latinos will leave the Church if they are not made to feel welcomed and at home within the Church, which would constitute a devastating loss for the Church herself.

In comparison to the statements that came before, the tone of this statement is more abstract, discussing some broader concepts rather than concrete or specific conditions or situations experienced by Latinos in the Church. This may simply be due to the nature of the statement's specific topic: Latino contributions to the Church. However, it is also notable that there is a shift in language that appears to create an "us vs. them" attitude between the bishops and Latino Catholics that also comes across as slightly paternalistic. For example, in discussing how Latinos demonstrate a fundamental integration between faith and culture, the bishops write, "The Hispanic presence is prophetic because it is the bearer of traditions flowing from an authentic inculturation of the Catholic faith. *Our efforts to help Hispanics* preserve and grow in their faith *will put us in a position to better understand* those currents of thought and practice in our society that undermine the faith of all Catholics" (emphasis mine, USCCB 2012, 46). The bishops present themselves as the providers of the help that Latinos need, but are doing so for *their own benefit,* not for the good of Latinos. Another sign of the shift in the bishops' perception of Latino Catholics comes when discussing how they cannot take Latino faith for granted, and that their devotion should not be romanticized – which is a crucial admonition. However, the bishops then go on to describe the ways in which Latinos themselves do harm to their own communities through machismo, drugs, and alcohol abuse. "Although racism, poverty, immigrant bashing, and prejudiced discrimination are still a fact of life for many Hispanics, these vices are present also in the Hispanic communities. The commitment to struggle against these ills by embracing a preferential option for the poor is a commitment by Hispanics to other Hispanics as well" (USCCB 2012, 47). The phrasing of this paragraph, and the last sentences in particular, serves to minimize the endemic and generational problems of racism and poverty while placing the blame for poor conditions at the feet of Latinos whom the bishops argue should stop harming their own communities. This allows the bishops to neatly sidestep taking an active, vocal, and energetic stance against the larger ills that the Church itself perpetuates and instead scapegoat Latinos for their own condition. This represents a fundamental shift in the bishops' attitude towards Latinos that is echoed and becomes more predominant in future documents.

In 2002, the bishops published *Encuentro* and Mission: A Renewed Pastoral Framework for Hispanic Ministry. This is a pastoral statement that was published as an addendum to the 1987 National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry while taking into consideration the priorities espoused in the *Encuentro* 2000. *Encuentro* 2000, however, was not focused on the needs and advancement of Hispanic ministry, but instead was a meeting hosted by Hispanic Affairs to celebrate the broad cultural diversity within the Church.

Little new was shared in *Encuentro and Mission*; it reiterates the main themes of the prior *Encuentros,* including the inter-relatedness of Latino culture and faith; the need for a *conjunto pastoral* (a combined effort between Hispanic ministry and all other Church offices to serve Latinos); and more Latino representation in leadership.

As with *The Hispanic Presence*, *Encuentro and Mission* marks some tonal shifts that bely the fact Latinos are still not fully integrated into the U.S. Church structure. This includes comments about how Latinos themselves must take on more responsibility for leadership – which is fair *if* such comments were situated within a recognition that the Church itself has been historically inhospitable to that possibility, and that Latinos have

been requesting more opportunities for leadership formation since the first *Encuentro*. Warnings about the dangers of assimilation and the need to preserve Latino language, culture, and religious traditions are also watered down to describe a vague and general assertion that one's native culture should be retained (USCCB 2012, 10).

Unfortunately, there are other signs the bishops were advancing their own – rather than Latino – interests in this document. For one, in discussing how to promote more political engagement (which follows an ongoing recognition by Hispanic Ministry of the Catholic responsibility to participate politically), the bishops highlight pro-life issues, only, as an example of how Latinos should strengthen their dedication to social justice. This stands in stark contrast to the many issues listed in past *Encuentro* documents, and the first pastoral plan that all reference a preferential option for the poor as justification for emphasizing the socio-economic, legal, and discriminatory behaviors that negatively impact Latino communities.

The bishops relegate to the appendix the more concrete issues that face Latino communities, thereby avoiding making actionable recommendations that could affect positive change within the Church. These include an over-emphasis on rules and administrative tasks, rather than getting to know and building community with Latino Catholics. The lack of priests is an ongoing issue, as well as the lack of formation for priests and lay leaders from within the Latino community. As a result, while there had been a dramatic increase in the number of parishes offering Spanish mass, the numbers are still far below what is needed to meet demand. Further, Latino leaders are consistently relegated only to positions within the Latino community because they are not seen as authoritative in any other area. There is also expressed concern about shifting to a multi-cultural model in the USCCB. The Committee on Hispanic Affairs was downgraded to a sub-committee under the Office of Cultural Diversity in the Church in the year 2000. "In the experience of the participants, this model often dilutes the identity and vision of Hispanic ministry and those of other ethnic ministries" (USCCB 2012, 21). Further, those in Hispanic ministry assert that "the size and long-standing presence of the Hispanic population call for an assertive response by the Church to the challenge of ministering among Hispanic Catholics" (USCCB 2012, 21), yet this response is simply missing.

Something happened in the 13 years between the publication of the first National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry in 1987, and *Encuentro 2000* that either caused or allowed for the U.S. bishops to not only cease advocating for the celebration, support, and integration of Latinos into the full body of the Church, but they also seem to have stopped *recognizing* the important role Latinos play in the Church, and the realities of their lived experience. One assessment holds that "The U.S. Catholic Hispanic leadership is called to avail itself of the riches of the three Encuentros …. [but] just as the conciliar calls to action [Vatican II] endure after five decades and have yet to produce fully mature results, so the seeds sown by the three Encuentros have yet to come to full fruition" (Paredes 2014, xxi). More than seeds not coming to "full fruition," it seems that the bishops have regressed even in their awareness that seeds were planted in the first place.

2.5 V *Encuentro* and a New National Pastoral Plan

The V Encuentro marked a return to grass-roots mobilization and discussions that focused on the state of Latinos, and their needs via Hispanic ministry and the Church. As with the third *Encuentro*, organizers emphasized the role of the *Encuentro* process itself in forming leaders within the Latino community. In order to achieve this, organizers took close to two years to establish and train regional and diocesan offices to recruit, train, and lead local representatives

to go out and talk with community members about their needs, beliefs, and thoughts on how to shape and mold Hispanic Ministry for the better. These findings were then brought to the national meeting (held in 2018) for discussion.

From the outset, the V Encuentro documents reflect the increasing vagueness of the bishops' attention when it comes to Latinos and their needs, and continues the shifting of responsibility for Latinos' exclusion from the Church and existing Church leaders to Latinos themselves. This is evident from the list of objectives that were created to guide the four-year[4] *Encuentro* process. The first objective was to "call all Catholics in the United States to become authentic and joyful missionary disciples by giving witness to God's Love with a prophetic voice by encountering their Hispanic brothers and sisters in Christ, therefore embracing the cultural diversity in the North American Church (USCCB 2018, 13). The first objective of a process to improve Church treatment of Latinos places as its subject not Latinos, but non-Latinos within the broader Church. This is undeniably an important factor that impacts Latinos, but it is confusing, at best, why the first goal is not something akin to recognizing and responding to Latinos and their needs, or making space for Latinos within the Church as is their right and calling according to Catholic teaching.

The second objective was to "promote a vision of the Church in mission that develops effective pathways to invite, engage, and form Hispanic Catholic youth, young adults, families, and ecclesial movements to live out their baptismal vocation." It is unclear why the promotion of a *vision* of the Church that engages Latinos is the objective, rather than the *creation* or *implementation* of changes that would result in the greater engagement of Latinos. On one hand, this is an insightful goal, because Latinos are *not* widely seen as being "the Church" and so Church officials must work hard to dispel the myth that Latinos are outsiders, while promoting an image of Church that readily and easily includes them. On the other hand, this is a vision that was created at least fifty years prior during the first Encuentro (although many can and should rightly argue that the vision of Church that included Latinos was created much earlier), making the emphasis on awareness alone seem outdated and somewhat myopic.

The third objective echoes the first one, in inviting "all Catholic leaders to engage and accompany Hispanic Catholics, particularly the most vulnerable and those who find themselves in the periphery of the Church and society." The fourth and fifth objectives are the only ones that directly address Latinos, specifically, and both relate to the need to create more leadership and training opportunities, which has been a goal specified by the Encuentros since 1972.

Notably, there is no discussion about breaking down barriers to Latino inclusion, about the need to ensure Latinos have an equal place in the Church, particularly in an age of Shared Parishes (when more than one ethnic congregation worship in the same church), nor of recognizing, celebrating, and promoting Latinos' unique gifts and strengths. Most striking is that there is no mention about the Church itself actually

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[4] The V *Encuentro* was convened in 2013. Regional groups that worked to create the framework and communication systems for the regional outreach, identified the lead bishop and "anchoring institution" in each region, and formed *Equipos Regionales de Acompañamiento al V Encuentro* (ERAVE) to guide implementation were formed in 2014. Resource development and training of diocesan teams took place throughout 2016, and during 2017 Encuentros were carried out at local parishes and within dioceses. Regional *Encuentros* were held throughout the beginning of 2018, and the national *Encuentro* took place from Sept. 20-23, 2018.

changing or making structural adjustments to facilitate the advancement of Latino Catholic interests. Given that one main goal of

This is not to say that the V *Encuentro* was unsuccessful. To the contrary, *in spite of* the bishops and the (in)action of the Church, writ large, what the V *Encuentro* unambiguously demonstrates is that when given the opportunity, space, and power to engage, Latinos have astounding success. It was estimated that 90% of dioceses participated in the *Encuentro* process, trained over 30,000 leaders (many who were young adults), and that Hispanic ministry grew in size and/or personnel in more than 50 dioceses, ministry organizations, Catholic schools and universities, and other ministerial organizations (USCCB 2019, 27). In fifty years of Hispanic Ministry and consultation with Latinos about what they need to be more integrated into the Church, one constant answer has been: make space for Latinos in leadership positions, offer training and formation, and give them power to act. The V *Encuentro* did exactly that and had a level of success that is not recognized here nor celebrated to the degree that it should be.

2.6 National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry 2023

The bishops updated the Church's national pastoral plan for Hispanic ministry based on the findings of the V *Encuentro*, and it was released in June of 2023. This new plan offers a clear outline for creating diocesan plans for Hispanic ministry with some concrete recommendations, such as ensuring Hispanic Ministers have direct access to the bishop; a dedicated budget; and a *pastoral de conjunto* among various diocesan offices. The Plan also outlines several considerations, such as needing to assess the reality of the Latino community in each area, evaluating how well a diocese's resources are being allocated, and the need for leadership formation. However, overall, the document also soft pedals a lot of the recommendations from the V *Encuentro,* and in contrast to the prior documents, is almost completely lacking a recognition of the responsibility of the Church itself for 1) advocating for the improvement of conditions, both socially and politically among Latinos, and 2) for creating the systems of inequality *within the Church* that have created many of the problems that we now see among Latinos Catholics today. This includes the lack of lay leadership, the risk of losing Latinos to other religions, and the unwillingness of those leading other departments to participate in the advocated *pastoral de conjunto*. Further, the language of this plan discusses issues with multiculturalism and diversity in the Church, broadly speaking, sometimes to the detriment of making a clear statement about what needs to happen within Hispanic ministry to better serve Hispanics/Latinos – which is the point of this document.

At this point, after five *Encuentros* (with *Encuentro* 2000 dedicated to the topic of broad diversity rather than assessing the needs of Latinos in the Church) and fifty years of effort to raise awareness about the growing Latino presence, their unique cultural expression and gifts, their social, political, and religious needs, and the barriers Latinos experience to full integration into the Church, it is difficult to believe that the failure to call out – let alone address – the explicit issues facing the Latino community is anything but deliberate.

In no place could this point be clearer than in the bishops' discussion of Shared Parishes - where two or more cultural groups share the same parish – which they describe in near-wholly positive terms. Per the bishops, shared parishes lead to "healthy interaction among different racial, ethnic, and cultural groups in a spirit of communion." However, they acknowledge that the shared parish model can lead to difficulties for the *pastoral leaders* (not the congregants) and

note that such parishes "will undoubtedly have an impact on Hispanic/Latino ministry." These comments are in direct contradistinction to the widely known reality that shared parishes often result in an inequitable distribution of resources for Latino congregations who, even when they constitute a larger congregation size, are often relegated to holding masses at off-hours, have less money to pay for deacons and ministers, are often ignored or given little attention by pastors and priests, and suffer from multitude microaggressions from the dominant congregation (see Hoover 2014).

The closest the pastoral plan comes to recognizing this reality is by saying "even within the church, racism, xenophobia, discrimination, and exclusion continue to be experienced by so many of our Hispanic/Latino brothers and sisters and other racial, ethnic, and cultural groups" (USCCB 2023). The solution offered by the bishops is leadership training – specifically including our Hispanic/Latino leaders – on how to "navigate the complexity and diversity of all races, ethnicities, and cultures as well as to advocate on behalf of equity and racial justice" (USCCB 2023). Such a watered-down acknowledgement of the widespread and ongoing discrimination that takes place within the Church is irresponsible within the context of a document that must address those realities head-on in order to fulfill its directive to serve and integrate Latinos. Further, the bishops' response in suggesting "training" about "navigating diversity" is a shameful non-response to the profound, endemic problem of bias. At best, it is a willfully ignorant, superficial rejoinder to a large-scale problem, perhaps with the intention of being able to say "at least we are doing something." At worst, it is an intentional effort to preclude taking responsibility for the deep-seated issues that the bishops themselves must contend with if they truly wish to address the barriers Latinos face to their full integration and proper valuation in the Catholic Church.

A more general critique of this pastoral plan is in its blandness. This, however, is a problem that besets the Church, broadly speaking, not just in its response to Latinos. However, within the context of a plan to recruit, include, and celebrate Latinos – a population long noted for their strong religio-cultural traditions and dynamic worship practices – the utter banality of the bishops' language is striking. "Part II: Pastoral Guidelines for Hispanic/Latino Ministry" consists mostly of some biblical stories, principles from Pope Francis, and overly general comments on mission, faith, and pastoral responsibility without more than a superficial reference to Latinos and their needs. There are a few clear passages, but overall, this section fails to say anything of real substance to connect a vision of pastoral responsibility or engagement with Hispanic ministry, specifically. The same can be said for "Section IV: Pastoral Priorities," where most segments offer vague lists of principles without any specific recommendations for how they can and should be applied within Latino communities.

Important to this conversation is the fact that the full body of documents on Latinos and Hispanic Ministry consistently reference the fear that Latinos will leave the Church for other denominations, and that many (youth and adults alike) are not engaging with the Church in a meaningful way. Later documents emphasize the need for missionary engagement where all (laity in particular) work to evangelize and invite those "at the peripheries" into the Church body. Yet there is no recognition that the way Church officials talk, the language they use, and their approach to celebrating Catholicism may not be inspiring to Latinos who respond and enjoy a vibrant faith that, the bishops repeatedly acknowledge, is *expressed in a culturally distinct way*. So then, it is somewhat

ironic that the bishops write about needing to appreciate Latinos' unique cultural gifts and religious practices using a language style that is culturally entrenched in White American Catholicism. In other words, the bishops are violating the very practice of celebration and inclusion that they claim to advocate by writing a plan for Hispanic ministry in a way that fails to celebrate and include the language, culture, and preferences of Latino Catholics.

The last puzzling aspect of the 2023 Pastoral Plan is its failure to recognize the success that was the V *Encuentro*. Yes, the bishops acknowledge that it happened and that it was a success. Yet they do not mention that the V *Encuentro* was wildly successful in fulfilling Latinos ongoing request for programs to recruit and train new leaders from within their communities. Not only were new leaders formed, but those leaders brought in and engaged many Latinos who were outside of the Church, reported loving doing the work of Evangelization, and specifically requested more opportunities for their work to continue. Instead of building on this success and recommending ways for these leaders to continue working in their communities, the 2023 pastoral plan is vague, mentions training catechists in Spanish, and offers a generalized 16-point list of components that "have been identified as key for successful formation programs" – of which only one specifically references the needs of Hispanic/Latino communities. There is no discussion of the V *Encuentro* beyond a recognition that religious leaders need to be "interculturally competent" to address Latino communities' needs.

This omission is bewildering, except for the fact that it is couched within a document that fails to recognize that a primary reason for the lack of Latino leadership within the Church is because the Church has continued to fail to provide or even simply make space for these opportunities to Latinos on a broad scale.

2.7 Summarizing the findings of the Church's documents on Hispanic Ministry

One would hope that the bishops' official documents would demonstrate continued progress in the celebration Latino culture and contributions, development of programs to address their specific needs, and the production of tangible outcomes that contribute to Latino empowerment as full members of the Church body. Instead, what comes across is a regression in perspective that effectively works to marginalize the Latino population, by not only failing to recognize the full reality of Latino experience, but also in removing responsibility from the Church for advocating for Latino integration and advancement. This is not to say there has been no progress; indeed, a common theme throughout the history of Hispanic ministry is a consistent recognition that conditions are improving – but there is still much to be done. Yet it bears noting – and making it quite explicit - that if the bishops had taken seriously the recommendations they themselves have made since the 1980s, then conditions for Latinos within the Church would be significantly improved compared to what they are today.

3 USCCB NEWS RELEASES AND LATINO PRIORITIZATION

While it is important to read and assess the bishops' documents to gain a clear view of their attitude towards Latinos and their approach to supporting Hispanic ministry, the reality is that the vast majority of U.S. Catholics will never read any of these documents. Yet the inclusion of Latinos into the Church rests upon the ability of Church leaders to normalize the Latino presence in churches, a necessary first step that must happen before one can expect full inclusion. The easiest way to do this is to talk about them. Further, this is a commonsense metric

for determining the Church's priorities, because we talk most about the things we care about, particularly the people or causes we want to bring attention to. So then, it is logical to presume that if the Church cared about increasing the place of Latinos in the Church and the services provided to them, it would advertise this. Secondly, if the Church were active in its agenda to serve and include Latinos, it would mention those services as a matter of course – they would be part of their frequent events that would merit mentioning.

Further, almost all of the documents discussed above make some mention of the Church's use of media to bring attention to the needs of Latinos and to advance their cause. The first two *Encuentro* documents push for the church to use media for drawing attention to Latinos. The bishops echo this sentiment in their 1983 pastoral letter, discussing "the need for greater efforts toward planned and systematic programming and regular coverage of issues relevant to the Hispanic community" (NCCB 1983, 19). The III *Encuentro* documents mention that "social communications media are seldom used to help the people of the United States grow in awareness of these situation" (USCC 1986, p10), a pattern they recommend the bishops change. This sentiment had not dissipated by the time of the V *Encuentro*, as it was recommended in the inter-regional discussions that the Church "use social media to enhance communication for evangelization" (2019, 74).

Even before the explosion of social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, or Tik Tok, the USCCB has had a national platform from which to publicize topics and issues that the bishops deem to be important to the Church. Since the mid-1990s the USCCB has had its own "newsroom" located on the USCCB website where the conference publishes announcements about significant goings-on within the Church. The USCCB newsroom has no space constraints, being digital, and the virtual nature also allows for news items to be published as they come, rather than needing to be held for a particular date or time, as happens with print publications. More importantly, the USCCB does not depend on sponsorship or paid subscriptions to keep running. This means the news content is exclusively driven by the bishops' priorities, rather than by the interests of a readership base or advertisers, providing an honest assessment of the bishops' priorities. As such, if the bishops prioritize Latinos in the Church and are working on the basic step of raising awareness around the existence and needs of the Latino community within the larger Church population, we should expect to find frequent mention of Latinos, Hispanic Ministry, Latino needs, and simple reporting about events put on by Latino communities within the Church.

To determine if this was the case, I searched all newsroom items from 2010 through 2023[5] looking for any mention of Latinos, Hispanics, the Spanish language, or culturally specific events (such as Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations or the *Encuentros*). I specifically looked for mentions of the V *Encuentro*, which was a significant event for the entire Church that required a great deal of publicity to recruit participation at the local as well as diocesan levels. One would also expect to find reports

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[5] One downside of relying on a website for information is that the available information and documentation can change over time. For example, when the USCCB changed its website in 2016 the newsroom items from 1994-2010 became unavailable. The weblinks that I had previously collected were invalid, and I was told I would have to go to the physical archives at Catholic University to access them. While this has since been changed when the website was again updated, and all news items from 1994/1997 on appear to be available, I retain my analysis from 2010-2023 with the justification that the newsroom was used more sparingly prior to 2010. The volume of news items increased in 2010, and remains at a near steady rate of ~200 news items per year, with 2023 being the current exception.

about the findings of the *Encuentro,* or at the very least announcements that the findings of the V *Encuentro* had been published for public consumption. Further, the new National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry was published in June of 2023 - a significant event since the last pastoral plan was published more than 35 years ago in 1987. This is an accomplishment should be celebrated, and also announced in order to encourage more of the faithful to look for this resource to use in their local communities.

Since I am arguing that frequency is a sign of prioritization, I also measured how often the USCCB publishes news items on other topics to offer some context. I looked for any mention of racial diversity, including issues relating to African American/Black, Asian/Asian-Americans, other ethno-racial communities and events in the U.S., or any discussion of race and diversity, writ large. I also tracked how often the USCCB site discussed the sexual abuse scandal (which is a significant and ongoing issue); "family values" issues such as abortion, homosexuality (including sexual identity and same-sex marriage), and "religious freedom" (which is a term that almost exclusively is used to discuss the right of Catholic organizations to refuse access to contraceptives and/or abortions); and politics, which includes USCCB calls for policy changes as well as voter mobilization efforts. All tallies are summarized in the table below.

First, in answer to the question: does the USCCB prioritizes Latinos by using its platform to address and raise awareness of Hispanic ministry, Latino concerns, or events and celebrations within the community? I found that the answer is a clear "no." Out of 2976 news items published in fourteen years, the USCCB site mentions Latinos and issues concerning Latinos (broadly defined) a total of 16 times. That constitutes approximately one half of one percent of all news items. As I mentioned above, this time period covers the V *Encuentro*, including its convocation, the recruiting of leaders and participants, the organizing of regional, diocesan, and local meetings, in addition to the national event itself. In spite of the fact that the *Encuentro* itself was big news, and the USCCB news site offered a perfect place to raise awareness and encourage participation, there was only one mention of the *Encuentro* per year from 2015-2017; in 2018 there are three mentions of the *Encuentro*, each of which consisted of announcing that it was happening, but there was no summary, invitation, or celebration of the *Encuentro* before, during, or after the fact.

Another banner event missing from USCCB headlines is the election in 2019 of Archbishop José Horacio Gómez as president of the USCCB - the first Latino ever to hold that post. This is an important milestone for Latinos in the U.S., generally speaking, but specifically for Latino Catholics who – via the *Encuentros* over the past fifty years have been calling for more representation in Church leadership. In spite of these facts there is no mention of the Archbishop's historic appointment in the USCCB's new releases. The relevant news item is simply titled: "U.S. Bishops Vote for USCCB President and Vice President at Annual General Assembly in Baltimore," and the brief article reports on the number of votes he received and the procedure for electing the president with no discussion of its significance for the Latino community, or the Church as a whole.[6]

Because of the emphasis placed on representation, one might expect that the first Latino president would usher in an epoch of raised awareness of Latino Catholics and their needs, but this does not seem to be the case. In the years of Archbishop Gomez's tenure as USCCB president, there are no mentions of Latinos or Hispanic ministry at all. Continuing the

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[6] Archbishop Gomez is no longer president; Most Reverend Timothy P. Broglio was elected to the post in 2022.

conference's trend of ignoring major events in the Latino community, the new National Pastoral Plan for Hispanic Ministry *also* failed to earn even a passing mention from the newsroom.

How do these findings compare to the rate at which the USCCB publicizes other issues? Issues of race and diversity were discussed even less frequently than Latinos, with only ten mentions in fourteen years, and zero mentions in the last two years. The sexual abuse scandal is mentioned more often, though still not with much frequency: there were only 40 mentions in all recorded news releases.

In comparison, the USCCB newsroom published items concerned "family values" a total of 596 times in 14 years – a 37-fold increase over the number of items concerning Latinos and Hispanic ministry and constituting 27.98% of all news items. The topic of politics – a broad category that includes the conference's position on any political issue, any exhortation to the public regarding political engagement from voting to protests, and any statements made or commentary given on the preferred direction of public policy and governmental action – fails to reach the same level of coverage that is given to the topic of sexual morality with 517 news items, constituting 24.27% of all news releases. For more context, the only topic that exceeds family values in the newsroom has to do with liturgical and theological concerns, which includes announcements about the observance of holy days, changes to the language or wording of a prayer, or a summary of papal teachings or speeches. Even then, this category only amounts to 30% of the news releases.

What this tells us is that the USCCB is not reluctant to use its platform to draw attention to issues it deems important. Unfortunately, those important issues do not appear to include the celebration, valuation, or empowerment of Latinos.

Table 1: USCCB News Releases Tally by Category

Year	Latino/Hispanic	Race/Diversity	Sexual Abuse	Family Values	Politics	Total
2010	2	0	5	2	2	158
2011	2	1	5	39	12	244
2012	0	1	2	44	20	210
2013	0	2	2	51	20	234
2014	2	2	1	12	47	188
2015	1	1	1	16	36	154
2016	1	0	4	15	26	171
2017	1	0	5	7	82	245
2018	3	2	5	9	35	205
2019	1	4	4	10	52	216
2020	1	2	2	11	48	208
2021	0	2	1	5	71	195
2022	0	0	0	7	46	159
2023	2	0	3	23	20	389

Total count	16	10	40	596	517	2976
Total %	0.54%	0.34%	1.34%	27.98%	24.27%	

4. CONCLUSION

The Catholic Church is currently in a watershed moment – it is hemorrhaging members, closing parishes, and fighting what seems to be a losing battle against public sentiment in part due to the ongoing sexual abuse scandal. Latinos have long represented a bright counterpoint to the bleak forecast for the Church, representing 40% of all American Catholics, 71% of all growth since 1960, and possessing a vibrant, culturally oriented faith expression that many have expected to help revitalize the waning American Catholic community. Yet it has long been recognized that in order for Latinos to have a positive effect, they must be made *at home* within the Church, which includes their integration as full members from the parishes up to the bishops' conference, among congregations as well as within leadership. The *Encuentros* were originally held as a mechanism for determining how the Church could bring about this integration given the barriers Latinos have long experienced to their full inclusion in the Church.

Recommendations coming out of the *Encuentros* have consistently advocated for Latino empowerment, including the creation of dedicated space for community development (the basic ecclesial communities), leadership formation programs, and *pastoral conjuntos*, ensuring that all offices of the Church are dedicated to serving Latinos, and that Latinos themselves also have access to the resources and leadership positions in those offices as well. Success in these endeavors requires a recognition of the discrimination Latinos face – both within the Church and larger society, as well as an active response from the Church to work to rectify the problems that both cause and result from said discrimination. True service and full integration of Latinos can only result when the structures that cause their marginalization are changed. The original series of bishops' documents (up through the 1987 national pastoral plan for Hispanic ministry) readily acknowledge this reality, and promote solutions to address both beliefs as well as systems within the Church that needed changing.

Instead of empowerment, the documents demonstrate a marked shift in tone at the beginning of the 21st century when the bishops cease to acknowledge the Church's role in the ostracization of Latinos and weaken their presented understanding of the effects of ongoing discrimination and bias. Instead, Latinos are charged with "taking more responsibility" to evangelize, help their communities, or take on leadership roles – all of which they have with astounding success once they were given the opportunity to do so. Yet this success was not recognized by the bishops, neither in their official statements, nor in their news releases that all but ignore the presence of Latinos in the Church.

One might ask why this matters. There is the question of how aware the public is of the bishops' statements or news releases, making the lack of Latino mentions a non-issue. Yet one of the basic signs of inequality is restricting certain groups' access to available resources at all levels. This includes using the public platform of the national Church body to advertise and advocate for the needs and concerns of the Latino community. Doing so has the power to set the agenda of the national Church body by drawing attention to the fact that Latinos are a growing population within the Church, normalizing acceptance of Latinos and their various cultural religious practices, and providing concrete resources to assist mixed or shared parishes in

becoming unified congregations. Yet this is not happening, and the Church is not currently dedicating itself to taking concrete actions advocating for improved political, social, educational, or economic conditions for Latinos, particularly not in the way it is actively working on topics such as abortion and same-sex marriage. While the Church currently has the tools to help engage and empower the Latino community, instead it appears it is allowing the continuation of their marginalization.

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