

# Understanding Reactions to Affirmative Action on Tik Tok

## Introduction

In an era marked by rapid technological advances and unprecedented global connectivity, the influence of digital platforms on political discourse, especially amongst younger generations, cannot be understated. Central to this discourse is the power of emotions, which not only express but also maintain power across societies. Platforms such as TikTok have emerged as powerful tools for facilitating emotional connections, forging culture-specific affective communities, and shaping public opinion on contentious issues.

One such pressing topic is affirmative action—a policy that, while originally designed to improve prospects for African Americans in the United States (U.S.), has expanded over the decades to encompass other minorities and women. Its history, marked by legal challenges, adaptations, and varying global interpretations, underscores the multifaceted nature of addressing historical injustices. In the midst of these evolving conversations, recent court cases challenging race-based admissions in education have thrust affirmative action back into the limelight.

This research seeks to harness the power of TikTok—a platform embraced by GenZ—to delve into the public's sentiments, drawing insights from a cross-sectional study of the top-20-liked videos tagged with #affirmativeaction. Through the netnography framework, we explore the narratives and themes expressed, aiming to understand not only the general grievances of the younger generation but also the broader implications of such discourse on the future of affirmative action, education, and employment opportunities. This paper unpacks these findings, emphasizing the consequential role of emotions and digital platforms in shaping modern societal debates.

## Background

### **Political Emotions**

Emotions constitute a site where power is expressed but also maintained. Political power is most often sustained by oppressive, manipulative, exploitative, and abusive emotional norms. For instance, in a Tamil family, pinches and slaps express affection, food may be forced down the throats of the sick, and a mother's loving gaze is considered dangerous to the child. And in Ilongot families, fathers used to take their sons on head-hunting raids to enhance their anger and consequently perceived power. To analyze these myriad expressions of emotion, most anthropologists implement "constructionism." This theory suggests that emotions are socially constructed; the individuals are the site, not the source, of emotional events, and the learned feelings that the individuals express are compliant with the norms, ideals, and structure of authority of their social order. While this delineates a method of combating the Western assumptions that emotions are natural and psychological rather than cultural, it also renders the ethnographer incapable of making political judgments about non-western communities. Thus, to build a foundation for political judgment not vacuously Eurocentric, it becomes necessary to acknowledge the importance of management of emotions, allow political distinctions among management styles on the basis of a concept of emotional liberty, and permit the narration of significant historical shifts in these styles (Reddy, 1999).

Two normative perspectives have emerged regarding the role of emotion in political judgment. The first perspective, advocated by Plato and the Stoic school, suggests that emotion should be entirely removed from political decision-making. The second perspective, presented in the Federalist papers, acknowledges that emotions cannot be eradicated but should be controlled and limited through wise institutional structures. This allows for the coexistence of emotion and reason, with reason maintaining ultimate control. Freud's formulation posits that reason can be in executive control for individuals who are properly socialized, while emotions

drive action. The detrimental impacts of emotions can be mitigated by shielding passion from civic decisions.

A third formulation, associated with Aristotle, presents a more harmonious and productive relationship between reason and emotion. It suggests that appropriate emotions can strengthen accurate and just beliefs, leading to beneficial action and response in civic life. In contrast, the Scotch enlightenment formulation reverses the traditional view, positioning emotion as the foundation of human action and reason in a subordinate role. According to this perspective, reason depends on emotion for motivation and serves as a tool for critical analysis and public deliberation. Recent work in philosophy and neuroscience supports the idea that reason relies on emotion for motivation and cannot independently compel action. Valence theories propose that emotions can be understood based on a single bipolar dimension of evaluation, spanning from positive (approach) to negative (avoidance) (Marcus, 2003).

### **Mediatized Emotion and Digital Affect Cultures**

Mediatization refers to the infiltration of media into various aspects of society, including emotions. In today's digital world, online spaces have emerged where emotions are shared and experienced collectively. These spaces, facilitated by digital platforms, create globally emergent atmospheres of emotional and cultural belonging through emotional alignment, since emotions are influenced by the cultural context in which they occur. Digital affect cultures, then, are specific communities that form online, where members engage in shared emotional practices such as memorializing a person who has passed away. These cultures traverse digital terrains and give rise to pockets of culture-specific affective communities.

As a result of these digital affect cultures, mediatized emotion in relation to various events and phenomena, such as politics, terrorist attacks, natural disasters, and celebrity deaths, become prevalent. Mediatized emotion involves multimodal communication, connecting users through elements like emojis, symbols, and profile pictures. Digital memorial culture

serves as an illustrative example, showcasing the cultural negotiation of public grief and the diverse meanings constructed within temporary memorials. At the micro level, media is used for personal ends, with emotions directed inward. The meso level involves emotionally aligned groups coming together around specific themes. At the macro level, globalized emotional flows emerge, such as the global commemoration of celebrity deaths. The collective construction and interpretation of emotions thus occur through narratives and imagery in the digital realm. Social reality becomes an evolving assemblage of diverse accounts, mirroring the collective nature of emotions and the symbolic dimension of emotion production and interpretation.

Core concepts characterizing digital affect culture include discourse, participation guided by emotional interaction chains, and established solidarity symbols. Emotional discourses can construct notions of the “other” in various ways, evoking reassurance and validation in a “similar other” or empathetic alignment with a “distant, suffering other”. Alignment is central to emotional identification, though it can also lead to disalignment and the polarization of emotions. In this way, emotions serve as direct relational resources that bring people together across borders. Global flows of emotion condense into pockets of cultural, social, and ideological intelligibility, where certain emotions make sense while others may not (Döveling et al., 2018).

This exploration of digital affect cultures provides a conceptual framework for understanding the influence of media on emotions and the significance of analyzing emotions expressed on social media platforms, like Tik Tok, in the context of communication and politics.

## **TikTok**

In the realm of social media, few platforms have experienced a meteoric rise as TikTok has. Launched internationally in 2016, TikTok, originally known as Douyin in its homeland China, has become a global sensation, particularly among the younger generation. The platform's primary audience (60% of the U.S. audience), often categorized as GenZ, ranges from 16 to 24 year olds, making it a significant digital space for understanding the perspectives, behaviors, and

reactions of this generation to global and local events (Admin, 2023). Beyond GenZ, as Gen Alpha steps into the social media landscape, exposure to media is becoming younger and younger. This means that all phenomena measured for GenZ are magnified for this even younger audience. With current events such as the 2023 Writers Guild of America strike, short-form content on Tik Tok becomes an even larger part of this majority-minority population's media consumption (Helmore, 2023).

TikTok's spectrum of content is vast, encompassing everything from dance challenges and comedic sketches to political discourses and educational graphics. The platform is also constantly evolving, rolling out new features regularly and rapidly. Tik Tok's unique algorithm, which became a focal point of the company's June 2023 court case, operates by meticulously analyzing user behaviors, video metadata, and account specifics to craft a tailor-made "For You Page" (FYP) for each user. This personalized approach ensures that users are continually exposed to content that resonates with their preferences, leading to higher engagement rates because of an emotional connection that is made between the creator and the user (Hern, 2022).

While other social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram might initially seem like viable platforms to conduct this study on, their algorithms present certain limitations. These platforms, unlike TikTok, do not offer the same granularity in terms of user engagement metrics and content virality. Furthermore, TikTok's recent undeniable influence on pivotal global events, such as its instrumental role in disseminating views on COVID-19 and mobilizing attendance for political events, accentuates its centrality in the current digital zeitgeist (Ostrovsky, 2020; Lorenz, 2020).

### **History of Affirmative Action**

Affirmative action, a policy designed to redress historical injustices by enhancing opportunities for historically marginalized groups, especially in domains like education and employment, has

been a topic of intense international debate, especially in the United States, for several decades. It originated during President Lyndon Johnson's tenure in the 1960s, initially aiming to improve prospects for African Americans. Over time, it expanded to include other minorities and women, and institutions, including colleges, started considering race, gender, and other factors for admissions.

However, from the late 1970s and on, affirmative action began to face legal challenges, alleging “reverse discrimination.” In the landmark case, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978), the Supreme Court ruled against specific racial quotas but permitted race to be one of the deciding factors in admissions. Still, the court made further restrictions on race-based affirmative action from 1989 onwards. In 1996, California's Proposition 209, and similar measures in other states, limited or prohibited affirmative action.

The Supreme Court rulings in the early 2000s confirmed the constitutionality of affirmative action but with conditions. In 2022, challenges were made to a prior ruling in *Grutter v. Bollinger* which had upheld affirmative action. But by June 2023, the Supreme Court declared that affirmative action practices at Harvard and the University of North Carolina violated the equal protection clause, effectively signaling the end of race-based affirmative action in college admissions in the U.S. (Britannica, 2023).

Beyond the U.S., though, affirmative action has taken on various other identities, such as in India as “compensatory discrimination”, to offset the lasting legacy of the caste system (Chandola, 1992). In 1921, Mysore was the first city in India to introduce a system of reserved seats in public service and higher education for groups like the "untouchables", who are placed at the lowest rank in the Hindu caste system (Roychowdhury, 2023). Traditionally, those born into this social group faced restrictions in employment and experienced extreme segregation, akin to the experience of people of color in the U.S. Since 1921, India has made more strides towards this idea of compensatory discrimination, which many in the U.S. may now misappropriate as a form of “reverse discrimination”. In 1949, Article 17 was adopted in the

Indian Constitution to completely abolish untouchability and allow for quotas. Still, the social effects of this caste system remain despite its inherent illegality, hence the continued use of affirmative action in the country (Chandola, 1992).

While the U.S. first introduced affirmative action to address discrimination against minority groups and women, India's affirmative action was designed to combat discrimination against castes. Despite these differences, there are striking similarities in the histories of discrimination faced by people of color in the U.S. and “untouchables” in India.

Though India continues its use of affirmative action in higher education and the workforce, this is not the first time Americans have experienced the dissolution of race-based admissions. In 1996, the state of California voted to ban race-based admission, and immediately saw the consequences. Following the ban, diversity plummeted at many of the University of California (UC) schools which once saw a student population representative of the region's high school graduating class. Enrollment of Black and Latino students at UCLA and UC Berkeley fell by 40% for the Class of 1998 and high-performing minority students were subsequently discouraged from applying to these schools where they were underrepresented. To mitigate the effects of a race-neutral admissions policy, the UC system has spent more than a half-billion dollars on various outreach programs to draw in a more diverse student body (Bowman, 2023). Though, 27 years after the policy went into effect, the state is still grappling with strategies to create a representative student body. For example, though from 2002 to 2022, the percentage of undergraduate Latino students enrolled in the UCs has increased from 13% to 25%, Latinos made up 55.7% of the state's high school seniors in 2022 (Burke, 2023).

California has also been the first state to acknowledge that the U.S. faces strikingly similar caste-based discrimination as India does. As of September 2023, the state's senate approved SB-403, which adds caste to the list of characteristics protected by the Fair Employment and Housing Act, the Unruh Civil Rights Act, and the California Education Code. If signed, this policy will go into effect on the first day of 2024 (Thompson, 2023).

Given the historical weight and contemporary relevance of affirmative action, the recent court case emerges as a pivotal moment in the topic's ongoing discourse. Analyzing emotions through shared reactions, especially on influential platforms for younger generations like TikTok, offers invaluable insights into the collective psyche of a generation poised to influence the nation's future trajectory.

### **The Court Case**

The Supreme Court of the United States examined the case titled "STUDENTS FOR FAIR ADMISSIONS, INC. v. PRESIDENT AND FELLOWS OF HARVARD COLLEGE," which centered on the legality of race-based admissions systems employed by Harvard College and the University of North Carolina (UNC).

Both Harvard and UNC, two of the nation's oldest institutions of higher education, employ a highly selective admissions process. The specific component under scrutiny is the consideration of an applicant's race as a significant factor in the school's admissions decision. For example, at Harvard, each application undergoes an initial screening where a "first reader" assigns scores in various categories, including an "overall" category that takes into account the applicant's race. The aim of this process, as described, is to ensure the school does not experience a significant drop in minority admissions from one class to the next. UNC's admissions process involves a similar initial review where the applicant's race acts as a contributing factor to their evaluation.

The case emerged when the Students for Fair Admissions (SFFA), a nonprofit organization, initiated separate lawsuits against Harvard and UNC. SFFA contended that the institutions' race-based admissions programs were in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. While both programs were initially deemed permissible under the Equal Protection Clause in 1868, this finding was subsequently challenged. Delving into the history and interpretation of the Equal Protection



Clause, the Court emphasized its foundational commitment to eradicating all forms of government-imposed racial discrimination. Concluding the examination, the Supreme Court determined that the admissions programs of both Harvard and UNC contravene the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment, emphasizing that any state action based on race must undergo strict scrutiny and must, at some point, conclude (Students For Fair Admissions, 2023).

## Methods

The purpose of this cross-sectional study is to describe TikTok content with the hashtag “affirmativeaction” (#affirmativeaction) and investigate users’ reactions to the 2023 court case. The descriptive content analysis thus centered on 20 videos posted under the hashtag “affirmativeaction” on TikTok. The top-20-liked videos that included the hashtag #affirmativeaction were analyzed and coded for the presence of content categories. Additionally, the top 20 comments to each video were viewed and coded for with sentiment analysis to determine the main sentiment of the comment out of three options: positive, neutral, or negative. This study did not require research ethics approval because all TikTok data, including comments, was posted publicly with no expectation of privacy.

To conduct the descriptive content analysis, the qualitative data analysis platform Atlas.ti was utilized. In outlining this study, a qualitative analysis was determined to be more representative of the content and context of the videos and TikTok users compared to a solely quantitative, statistical analysis of the platform. In conducting this exploratory research, we allowed the content found in the video transcripts to dictate the types of themes and codes that were used, enabling the comprehensive narratives presented in the videos to remain weaved in our analysis of them. Instead of going in with a set codebook, the codebook was created along the way. In this way, the content and context remain inextricable from each other, ensuring as accurate research and analysis as possible. While many frameworks were analyzed for their relevance and utility for this study, a netnography was chosen as the most pertinent.

### **Netnography**

Netnography, a framework devised by Robert Kozinet in 1998, is rooted in consumer research and ethnography. But unlike traditional ethnography, netnography is more structured and has thus gained popularity across various academic fields, including management, business, education, health, geography, journalism, sport, and tourism. While netnography originates from

ethnography, it has been adopted by researchers with diverse philosophical views, ranging from interpretivist to positivist and critical realist perspectives. Kozient's 2015 book *Netnography: Redefined* distinguishes netnography from ethnography epistemologically, framing it within the context of techno-cultural social interactions.

In terms of methodology, netnography employs non-participant observation in online communities, reflexive field notes similar to ethnography, and occasionally online surveys. It also utilizes digital trace data, such as retweets, likes, and hyperlinks. Kozinet identifies three primary data types for netnographic studies: archival data, data co-created through researcher interactions, and data from reflexive non-observation or researcher participant observation. For analysis, netnography incorporates various methods, including thick narrative and descriptive analysis, social network analysis, simple descriptive statistics, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, and qualitative textual and content analysis. For the present study, a thick narrative analysis was completed because of the strategy's focus on interpreting experiences in the form of stories that consider the broader context in which it is told. (Jones, 2020).

## **Data Collection**

In choosing to use TikTok as the primary social media platform on which this study was conducted, a systematic elimination of many other popular platforms was done. We initially hoped to conduct research on Twitter because of its API that has become familiar to many digital researchers in the past few years. However, because of the recent transition of ownership to Elon Musk and the transition of Twitter to Musk's ideal social media platform, X, we were unable to utilize the traditional Twitter API or gain accurate information from the platform's natural algorithm. When used on different devices, top Tweets were displayed in different orders and Tweets were generally shown to users with arbitrary algorithms that we were unable to clarify. We underwent a similar experience with the platform Instagram, which is owned by another media powerhouse, Meta. Lastly, we turned to TikTok because of its popularity amongst

the younger generation, but also because of its clear search filters on the platform. This meant that we were able to effectively filter for the top-liked videos at a given time, and the resulting videos were common amongst different users.

After collecting the top-20-liked videos under #affirmativeaction on August 1, we transcribed the videos into separate text documents. Three videos were excluded from this transcription process because they were solely visual videos with no audio, aside from music, to code for. These documents were then imported to the software Atlas.ti. After combing through all documents for any inaccuracies in transcription and to identify recurring general themes and subcodes, a codebook was created through inductive thematic analysis. The codebook was used to identify segments of transcripts that clearly convey an idea or theme, and to record possible quotations that can be used in weaving the narrative.

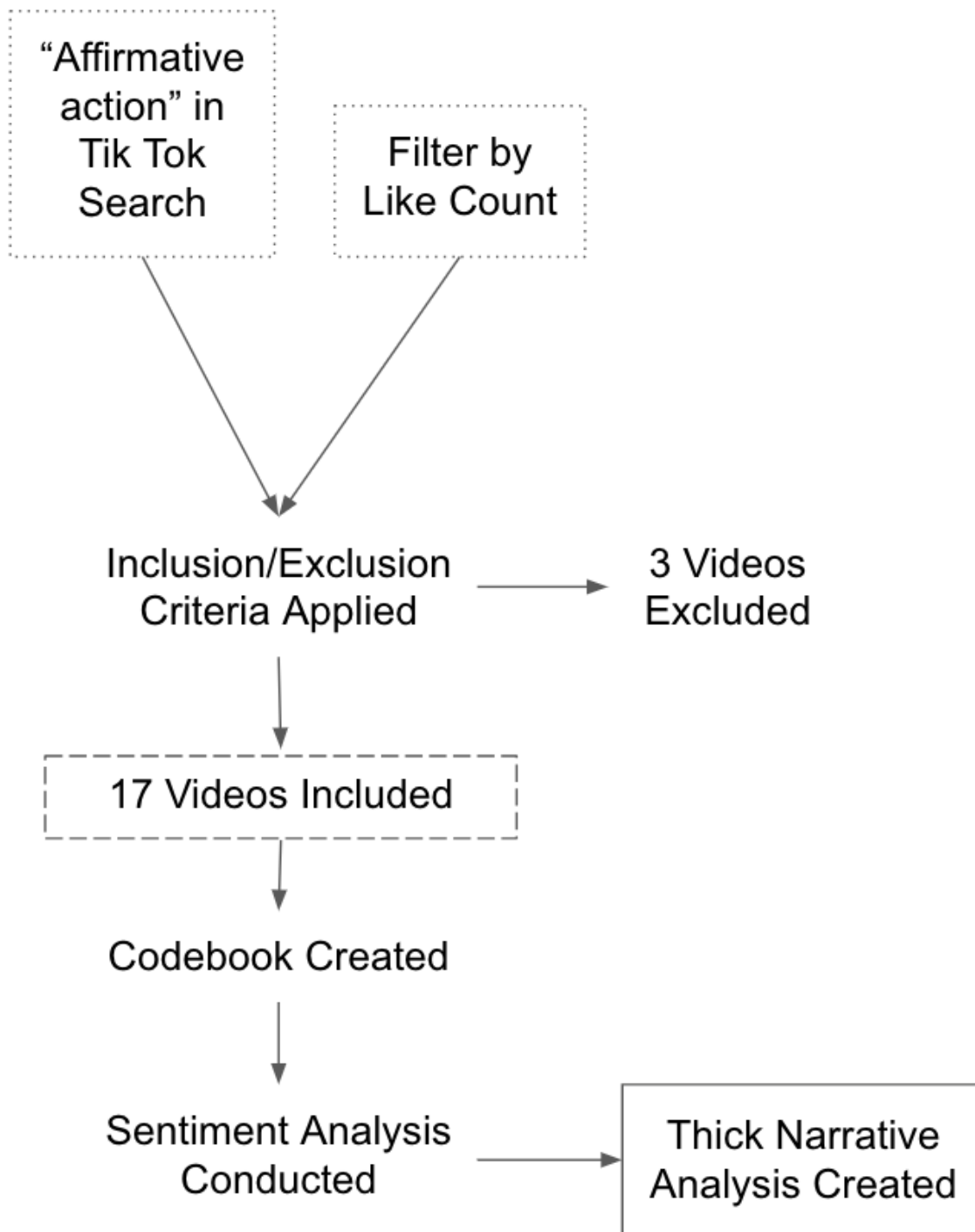


Fig. 1. Conceptual Model of the Procedure

## **Results**

The videos in our sample (n=20) received a combined 48,355,300 views; 5,171,700 likes; and 141,481 comments. The overall sentiment of the video transcripts was negative (n=12 where n=the number of videos). The overall sentiment of the comments was positive (n=10 where n=the number of comments). In response to the videos labeled with negative sentiment, 60% of all videos, 50% of the comment sections were positive, with 33% being negative.

Six themes emerged from the data analysis: (1) Racism, (2) Admissions Factors, (3) Diversity in Education, (4) Systemic Oppression, (5) The Legal System, and (6) Post-Grad Plans. The 3 most prevalent content areas found in the video transcripts were systemic oppression (n=46 where n=the number of transcript segments coded under the theme “systemic oppression”), admissions factors (n=45), and racism (n=39). See Table 1 for all of the subcodes. These themes reflect user’ experiences and personal narratives of racial trauma, and each one is described in detail in the following sections.

### **Theme 1: Racism**

Among the videos in this study, 39 quotes were extracted that fit under the umbrella of racism. The theme was then divided into four subthemes, “Race-blindness,” “Racial bias,” “Racial Division,” and “Reverse Racism.”

Six quotes articulated race-blindness, which refers to the ideology of ignoring racial differences when it comes to the enforcement of laws, regulations, and policies, as well as in daily interactions. The proponents of race-blindness argue that treating everyone the same, regardless of their racial or ethnic background, promotes equality and helps to combat racism. Others argue that race-blindness can overlook systemic racism and the unique challenges faced by individuals from marginalized racial and ethnic groups. In this way, ignoring racial differences may perpetuate existing racial disparities and hinder efforts to address racial injustice. Proponents of race-blindness on Tik Tok hope to achieve a so-called ultimate equality

by entirely ignoring race as an identifier. In the thought experiment recorded in @firebase's video, some participants argued that "discriminating based on race should always be wrong, whether you're discriminating against one group or another." Others added on; notably, one student attempted to use Dr. Martin Luther King's ideas to support their belief in race-blindness: "And I believe that it was African American leaders themselves when Martin Luther King said he wanted to be judged not on the color of his skin, but by the content of his character, his merit, his achievements." Another user, @megynkellyshow, quoted Chief Justice Roberts, who wrote, "eliminating racial discrimination means eliminating all of it."

34 quotes described racial bias, which is a general term that refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect someone's understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious or conscious manner with regard to race or ethnicity. Many users like @arinekim noted how ingrained racial bias is in the U.S. education system, saying that "it is found when people are applying for jobs—teachers, recruiters hold this implicit bias that Black students are not as capable as their white counterparts." Other users recognized that America's history of slavery and discrimination has persisted to the modern day, with students in @firebase's video saying, "because of slavery, because of past injustices, today we have a higher proportion of African-Americans who are in poverty, who face less opportunities than white people. And so because of slavery 200 years ago and because of Jim Crow and because of segregation, today we have injustice based on race." In addition to sharing what may be seen as objective fact, some users shared their own experiences, like @msnbc who said, "the minute I arrived from my majority black little town, Montbello, in Denver to Harvard, the first like week or two that I was in class, my presence was questioned by white people. I was in this big conference class where some white students stood up and said, 'those students, the black students, they're only here because of affirmative action.'"

The code racial division solicited five quotes. This code refers to the discord among individuals or groups based on racial or ethnic differences, which can manifest in various forms,

especially in the educational sphere. Lastly, three quotes were coded under reverse-racism, which describes acts of discrimination directed towards members of a historically dominant or majority racial group, particularly white individuals in Western contexts. Many argue that the term “reverse racism” is a misnomer because racism is a systemic issue, rooted in historical and structural imbalances of power that disproportionately benefit certain racial groups at the expense of others. In this view, isolated acts of prejudice against individuals from historically dominant racial groups do not equate to the systemic racism experienced by individuals from marginalized racial groups.

## **Theme 2: Admissions Factors**

Across all videos used in the study, 45 quotes were coded under the general theme labeled admissions factors. The theme was divided into six subthemes, “Race-conscious Admissions,” “Holistic Admissions,” “Merit,” “Standard,” “GPA,” and “Test Scores.”

The subcode “race-conscious admissions” generated 18 quotes, many of which discussed that an alleged lowering of standards to accommodate for certain races is inherently unfair. One user, @thelawyerangela, aimed to inform their audience, stating that, “The same colleges will still value diversity. But the burden has now shifted from the admissions officers being able to ask you about it to you, the applicant, writing about it. UNC was giving extra points to certain minorities and Harvard said race can tip you into the acceptance pool. The court says those formal policies are not okay, but race could still be considered.” On the reverse side, eight quotes were coded under “holistic admissions” These quotes mainly centered on the idea that prospective students should be evaluated on their identity as an entity rather than just one test score or one race, with users like @thelawyerangela claiming that “if there’s one quote you remember it should be that students must be treated based on his or her experiences as an individual, not on the basis of race.”



Next, “merit” received 8 quotes, with users stating both that merit should be the only factor considered but also that the definition of merit is not clear-cut. For example, @storiesofcz said: “When people think about admission, logically, you would expect that all you really need to do is select the best of the best from your applicant pool. But there are actually unintended negative consequences of doing that.” The professor in the @firebase thought experiment summarized that “the argument is consistent in principle with the idea that only academic promise and scholarly potential should count in admissions, we just need to go beyond test scores and grades alone to get a true estimate of academic promise and scholarly ability.” However, others firmly believe that admissions should only reflect pure merit; @aaron.geer said, “This is an amazing day in history because we have the racist policy of affirmative action being struck down. Colleges can no longer admit you based on the color of your skin, which by the way is something that we cannot control, and they have to admit you based on your merit.” In this vein, some users believed that the standards are lowered for certain races, citing differing average GPAs and test scores across races.

### **Theme 3: Diversity in Education**

15 quotes were extracted from the videos in the study under the theme of “diversity in education.” The theme was divided into four subthemes, “benefits of exposure,” “risk of no exposure,” “to serve a diverse population”, and “school demographics.”

In total, five quotes were coded under both benefits of exposure and risk of no exposure. Most users state that protecting diversity in educational spaces ensures that students are exposed to different backgrounds. In @firebase, students claim that “by promoting diversity in an institution like this, you further educate all of the students, especially the white students who grew up in predominantly white areas. It’s certainly a form of education to be exposed to people from different backgrounds, and you put white students at an inherent disadvantage when you surround them only with their own kind.” Another student pointed to higher education’s purpose:

to educate their students; they said, “I feel that people coming from different races have different backgrounds and they contribute differently to the education.”

Three quotes were coded under “to serve a diverse population” and 10 under school demographics, which is specific to the makeup of a student body. Students in @firebase’s video claim that “with regard to African-American people being given a special advantage, it’s obvious that they bring something special to the table because they have a unique perspective. Just as someone from a different religion or socioeconomic background would as well. As you say, there are many different types of diversity. There’s no reason that racial diversity should be eliminated from that criteria.” Interestingly, students in that video also looked at legacy through this lens of diversity: “I mean, legacy admission you could argue is another part of diversity. You could say it’s important to have a small percentage of people that have a several generation family attendance at a place like Harvard. However, that should not be an advantage factor like race. That should just be another part of promoting diversity.” The argument for diversity is thus used both ways, for both sides of those who support affirmative action and those who do not. Other users like @stellamagz claim that “they don’t tell you that the majority of the student body at these Ivy League schools already consists of students who come from the top 1%. Now why would they tell you the truth? They just tell you that poor black and minority C students are taking the spots of smart A plus white students.”

#### **Theme 4: Systemic Oppression**

46 quotes from the videos in the study were categorized under this broad theme. While racism can evidently be included in this theme, we felt it was necessary to have a separate theme for it because of the prevalence of commentary on race itself, and use this theme to group all other forms of systemic oppression. The theme was divided into six subthemes, “School Resources,” “Socio-Economic Status,” “Family Resources,” “Nepotism,” “Legacy,” and “Reparations.”

The code school resources included 10 quotes. @arinkekim discussed their personal experiences attending a wealthy versus an underfunded school: “I was enrolled in seven APs at my old high school during my junior year and because my new public high school was so underfunded, they didn’t have 4 of my 7 APs. At my old school where they gave out Chromebooks like it was nothing, at my new school they probably had at max two computer parts and if you needed to use a computer your only option was pretty much going to the library,” they said. “There were almost 0 resources at my new school versus at my old school we had a designated college counselor.” It follows that other users propose changes in the secondary education system to eliminate the need for affirmative action. Students in @firebase say, “We need to address differences in education and differences in upbringing with programs like Head Start and giving more funding to lower income schools rather than trying to just fix the results so it makes it look like it's equal when really it isn't.” In response, one student points out, “I mean, if you want to correct based on disadvantaged backgrounds, that's fine. But there are also disadvantaged white people as well. It shouldn't matter if you're white or black.” Similarly, 10 quotes were identified to discuss socio-economic status, with @cohen489 claiming, “And the way that we continue to quote unquote, earn these spots, is that if you are rich, it is really fucking easy to do well on a standardized test.”

In addition to school resources, we thus see that personal background and family resources are just as crucial to admissions, especially when it comes to nepotism or legacy, which had a combined 24 quotes. The majority of these quotes express resentment towards ALDC admissions, which stands for “athletic, legacy, dean's preferences, and children of faculty.” @stellamagz says,

“The Supreme Court Justices just deemed affirmative action unconstitutional and made you idiots on the right think it's about fairness and merit, the same fairness and merit that got C student Jared Kushner into Harvard because his daddy pledged \$2.5 million to the school, a wealth he acquired by being a white collar criminal, that fairness and merit. The same fairness and merit that makes colleges like Harvard University admit legacy

students at a rate of 33%. That means if your rich mommy or daddy or grandpappy went to the school, you get in too. Fairness and merit.”

Others like @kes.io echo this idea, saying, “And like fuck, I'm not even exaggerating, this study came from 2019 where they found out half the white kids that were attending Harvard only got there because mommy and daddy bought a fucking statue.”

The last subcode to fall under this theme is that of reparations, which is the idea of offering restitution for past injustices that certain groups have suffered. This subcode generated 10 quotes that discuss both how affirmative action acts as temporary reparations, but also that modern politics should not be rooted in the past. @nessadiosdado says, “Affirmative action was created to help remedy historical discrimination and as a whole create more diverse student bodies.” In @firebase, students argue that “affirmative action is a temporary solution to alleviate history and the wrongs done to African-Americans in particular.” Other students respond with, “Just because our ancestors did something doesn't mean that that should have any effect on what happens with us today,” or “First of all, if affirmative action is making up for past injustice, how do you explain minorities that were not historically discriminated against in the United States who get these advantages?”

### **Theme 5: The Legal System**

Building off the theme of systemic oppression, ideas regarding the legal system were quoted 11 times, with two subcodes of “interpreting the constitution” and “policies and laws.” One user, @stellamagz, questions the U.S. legal system, saying that “It's a precedent, a precedent—the same thing those Supreme Court justices said it was right before they overturned it. What's next? What more things do we have to roll back on? What else are they going to deem unconstitutional?” @cohen489 shares this negative sentiment, saying, “And I don't mean bullshit from a legal perspective, though it is also bullshit from a legal perspective—Google stare decisis because apparently the majority of the Supreme Court can't do so.”

## **Theme 6: Post-Grad Plans**

Though this theme was only implicated in four quotes across the videos included in this study, we determined that the videos which it was quoted in had substantial content. Most users discuss what future careers may look like for students after the dissolution of affirmative action. For instance, @bookersquared said, “A medical school trying to ensure that more black doctors graduate, especially in the wake of high rates of black maternal and infant mortality, high rates of racist healthcare practices, they said that is as bad as not letting black people ride the same buses as white people. The Supreme Court has said that getting more black and brown teachers, lawyers and psychologists in those fields is as bad as banning interracial marriage.” @storiesofcz relates affirmative action to the diverse needs of the public health field, claiming that “medical schools can’t and will never only take academic metrics into account in deciding who gets into their program because they have to think about how they’re going to fulfill the needs of the community.” They then give an example: “Let’s say you have two applicants and one is interested in becoming an orthopedic surgeon in downtown Toronto. And then the other who’s slightly weaker on the academic metric but still very smart and very accomplished is interested in going back to their hometown of about 30,000 people in rural Ontario and wants to be the only family doctor in their town. From a public health standpoint, who do you think is going to make the bigger contribution?” They end off by stating, “We often fall prey to this fallacy of living in such an individualistic culture, that the purpose of schools is to benefit the individual but the reality is the schools are there to benefit society as a whole. And sometimes what’s good for society is not necessarily going to be fair to the individual.”

## **Sentiment Analysis**

In addition to conducting a thick descriptive analysis of the 20 videos, we also carried out a sentiment analysis following the guides of sentiment that were agreed upon by the research team. We were interested to see if there was any correlation between the valence of each specific video and the type of engagement, specifically comments, that the video received. As expected, most of the videos themselves were categorized as being negative, with only two being positive, four being neutral, and two coded N/A, as there was no valid sentiment to detect. Surprisingly, most of the comment sections were positive, or in support of the arguments of the user. Thus, amongst the 12 negative videos, six had positive comment sections, four had negative sections, and two had neutral ones. In total, 10 comment sections were considered positive, 6 as negative, and 4 as neutral. Though we expected negative content to incite similarly negative engagement, this was proved false, and we were shown the general solidarity that is common amongst Tik Tok videos. This illustrates that Tik Tok does not act as an intense echo chamber where ideologies can be made more extreme or more negative as people interact with videos, as most comment section valences were positive. See Table 2 for the entire table.

## **Discussion**

TikTok has the potential for users to share information and build communities of understanding and support. Especially amongst the younger generation that this court case directly impacts, understanding and evaluating the information and narratives that social media feeds users can help Tik Tok users better form their own opinions and beliefs informed by videos, rather than entirely based on videos.

The collected data also helps to understand the general grievances and sentiments that are related to the court case. This illuminates the general stances of the younger generation, who both make and receive Tik Tok content, allowing researchers to extract trends and predict how best to serve the younger population in the legal macrocosm. We were able to delineate

what users were most worried about so that moving forward, our policymakers may stay informed on how best to represent these young voices that span cultural, socio-economic, and gender backgrounds.

Given the data, we were also able to interpret what types of videos garner the most expressive engagement. For example, we saw that videos that were categorized with negative sentiment were still likely to incite positive engagement. We may interpret this data to understand how algorithms on social media platforms work, in order to become aware about what content does the best to share information. We can thus understand what type of information is reaching which types of communities to answer questions such as: do communities most often get fed content that correlates to their beliefs, creating online echo chambers?

Whilst digital media communities are often beneficial to users through sharing communal experiences and gaining support from each other, such echo chambers become dangerous if used for group polarization. In this way, we may learn about how communal groups are formed based on opinion and how some of these groups may be mobilized to action given the type of content they receive and interact with on social media platforms like Tik Tok.

### **Limitations**

This study does not serve as a comprehensive analysis of all TikTok videos regarding affirmative action, but rather a glimpse at what kind of content users are consuming. Because the sampled videos were only the top-20-liked-videos at the time of collection, it will be worthwhile to also look at how these videos changed as we move on from the court case. As we progress beyond the immediate aftermath of the court case, it would be beneficial to observe how the content and themes of these videos evolve over time.

Notably, several anticipated themes, such as the portrayal of Asians as pawns and the idea of pitting races against each other, were scarcely present, appearing in just one of the top

videos. Potential solutions to address diversity in educational institutions, such as emphasizing education, were not as prominent as expected. Identifiers other than race, such as religion and socio-economic status, were only occasionally mentioned in the videos. The experiences of mixed-background or interracial students also surfaced, as did discussions about personality traits as potential criteria for admissions.

It's crucial to emphasize that the focus on the top 20 videos means the study primarily captures content that garners the most clicks. However, this does not necessarily de-value the various other themes in the discussion of affirmative action. For example, only one user included other related current events such as the court case on abortion rights or LGBTQ+ businesses in their video. We must be aware that on social media, users tend to view issues in total isolation, despite the fact that each issue is interconnected with broader societal structures.

### **Future Directions**

The involvement of GenZ and the use of platforms like TikTok, in this case, spotlight the power of social media in shaping emotions and thus public opinion. TikTok, with its vast reach among younger audiences, has emerged as a potent tool for people to disseminate diverse viewpoints and engage with complex legal and societal issues, breaking them down into digestible content. This democratization of information allows users from varied backgrounds to understand and form opinions on matters that might have previously been inaccessible or esoteric to them.

The ramifications of this case extend beyond just undergraduate admission in the U.S., but raise questions about the future of post-grad admissions and employment opportunities as well. As institutions grapple with the verdict, there will be a reevaluation of what it means to be a suitable applicant and how diversity and inclusivity are approached.

As we move forward, it will be crucial to monitor how the legal system adapts to the digital age's novelties. The rapid dissemination of information not only amplifies voices but also accelerates the pace at which societal norms evolve and digital communities are created. This



dynamic landscape necessitates a proactive approach from institutions, ensuring that their policies and practices remain relevant and equitable. In addition to conducting qualitative studies such as this one, it is imperative that the field conduct concrete quantitative research to complement narrative research, especially given the accessibility of social media analytics. In this study, we were also unable to consider the backgrounds of each user in order to even more deeply contextualize their arguments. Given more demographic data, studies should be conducted to include and implicate users' backgrounds to better delineate differences in emotional reactions based on identity.

Most of the videos analyzed in this study adopted an informative style, hinting at a meta-theme: users are simultaneously learning about and debating affirmative action on TikTok. The platform's role in educating its users is undeniable, but it also poses risks, especially when false information about constitutional matters is disseminated.

The influence of GenZ, armed with digital tools, underscores the need for transparency, adaptability, and inclusivity in decision-making processes. As the lines between digital and real-world interactions blur and emotions begin to be weaponized online, the onus is on both the legal system and educational institutions to foster environments that reflect the diverse and interconnected world we live in today.

Table 1. Themes and Subcodes

Theme	Admissions Factors	Diversity in Education	Post-Grad Plans	Racism	Systemic Oppression	The Legal System
Subcodes	GPA	Benefits of Exposure	Careers	Race-Blindness	Family Resources	Interpreting the Constitution
	Holistic Admissions	Risk of No Exposure	Graduation Rates	Racial Bias	Legacy	Policies and Laws
	Merit	School Demographics		Racial Division	Nepotism	
	Race-Conscious Admissions	To Serve a Diverse Population		Reverse Racism	Reparations	
	Standards				School Resources	
	Test Scores				Socio-Economic Status	

Table 2. Video and Comment Reaction Sentiment

User	Video Sentiment	Comment Net Sentiment
@firebase	0	+
@msnbc	-	+
@coolmustache12	+	+
@occasional_sports_memes	n/a	0
@theflyingred	-	-
@kes.io	-	-
@thetrumpet	-	+
@nessadiosdado	-	-
@stellamagz	-	+
@thewokemama	-	-
@cohen489	-	+
@bookersquared	-	+
@occasional_sports_memes	n/a	-
@megynkellyshow	+	+
@arinekim	-	0
@the.law.says.what	0	-
@aaron.geer	-	+
@thelawyerangela	0	+
@storyfavorites	0	0
@storiesofcz	-	0

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Supplemental Table 1. Codes and Salient Quotes

Subcode	Salient Quotes
<p>Racism: Race-blindness</p>	<p>@firebase: I think that discriminating based on race should always be wrong, whether you're discriminating against one group or another.</p> <p>@megynkellyshow: Chief Justice Roberts, writing for the majority: quote: eliminating racial discrimination means eliminating all of it.</p> <p>@firebase: And I believe that it was African American leaders themselves when Martin Luther King said he wanted to be judged not on the color of his skin, but by the content of his character, his merit, his achievements.</p>
<p>Racism: Racial Bias</p>	<p>@arinekim: It is found within our education system, it is found when people are applying for jobs- teachers, recruiters hold this implicit bias that black students are not as capable as their white counterparts.</p> <p>@firebase: Because of slavery, because of past injustices, today we have a higher proportion of African-Americans who are in poverty, who face less opportunities than white people. And so because of slavery 200 years ago and because of Jim Crow and because of segregation, today we have injustice based on race.</p> <p>@msnbc: But the minute I arrived from my majority black little town, Montbello, in Denver to Harvard, the first like week or two that I was in class, my presence was questioned by white people. I was in this big conference class where some white students stood up and said, those students, the black students, they're only here because of affirmative action.</p>
<p>Racism: Racial Division</p>	<p>@firebase: In addition, you could argue that affirmative action perpetuates divisions between the races rather than achieve the ultimate goal of race being an irrelevant factor in our society.</p> <p>@firebase: Why should race necessarily be equated with diversity? There are so many other forms. Why should we assume that race makes people different? Again, that's perpetuating the idea of racial division within our universities and our society.</p> <p>@msnbc: But the minute I arrived from my majority black little town, Montbello, in Denver to Harvard, the first like week or two that I was in class, my presence was questioned by white people. I was in this big conference class where some white students stood up and said, those students, the black students, they're only here because of affirmative action.</p>
<p>Racism: Reverse Racism</p>	<p>@firebase: I think that discriminating based on race should always be wrong, whether you're discriminating against one group or another.</p> <p>@thetrumpet: Oh yeah, reverse discrimination, there's a buzzword.</p> <p>@thetrumpet: It's not reverse discrimination. It's just racism if you're judging people on the basis of their skin color.</p>
<p>Admissions Factors: Race-conscious admissions</p>	<p>@firebase: And I just think that to decide solely based on someone's race is just inherently unfair.</p> <p>@kes.io: And so they said that I had a 20% chance of gaining admission to Harvard as an Asian American, and then a 95% chance as an African American.</p> <p>@thelawyerangela: The same colleges will still value diversity. But the burden has now shifted from the admissions officers being able to ask you about it to you, the applicant, writing about it. UNC was giving extra points to certain minorities and Harvard said race can tip you into the acceptance pool. The court says those formal policies are not okay, but race could still be considered.</p>
<p>Admissions Factors: Holistic Admissions</p>	<p>@arinekim: Instead of trying to determine what is fair or which student deserves to be in a certain university, try to view it in a more holistic sense. Don't just use GPA or test scores as a means to be able to determine what is fair or who is deserving. View it from a more holistic sense and think about what privileges that you've been extended and what privileges your other peers have been extended.</p> <p>@the.law.says.what: Supporters of affirmative action say that diversity in schools is hugely important, that race should be part of a holistic process.</p> <p>@nessadiosdado: race was allowed to be taken into consideration during the admissions process with other factors like test scores, grades and extracurricular activities.</p>

<p>Admissions Factors: Merit</p>	<p>@firebase: What's worth noticing, though, is that that argument is consistent in principle with the idea that only academic promise and scholarly potential should count in admissions, we just need to go beyond test scores and grades alone to get a true estimate of academic promise and scholarly ability.</p> <p>@stellamagz: The Supreme Court Justices just deemed affirmative action unconstitutional and made you idiots on the right think it's about fairness and merit, the same fairness and merit that got C student Jared Kushner into Harvard because his daddy pledged \$2.5 million to the school, a wealth he acquired by being a white collar criminal, that fairness and merit. The same fairness and merit that makes colleges like Harvard University admit legacy students at a rate of 33%. That means if your rich mommy or daddy or grandpappy went to the school, you get in too. Fairness and merit.</p> <p>@aaron.geer: You can turn that frown upside down whoopi because in order for a student now to get into a school that they want to be at, they have to work hard and they can't get in just because of how they look.</p>
<p>Admissions Factors: Standards</p>	<p>@theflyingred: And lowering your standard to admit somebody of a socioeconomic status or race would not help them do that.</p> <p>@theflyingred: No, the standard is lowered. As the student premier admissions data shows, an Asian has to score 273 points higher on the SAT to have the same chance of admission as a black person. So the standard is lowered for black Americans.</p> <p>@kes.io: Like fuck, John, you scored a perfect on the math SATs. If I were you, I wouldn't be focused on the five or six black kids that you scored a couple points higher than when half the white student buddy couldn't even break 1200.</p>
<p>Admissions Factors: GPA</p>	<p>@arinekim: Because the reality is that you can find hundreds and thousands of statistics online where you can clearly see that the median GPA or test scores of black and Hispanic students who are admitted into elite universities are lower than their Asian or white counterparts.</p> <p>@the.law.says.what: Even though he had a near perfect GPA and SAT score, he was rejected by almost every top college that he applied to and he says it's because affirmative action policies prioritize accepting black applicants to the detriment of Asians. Now we don't know anything about his essays or his extracurriculars or why he was rejected.</p> <p>@the.law.says.what: Data uncovered during the lawsuit revealed that black applicants were 12 times more likely to get accepted at Harvard than Asian students with similar test scores and GPA.</p>
<p>Admissions Factors: Test Scores</p>	<p>@arinekim: I thought it was unfair that I could get higher test scores than someone else but just because I'm Asian my chances of getting in were significantly lower than their chances.</p> <p>@arinekim: Almost every single one of my peers had SAT prep tutoring.</p> <p>@cohen489: And so to pretend that things like standardized test results are impartial metrics—they are perhaps impartial of how many points you got on the test, but to pretend that those tests are testing things that are impartial is crazy. None of this is impartial. It's all systems.</p>
<p>Diversity in Education: Benefits of Exposure</p>	<p>@firebase: First of all, you have to look at the university's purpose. It is to educate their students. And I feel that different races, people coming from different races, have different backgrounds and they contribute differently to the education.</p> <p>@firebase: I disagree with that because I think that by promoting diversity in an institution like this, you further educate all of the students, especially the white students who grew up in predominantly white areas. It's certainly a form of education to be exposed to people from different backgrounds, and you put white students at an inherent disadvantage when you surround them only with their own kind.</p> <p>@firebase: With regard to African-American people being given a special advantage, it's obvious that they bring something special to the table because they have a unique perspective. Just as someone from a different religion or socioeconomic background would as well. As you say, there are many different types of diversity. There's no reason that racial diversity should be eliminated from that criteria.</p>
<p>Diversity in Education: Risks of No Exposure</p>	<p>@firebase: First of all, you have to look at the university's purpose. It is to educate their students. And I feel that different races, people coming from different races, have different backgrounds and they contribute differently to the education.</p> <p>@firebase: I disagree with that because I think that by promoting diversity in an institution like this, you further educate all of the students, especially the white students who grew up in predominantly white areas. It's certainly a form of education to be exposed to people from different backgrounds, and you put white</p>

	students at an inherent disadvantage when you surround them only with their own kind.
Diversity in Education: To Serve a Diverse Population	<p>@bookersquared: A medical school trying to ensure that more black doctors graduate, especially in the wake of high rates of black maternal and infant mortality, high rates of racist healthcare practices, they said that is as bad as not letting black people ride the same buses as white people. The Supreme Court has said that getting more black and brown teachers, lawyers and psychologists in those fields is as bad as banning interracial marriage.</p> <p>@storiesofcz: Because medical schools have selected all of these students who are used to being the best of the best, at the top of the hierarchy, that's what they also want in medicine as well. A lot of them are only really interested in these very competitive specialties like surgery or one of the roads, the radiology, ophthalmology, anesthesiology, or dermatology, and not enough people want to do family medicine. Many of them also come from these wealthy backgrounds and are used to a certain kind of lifestyle, so they are not willing to move out of these large metropolitan cities. And so now we also don't have enough people wanting to do rural medicine.</p> <p>@storiesofcz: That's why medical schools can't and will never only take academic metrics into account in deciding who gets into their program because they have to think about how they're going to fulfill the needs of the community. Let's say you have two applicants and one is interested in becoming an orthopedic surgeon in downtown Toronto. And then the other who's slightly weaker on the academic metric but still very smart and very accomplished is interested in going back to their hometown of about 30,000 people in rural Ontario and wants to be the only family doctor in their town. From a public health standpoint, who do you think is going to make the bigger contribution? We often fall prey to this fallacy of living in such an individualistic culture, that the purpose of schools is to benefit the individual but the reality is the schools are there to benefit society as a whole. And sometimes what's good for society is not necessarily going to be fair to the individual.</p>
Diversity in Education: School Demographics	<p>@arinekim: I grew up in a pretty affluent town that was predominantly white. My school system was known for having a pretty good education system. In my school of roughly about 1300 students, there were maybe at max 10 black students in my entire school.</p> <p>@firebase: I mean, I do believe that in terms of a legacy admission, you shouldn't have a special preference. I mean, there is a legacy admission you could argue is another part of diversity. You could say it's important to have a small percentage of people that have a several generation family attendance at a place like Harvard. However, that should not be an advantage factor like race. That should just be another part of promoting diversity.</p> <p>@stellamagz: They don't tell you that the majority of the student body at these Ivy League schools already consists of students who come from the top 1%. Now why would they tell you the truth? They just tell you that poor black and minority C students are taking the spots of smart A plus white students.</p>
Systemic Oppression: School Resources	<p>@arinekim: I was enrolled in seven APs at my old high school during my junior year and because my new public high school was so underfunded, they didn't have 4 of my 7 APs. At my old school where they gave out Chromebooks like it was nothing, at my new school they probably had at max two computer parts and if you needed to use a computer your only option was pretty much going to the library.</p> <p>@firebase: So we need to address differences in education and differences in upbringing with programs like Head Start and giving more funding to lower income schools rather than trying to just fix the results so it makes it look like it's equal when really it isn't.</p> <p>@msnbc: But someone came to Denver, Colorado, to look for me. A Harvard recruiter flew to Denver and I met up with her at the Village Inn restaurant and did a pre-interview to get to—pull me into Harvard. I was pulled in—affirmatively. Yes. And it was literally not saying we're going to take an unqualified person and put them in Harvard. We're going to take a very qualified person who we would never know existed and put them in Harvard. That's how I got there. That's how Katanji got there, that's how Justice Jackson, I should say Justice Jackson got there. It's how Clarence Thomas got there, Right?</p>
Systemic Oppression: Socio-Economic Status	<p>@arinekim: It was simply because people from my old school had a lot more money. Almost every single one of my peers had SAT prep tutoring, or college counselors. They could afford private tutors for whatever classes that they were struggling in and they also had parents that had gone to college.</p> <p>@firebase: I mean, if you want to correct based on disadvantaged backgrounds, that's fine. But there are also disadvantaged white people as well. It shouldn't matter if you're white or black.</p> <p>@cohen489: And the way that we continue to quote unquote, earn these spots, is that if you are rich, it is really fucking easy to do well on a standardized test.</p>
Systemic	@arinekim: The average white family today holds over \$170,000 in net assets compared to just \$17,000 for



<p>Oppression: Family Resources</p>	<p>the average black family in America.</p> <p>@firebase: If both of your parents were scholarly, then you have more of a chance of actually being more scholarly yourself and getting those grades. And you can't control what kind of family you're born into.</p> <p>@cohen489: People talk all the time about early literacy skills as a predictor of future academic success. In a country that does not provide universal pre K that does not provide early childhood education or complimentary childcare or government subsidized child care in lots and lots of places, it is so much easier to build reading skills as a young child if you're from a wealthy background, if you have college educated parents, if you have college educated parents that don't have to work and you have a college educated parent staying at home with you, making sure that you know how to read by the time you're four years old like I did.</p>
<p>Systemic Oppression: Nepotism</p>	<p>@stellamagz: The Supreme Court Justices just deemed affirmative action unconstitutional and made you idiots on the right think it's about fairness and merit, the same fairness and merit that got C student Jared Kushner into Harvard because his daddy pledged \$2.5 million to the school, a wealth he acquired by being a white collar criminal, that fairness and merit. The same fairness and merit that makes colleges like Harvard University admit legacy students at a rate of 33%. That means if your rich mommy or daddy or grandpappy went to the school, you get in too. Fairness and merit.</p> <p>@firebase: Well, with regard to affirmative action based on race, I just want to say that white people have had their own affirmative action in this country for more than 400 years. It's called nepotism and quid pro quo.</p> <p>@kes.io: And like fuck, I'm not even exaggerating, this study came from 2019 where they found out half the white kids that were attending Harvard only got there because mommy and daddy bought a fucking statue.</p>
<p>Systemic Oppression: Legacy</p>	<p>@firebase: Exactly, I was going to say, if you disagree with affirmative action, you should disagree with legacy admission because it's obvious from looking around here that there are more white legacies than black legacies in the history of Harvard University.</p> <p>@firebase: I mean, I do believe that in terms of a legacy admission, you shouldn't have a special preference. I mean, there is a legacy admission you could argue is another part of diversity. You could say it's important to have a small percentage of people that have a several generation family attendance at a place like Harvard. However, that should not be an advantage factor like race. That should just be another part of promoting diversity.</p> <p>@arinekim: One statistic I found online was that over 75% of white ALDC's would have been rejected if they weren't an ALDC.</p>
<p>Systemic Oppression: Reparations</p>	<p>@firebase: Just because our ancestors did something doesn't mean that that should have any effect on what happens with us today.</p> <p>@firebase: Because of slavery, because of past injustices, today we have a higher proportion of African-Americans who are in poverty, who face less opportunities than white people. And so because of slavery 200 years ago and because of Jim Crow and because of segregation, today we have injustice based on race.</p> <p>@firebase: First of all, if affirmative action is making up for past injustice, how do you explain minorities that were not historically discriminated against in the United States who get these advantages?</p>
<p>The Legal System: Interpreting the Constitution</p>	<p>@stellamagz: It's a precedent, a precedent – the same thing those Supreme Court justices said it was right before they overturned it. What's next? What more things do we have to roll back on?</p> <p>@bookersquared: The Supreme Court has ruled that affirmative action is a violation of the 14th amendment and therefore unconstitutional.</p> <p>@aaron.geer: The Supreme Court has upset a forty five year precedent, ruling it unconstitutional for universities to consider race in admissions.</p>
<p>The Legal System: Policies and Laws</p>	<p>@cohen489: And I don't mean bullshit from a legal perspective, though it is also bullshit from a legal perspective—Google stare decisis because apparently the majority of the Supreme Court can't do so.</p> <p>@bookersquared: And then they discussed ending segregation in busing, bathhouses, public beaches, golf courses, neighborhoods, and then marriage in Loving v. Virginia because the Court said in this opinion the 14th Amendment proscribes all invidious racial discriminations, invidious meaning unfair, unjust, unpleasant. And then the court said that any race based decisions must survive strict scrutiny, meaning that the government has a compelling interest and then the action is narrowly tailored to achieve that interest.</p>

	<p>@thelawyerangela: because the court says college admissions is a zero sum game; there are only so many spots so if you give extra points to one minority, then another minority group loses, which is argued happened to Asians at Harvard.</p>
<p>Post-Grad Plans: Graduation Rates</p>	<p>@theflyingred: In fact, it would harm their graduation rate and excellence.</p>
<p>Post-Grad Plans: Careers</p>	<p>@arinekim: Because there's this idea that it's easier for black students or Hispanic students to get into college, who do you think job recruiters are going to think are more deserving of a certain role if they're comparing a black student and a white student from the same university.</p> <p>@bookersquared: A medical school trying to ensure that more black doctors graduate, especially in the wake of high rates of black maternal and infant mortality, high rates of racist healthcare practices, they said that is as bad as not letting black people ride the same buses as white people. The Supreme Court has said that getting more black and brown teachers, lawyers and psychologists in those fields is as bad as banning interracial marriage.</p> <p>@storiesofcz: That's why medical schools can't and will never only take academic metrics into account in deciding who gets into their program because they have to think about how they're going to fulfill the needs of the community. Let's say you have two applicants and one is interested in becoming an orthopedic surgeon in downtown Toronto. And then the other who's slightly weaker on the academic metric but still very smart and very accomplished is interested in going back to their hometown of about 30,000 people in rural Ontario and wants to be the only family doctor in their town. From a public health standpoint, who do you think is going to make the bigger contribution? We often fall prey to this fallacy of living in such an individualistic culture, that the purpose of schools is to benefit the individual but the reality is the schools are there to benefit society as a whole. And sometimes what's good for society is not necessarily going to be fair to the individual.</p>