

Dr. Henderson: My name is Errol Anthony Henderson. I'm technically an associate professor emeritus at Penn State University. I've technically retired from Penn State University, but I haven't retired from political science. So, I'm looking for my next job. So that's what makes it difficult to answer. But that's my technical affiliation.

Interviewer: Now, can you tell us a bit about your personal background? So specifically, where you're from or what was your home or family life like for you growing up?

Dr. Henderson: Ok. I was born and raised in the Brewster Projects on the east side of Detroit. I was actually born in the house of the project. So that's where I'm from. Coming up, we were poor. We weren't working class. We weren't working class. We weren't working class. We were poor. Poor is below poor. Poor is your poor, so you don't even have the extra O and R of poor. You know, it's like that. But my parents instilled in us, they motivated us to learn. I'm the youngest of my mother's nine. I'm her ninth child. I think my father's 30, I think. And growing up, it's a lot of different things. It's a lot of different dimensions to it. It was fun. It's like sometimes we're having so much fun we didn't realize we were poor, you know. But then you see a lot of violence from the house and then in the projects and stuff. But it was so much so that I joined the Army when I was 17.

Dr. Henderson: And it's funny because my mother encouraged me to. I joined the military. She'd rather have me in the military than in the streets of Detroit. That was kind of my honor. But my parents died within a year and a half. I got out of the Army in 1980. And my father was already dead in January when my mother died. But I was never, I was never ignorant. I was just often just uninterested. So, I was kind of, I went to a school, a high school in Detroit that you have to be accepted to. It's a public school. So, but then I had to go to night school to graduate from that high school because I got in a little trouble there.

Dr. Henderson: So, that was another reason why I was motivated to go to the military. But I say that to make a point. So, my mother died in January of '82 or '83. So, I was still in the project. So, I was walking to Wayne State University. That's a university that I've been exposed to because we used to go to the library, places like that. So, I went there, and I had a 4.0 just on anger alone. I was just so mad that my mother died. So, anyway, I was at Wayne State from '83 to '86. I was just going back into the Army. That was my plan, I was going to be an officer and go back to the Army because that's what I knew.

Dr. Henderson: I was never trying to be, you know, sometimes they say, boy, you want to be rich. They don't want to be rich. They don't want to be poor. You know? So, I worked minimum wage jobs until I was like 14 and stuff, you know, things like that. But I was going to the Army because that's what I knew, but to go as an officer. And then I had this professor. His name was Maurice Waters that really struck me. I did really well at Wayne State. I was on the dean's list. I graduated Phi Beta Kappa. And so, people were asking me was I going to graduate school. I didn't know what that was. So, I thought they were asking me was I going to graduate from school.

Dr. Henderson: So, I'm like, yeah. I didn't know. Then Maurice Waters, the political scientist, he put me in for this Dorothy Danforth Compton fellowship to go to the University of Michigan. And when he told me that, it just blew me away. I didn't know what the fellowship was. But to do it, I had to go to Michigan. Now, I had a regular Army commission. I was going into the regular Army, not in the reserve. So, I had to change that to go to Michigan. Because I'm like, wow, this is blowing me away. And I asked him. I said, Professor Waters. I said, I don't understand because I didn't think it was real at first. They're going to pay me to go to school and to go to Michigan.

Dr. Henderson: So, I asked him. He explained it to me. I said, I said, "I don't understand. Why would you do this for me?" I said, most of the time, he's a political scientist, most of the time in class, we would argue. We'd be arguing. And he said something I'll never forget. He said, Errol, I quickly realized that there was a problem. The main reason you and I argue so much in our class is that you and I were the only ones who did the reading in the class. Blew me away. And just to jump ahead, a decade and a half later, he would be my colleague. I'm a professor at Wayne State.

Dr. Henderson: But I went to the University of Michigan, worked with David Singer, Ali Mazrui, Ken Erganski. These were professors that were important. I'd have to add a social work professor at Rosemary's side. As well. But these were important. I didn't have mentors, per se. I never liked that word. But David Singer put me on the Correlation War Project as soon as I got to Michigan, I think in '86. Ali Mazrui, who was a renowned IR scholar and Africanist from Kenya, he did the BBC series, The Africans. Did it so well that the BBC tried to stop it from being disseminated because it was so from an African perspective, this Ali Mazrui. And so that's where I worked with. I worked on the Correlation War Project still. I did a lot of quantitative analysis and world politics.

Dr. Henderson: When I got there, there was only two of us, two Black folks in the coming class. And I saw a sister across the room; we had this, what do you call it, like an icebreaker for all the new students. And you know how Black folks, we go to some place and it's probably White, so we're looking for each other. And I saw her across the room. And so, I think we went to each other,

because she's looking too. I said, "oh." I said, I'm just thinking to myself. I said, "oh, you must be my obligatory second." And she said, "no, you're mine." And I said, that was so cool. I said, we've been cool ever since. Her name is Kathy Cohen. So, Kathy Cohen and I came in together. And so then at Michigan, like at Wayne State, there had been other questions asked about activism, because this was always a part of what I did. But just in the matriculation part. So, I got a University of Michigan degree. And then I stopped there, because I knew what was going on.

Interviewer: No, that was great. Now, just for the sake of clarifying the timeline. So, you entered the military 20 years, and then came back and did your undergrad at Wayne State?

Dr. Henderson: Oh, no. No. I went into the military when I was 17. I came out when I was 19. And that was a year and a half when my father died, when I was in. My mother died as soon as I got out.

Interviewer: Okay.

Dr. Henderson: And at Wayne State, you took political science courses. So, you went into the military as an officer, versus expecting to go enter as an officer with the military.

Interviewer: But instead, you went to graduate school at Michigan.

Dr. Henderson: Yes. I went to Wayne State from '83 to '86, because I'm just going through. And I wanted to major in political science and computer science. But the advisor told me, he said, "You know, if you take 20 credits this semester, you can graduate this semester." It blew me away. I didn't know. And because all I knew that was secure, that seemed to be something for me to do. So, I took literature, and I started my full career as a military person. But I was going to go back as a JAG officer.

Dr. Henderson: So, I went to the military to pay for my law school. But I wanted to get all this military training. So, I was going to be an arm... an infantry officer. And I ended up becoming a tank officer. Because I wanted to learn. But I had very little intentions. There's a famous Bob Marley song. My father is from St. Asbeck to me. But my oldest brother, recently deceased, was a Vietnam veteran. And I was one of the first veterans to go to Vietnam. So, he used to bring us

the radio music. So, when I was going to that high school, I used to listen to Rastamon Vibration. There was another Bob Marley album, another Bob Marley album called Uprise.

Dr. Henderson: And it has a line that says, “don’t you let the system make you kill your brother, man.” So, I’ve never fired a shot in anger through the military. Coming up in Detroit, you had to do what you do in the project. But the idea of going back was to go back as a dad. Because not only that, I didn’t want to be poor. And I didn’t want to get married or anything and bring a woman into poverty. So that was a big thing for me. I don’t want to be poor. It kept me out of trouble, too. Because a lot of my friends were drug dealers, gang members.

Dr. Henderson: And a lot of them, by the time I was in high school, a lot of my friends were dead. They were in prison or had to. So that was another reason to go there. So, it’s an irony, growing up poor like that, that you go to the military to get away from this. So, the timeline, so by ‘86, I’m in Michigan. And by ‘87, we started a movement there. Like I said, Movement 3. It’s a big protest. But we can talk about that if you’re interested. So, that was constantly a part of my scholarship, was activism. That was constant.

Interviewer: So, to that, how would you characterize the political social environment in the U.S. While you were in college or graduate school? And/or were you involved in social political activism as a student?

Dr. Henderson: Oh, it was the Reagan era. So, it was the Cold War. And Reagan was lighting a fire under that. So White supremacists and the popularization of White supremacists, like Gil Scott-Heron and Ronald Reagan, the man who called for a bloodbath in our college campuses. So, this is the Reagan era. It’s the era of AIDS. It’s the era of hip-hop. And I concentrate on some of these. There’s also the time, ‘83, when Harold Washington was the mayor of Chicago. And the Jesse Jackson phenomenon pushed the Democratic Party to its left in ‘84 and ‘88. So, I raise those specific things to make the point there was opposition, constant opposition to Reagan. People knew who he was from the invasion of Grenada to the debacle of the Marines killing in Lebanon. And there’s policies. There’s a militaristic policy.

Dr. Henderson: And, of course, his background as governor of California. But there was resistance. One of the big areas of resistance was the Free South Africa. There was resistance, the Jesse Jackson phenomenon, raising issues in the Democratic Party that are now prominent, but Jesse Jackson often doesn’t get credit for. He was doing that in ‘84 and ‘88. And a lot of youth was

moving toward that. It was hip-hop. And hip-hop also had resistance from the message of Grandmaster Flash. But all the way to an excellent sort of “we-are-the-world” hip-hop collaborative called Sun City. And the refrain was, I ain't going to play Sun City. Sun City is a resort in apartheid South Africa, in Bapu-Taswana, where some people were coming, and they would play that.

Dr. Henderson: So, all these artists got together. You got from the rappers, they went and got Eddie Kendricks, David Ruffin from the Temptations. What's his name from with Springsteen's band? That played in The Sopranos, Lil' Stevie, he's in it. A range of people were in that venue, and they kept saying the refrain, I ain't going to play Sun City. It was just a jab. And there was a movement on college campuses throughout the country, so much so there was a front-line special called Racism 101. And we at the University of Michigan formed the United Coalition Against Racism. One of the first things I said, I used to speak a lot of that. One of the first things I said on the front-line special called Racism 101, and we at the University of Michigan, the main, I don't know what you would call it, but the main meeting spot outdoors in Michigan is called The Diag, and it was about 2,000 or 3,000 folks at The Diag.

Dr. Henderson: And I got up to speak. I said, you know, they didn't even have Martin Luther King Day. They called it Diversity Day. That's how, this is how backwards it was then. And the first thing I said was, I said, I ripped off from Yosemite Harris. I said, “The first thing I want to say is, Diversity Day my ass. This is Martin Luther King's birthday,” and everything just went wild. You know what I'm saying? So, we had, but it was a resistance. It was a resistance. It was a resistance because The Caps was playing racist jokes on the people, racist jokes, okay? I'm going to put that in air quotes, on the university radio.

Dr. Henderson: They had threatened, they put this thing under a meeting of the sisters, the AKAs in the dorm, said, this is the Burbans, open season on [expletive]. That's what they were doing. That's how scandalous it was. So, we had organized. The first organized university, the United Coalition Against Racism, the steering committee consisted of me, Barbara Ransby, Tom LaVeese. And I said, you know what I'm saying? It was a big brother, came from Howard, who's now at Ms. Rob Sellers. Now I want to point out some of these folks in the leadership, the steering committee, Regina Jemison, because they went on, and I'm missing some folks. They went on to become prominent Big Rob Sellers in psychology, but we were protesting too.

Dr. Henderson: And then a second group emerged called Better Grounded in Black Deaths. This was a multi-racial coalition we put together; the leadership was all Black. That was the steering

committee... some of the people's names... but there was the Black Action Movement. A brother Chuck Weiner and JD Simpson and sister... oh man, I'm blocking her name. She married Barry Sanders, but they were in the law school, and they were more tied closely to the frats and sororities. And they called it BAM3. So, we put it together, and it was youth, non-coalition against racism, BAM3, we called it BAM3 for short. And I say that because a lot of BAM, BAM is used quite a bit from the Black Action Movement all the way to some other folks, but this was BAM3 because it was the third one in Michigan.

Dr. Henderson: Long story short, we protested, we shut down buildings. It's like what people saw in the 60's in form, but we had advanced to realize that we had to build institutions. The institutions would outlast us, and institutions, they would be compelled to recognize. One of them was called the Office of Minority Law. The Office of Minority Affairs. And to put the direct over there. His name was Charles Booney. They brought Jesse Jackson in to mediate our demands with the University. It was Harold Shapiro. And when they got to the point of negotiation, Harold Shapiro, the president, he would leave and go to Princeton. But when he was president, he asked about negotiating. And I used to use my middle name, Anthony.

Dr. Henderson: And he told him, he said, "I'll negotiate with anyone except Anthony." So, I took that as a badge of honor. You know what I'm saying? Because we just, we came there. And Michigan didn't have this very, there's a class structure in Michigan, too, among Black folks. And they hadn't I had folks from the projects, folks from This Was Us coming up, but making demands on the university to fulfill its early obligation. You figure, you got to have BAM three? That's the third time? Because they keep renewing it. You see? And then a lot of those people, I would go back, when I was in Michigan, I still lived in Detroit. I didn't want to live there at all. I'm not for folks who do.

Dr. Henderson: So, I drove 47 miles to commute. But I would bring brothers and sisters from Wayne State. I lived, still live, two blocks from Wayne State. We left the projects and moved to this street called Hancock. Anyway, which is a block from Wayne State. But still on the east side of Woodward. Got to be on the east side of Woodward. But I would bring brothers and sisters from Wayne State. And those brothers and sisters would then organize, in 1989, an even better takeover. Because I used to tell them, "Y'all want to do more than us, because you're right in the middle of Detroit." And they did. 11 days. We occupied the building, the administration building. We held that building for 11 days.

Dr. Henderson: And we created a degree and tenure-granting Africana studies department that's still there today. Because we learned. And I want to be constant in time. But at Howard, and all over the country, they were having similar protests. And Brother Joshua Myers just wrote a book on the protest at Howard. And the brothers and sisters, I don't know these folks. They mentioned some of us at Wayne State. In 1989, myself, Cherie Shabon, and each other, who were among the leadership there? But that includes also Brother Leif Smith, Merel Ansari, and other noise, something like that, too. Cambodia fraternity detractor 30. But I was in the University of Michigan. And I was representing and, you know, as well, at Wayne State, studying. After we did that, Michigan state protesters.

Dr. Henderson: See, we had some of the folks. And that's part of the movement. Now, in with this, there's so little writing, the historians are not writing on the 80's yet. The 80's is so important. We built on what the folks did in the 60's with much respect, and a lot of them advised us as well. And I'll tell you one in particular. But what was important for us is to recognize the particular demands for institution building, because we saw how they played the folks in the 60's. Yeah, we're going to give you this, we'll give you a center, and you realize the center can't grant degrees, or the center, you have to have a co-major, and it can't grant tenure, so it doesn't get professional, it doesn't get the funding.

Dr. Henderson: So, we learned those lessons, and a lot of it's from those same activists. But we want to get more of a focus on the 80's. It was also a time of the urban peace and justice movement. I mentioned the gang, and I was part of the National Gang Truce Movement. The first meeting in Kansas City was to bring together some 200 different cities, sets from 22 cities across the United States to try to organize a truce. The truce initiative started before the L.A. revolt, but it was definitely fueled by that. And it brought together a lot of folks, like former Panthers, like Marion Stamps in Chicago. One of the representatives from Minnesota was Keith Ellison. He actually went to Wayne State. He was there when I was there, but he went to law school in Minnesota.

Dr. Henderson: But he was part of it. Uh-huh. And he got funding from some disparate groups. At one time in Minneapolis, and I'll start with this, when the funding was taken away by some groups, Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis came and dropped \$14,000 on it. Because that's when they came up. They said, "This has got to work. This has got to take place." And when we would go to the city, we stayed at least four or five days. We bring together people who sometimes we have people who are trying to literally kill each other. And we had shot callers and others from the different sets for real conflict resolution. We would go to high school. We would go to the prison. We go to the correctional facilities as well.

Dr. Henderson: So, four or five days in different cities. Started in Kansas City, went to Chicago, went to Minneapolis, L.A., San Antonio. This was an urban peace and justice movement. But a big part of that were the women who are mothers of children who've been killed, like Clementine Barfield in Detroit in '87. When she started Save Our Sons and Daughters. And she branched out. It's after her teenage son. Derrick was killed outside of high school in Detroit. So, she started building in the bloodshed of her own child, Save Our Sons and Daughters. I volunteered with them for seven years and I promised her once I got my Ph.D., I would come and work for her for at least a year before I go into academia, which I did when I came out in '93.

Dr. Henderson: But I wanted to say about Ms. Barfield, Save Our Sons and Daughters, she then hooked up with Brenda Muhammad in Atlanta, whose son had been murdered. Sister Muhammad started Mothers of Murdered Sons. When she met Ms. Barfield, she made them Mothers of Murdered Sons and Daughters. And then Barbara Meredith was out in Los Angeles out here, and they had started Mothers Rock, Mothers Reclaiming Our Children. You see what I'm saying? So, this was an urban peace and justice movement. So, I was involved in that as well. Matter of fact, in my graduation, I think, what was it, 1992, I graduated from Michigan. No, 1993. I didn't go to it. You see, I have to think. I didn't go to it. I was at the Gay Summit in Kansas City.

Dr. Henderson: I was trained that there's a tradition, there's a Black tradition, a Black intellectual tradition that doesn't separate activism from academic work. But I make it really clear. In my classes, I teach accuracy. I don't teach advocacy. I don't say these students have to go out and be involved. No, no, no. You're a self-determined person. You make your own decisions. You don't have to parent what I'm saying. International relations, I'm going to introduce you to mainstream international relations. And I'm going to introduce you to some other things that should be in the mainstream. And you'll understand why. You see what I'm saying? So, but it's not because I don't have a special name for it.

Dr. Henderson: I don't even call it critical this, critical that. It's just accurate. And I'm really big on empirical approaches. What I learned at Michigan doing quantitative work. But the person who introduced me to quantitative work was a brother named Kenneth Hill who came in. He should come in. He's just clean. Just so clean. I found out later he was also a preacher. But he was so clean. He's an AMB preacher. He showed me as a guest lecturer at Wayne State. Quantitative work. Working politically. I'd never seen nothing like this before. And then Professor Waters invited David Singer to lecture at Wayne State. And that's when I saw him as an undergrad doing this quantitative work. And seeing that that's part of our tradition, too. The first quantitative study done in sociology in the United States. Not the first one done by a Black person. But the first one done. Philadelphia Negro. W.E.B. Du Bois in 1899. And one could argue that though it's called

investigative journalism. But the systematic work in 1892 and 1895 by I.W. Wells and Barnett should qualify as sociology as well. Okay, I'll stop.

Interviewer: Well, let me thank you for all of you. Thank you for that. Now, you've been touching on your work quite a bit. Can you tell us about your research trajectory? So, what was your dissertation topic? What is your current main area of focus? And are there any particular scholars whose work was influential in your thinking and research?

Dr. Henderson: Oh, my goodness. Yes. And wow. My dissertation topic was Afrocentrism and World Politics Towards a New Paradigm. Okay, my first book in 1995. My committee was David Singer chaired my committee. It was so interesting. David Singer said, "I don't know anything about Afrocentrism, but I can follow a logical argument." See? And I like that. Harold Cruz was a lot of the few Black professors that were at Michigan. A lot of them didn't want to deal with me. Because as a student, I was really big on student leadership. I was a student. I'm deferent to the folks in fighting for liberation, but they ain't on you all. And some of them would come and they would try to impose themselves. You got the wrong idea. It ain't that kind of party.

Dr. Henderson: You see what I'm saying? So, I was assertive in that regard. So, a lot. Some of them didn't want to deal with me. I won't mention their names. Okay. I'm talking about in the political science department and sociology and stuff. Matter of fact, several of them, some of them are prominent, did come to us to get us to stop our protest. I won't say no name. Ernie Wilson. Okay. He stands out. And the one professor who was a psychologist professor, a Black psychologist, very prominent, his obituary was in the New York Times. He tried to take my fellow, who took my fellowship, he said. So, I went to Singer and I said, I told him what had happened. And he said, "What can I do?"

Dr. Henderson: He said, "I can't do anything." He's no longer the chair of the department. I'm going to give you a question. Chair of the department. I said, but you're a White man. I said, you just call. And he was like, really? He's like, and then he had this chuckle about him. He said, okay. So, he called, and he said, and David Singer called him. And David, Professor Singer hung up the phone. He said, Henderson, you got your fellowship back. That was it. That was it. He had no other. He's a White man. He's a senior White man. So, I won't say the professor he called because he went on to be very prominent. James Jackson. Okay. So, he took my fellowship.

Dr. Henderson: So, some of those, but you know who would work for me? A professor who had just got there. He don't even know how he's going to work out there. He just came from Savannah State University. I went up to him. And he said, I can't tell you what he said because sometimes

when he's informal, he'll personalize. I can't say. And I told him the deal. I have people on that. He's like, yeah. He put, I asked him, he'll be, what? Yeah, I'll work with you. I promise. Bring that. His name was Haynes Walker. And Haynes. Professor Walker was just with me the whole time. So, these people. So, the influence was different.

Dr. Henderson: There was a White professor named Gail Ness. And also on my committee was Harold Cruz. Harold Cruz, somebody who supported our initiatives, the Black Lives Matter movement. And there were others, too. But I can count on one hand. The Black ones. But I want to be clear. Overwhelmingly, our opposition came from White professors. White men and women. I want to be clear about that. Okay. So, the research of the College of Work Project impressed me. I was looking for a theory of Afrocentrism that I could test empirically. And as I did, sister, I just, I read so much. And I could see. There was nothing worthy of being called a theory. So, I set out to make my own. And to devise one. And I did in that book. I don't think I did a good job. I did an acceptable job.

Dr. Henderson: But it focused on the role of diasporas in world politics. Major racial diasporas. The White one that became dominant through the European diaspora in the United States. And especially the Black one, which was most oppressed, coming from Africa. So, that's what I did. I looked at diasporization. That's what I did. But it focused on Pan-Africanism. And I have to tell you. I know I've jumped around. The first political scientist made me say, "I want to be a political scientist." Because I only majored. I didn't even realize my undergrad was a major in poli-sci. Because I just took the class that interests me. You know? But then I saw this guy on the Jesse Jackson campaign. The president was so cool.

Dr. Henderson: He was so thorough. A handsome guy, too. He had a party. And he was just so eloquent. And so focused. And so attentive to evidence. His name is Ronald Walters. And I said, "I looked at him on the PBS shows." I was like, that's impressive. Political scientist. I'm like, yeah. Yeah, that guy. And he will become a colleague later. But I wanted to do quantitative work. And I wanted to test things. One of the things I wanted to test, one of my earliest articles published. It was published in the Journal of Politics on Military Spending and Poverty. My own experience. I realized that we were poor. Welfare, ADC. They were called ADC before AFDC. Aid to Dependent Children. And I knew when I went to the Army, so half my tech went to my mother.

Dr. Henderson: Because that was the most you could, you couldn't send it all, you know. Because some people I found out, you know, that they would, they'd be usurious on their own children or they would, they would take all their money and stuff. And also in the Army, the first time, not the

first time, but when I really had an intimate connection with poor White people, because I didn't think there were poor White people. Just like when I was in high school, I didn't think there were, there were well-off Black people. I was upset when I met the Black people in high school and I saw they, they lived in houses and the houses were, were, were separated. They weren't connected. I grew a house in the project.

Dr. Henderson: I was upset. I was pissed. I was a sister. I was kind of a girlfriend. I'm trying. And she lived in this elite part of Detroit called Palmerwood. And they got intercoms in their, in their house, intercoms in their house. They got furniture that's made by, oh, I have to be careful what I say. But somehow, we... we were extra proprietary. We might take things without paying for them at the cash register. So, these belts, which were easy to take, to just put them on. Pierre Cardin, Yves Saint Laurent. We had those types of, but this, she got Pierre Cardin furniture. And she didn't like it. I was pissed that she's Black. Do I mean in high school?

Dr. Henderson: But then I got a girlfriend from like the, the day after Palmerwood was assured before. And I had a girlfriend from over there on the west side. So, I would like to say my politics were such that I was like, no, no, I won't date you because you all left us, left us in the project. So, I had a girlfriend from over there. I got over there. I'm like, we probably brought this on ourselves. So, so, so the idea about, I want to tell that story to make the point that, um, my political consciousness was, even as I was working and doing these things, I was learning as I went along. I wasn't conscious in Wayne State. Some of the things I said back in '83. So, I don't want to give people that impression. No, it wasn't.

Dr. Henderson: I have people in my family with the Black Panther Party, my older sister was in the Black Panther Party. They taught me, but it wasn't kicking in. I don't want to give people the impression. So, when I go, when I go to, when I see this quantity, I think of work, military spending. I knew that the money I sent back to my mother was more than what she got on, especially because now I'm gone. Because age of the family with dependent children, I was still a dependent child when I was 17. So, so I knew that military spending, uh, typically crowds out investment. Um, and, uh, it was viewed as something that could have either no impact on, uh, on, on, uh, on poverty.

Dr. Henderson: Um, but then it wasn't further investigated largely, but there was a huge literature on unemployment and poverty, which was the most direct, uh, relationship. So, I knew that military spending has different categories. And part of the category is on personnel and spending. Things like procurement may crowd out some investment, but, but personnel, I was a person that when I went to the military, there was one less person in poverty. And then the money I can send to my

family, help them. You see, so I'm like the connections, military spending and poverty, the military spending. It doesn't have the impact of social welfare spending, but this part of it, personnel spending could. So, I put that in, um, uh, article, it's published in 1998, uh, military spending and poverty.

Dr. Henderson: Interesting thing about it. I, I proposed this thesis, uh, to, uh, at Michigan. And I proposed, and I think Kathy Crowe was in that class at one time with Sheldon Dasinger and Mary Corcoran. And I proposed it. I put it together. I had my research design, and it gave me a, uh, I think they gave me an A minus. I said, what's the minus, uh, uh, uh, cause I would ask my professor. And, um, and he said, well, it's, uh, it's never been done. I said, that, that, that creates a problem as opposed to it being novelism. So that's the kind of stuff you have to deal with. So, when I got it published, I went back, went back to find it. I couldn't find him.

Dr. Henderson: I could only find Mary Corcoran. So, so the Journal of Politics published the thesis you said was untenable. Uh, when I was a student. So, I went to, I went to testing this notion that democracies don't fight each other. I thought that was just a, um, it's, um, it was more an empirical regularity that was uncovered. There was no strong theoretical argument for it. So, my second book focused on debunking that. I would tell people I am a professional debunker. I subject theses to, um, empirical examination. I did the same thing with the Clash of Civilizations thesis on the first, uh, upon the table articles to demonstrate that it's inaccurate. I was published in 2001, but the, um, I, so I've debunked that.

Dr. Henderson: I debunked the democratic peace thesis. I debunked, uh, the Clash of Civilizations thesis. I tell my students that because I have no originality, I can't come up with my own. So, I just debunk what's out there. But I, I, I advised them that one of the first things you could do is simply test extant thesis with a longer spatial typical domain. Often when they were published, there's more data now than when they were published. So just test them. And this is a way that you can develop your research skills. And then in my case, publish in a pretty, uh, high-valued, uh, uh, journal at that time, the Journal of Politics. And, but remember, I'm an international relations scholar.

Dr. Henderson: So, my last book with Zeph Miles, who's the head of the World's War Project, is on religion and world politics. A lot of debunking there, too. Uh, but we built, uh, a data set, uh, had a, uh, uh, about a, almost a two million grant from the Tilken Foundation. Uh, we didn't get all that money. It was scattered across researchers across I think three continents. Um but uh it was published by University of Michigan Yes Well um a big part of it was challenging again the extant

thesis about religion and conflict religion and cooperation That came out in 2020 I did empirical work on um called African Realism At this time I gave credit to both Singer and Ali Mazroui, um, Professor Mazroui and I were going to write an article uh about what he did. And he asked... and he was such... a... he encouraged me so much as a graduate student. Well, um, Singer foremost thought it as a quantitative analysis, but it also includes a, uh, uh, um, a chapter on White supremacy in international relations.

Dr. Henderson: This may be surprising to some. The first two Black political science PhDs were called government then, but they were political science PhDs, was Ralph Bunche. Ralph Bunche and Murs Tate. They both focused on international relations, isn't it? And so, for some, it's like, how did they have a particular penchant for international relations? Um, but, uh, but there was also at a time when there wasn't as much research on Black politics in the United States, because for some strange reason, Blacks didn't seem to be political.

Dr. Henderson: You know, for some strange reason, they didn't vote. And some strange reason, right? So, they focused on international relations. And so, what I, uh, did was I, uh, tested the extent to which prominent paradigms in world politics, through prominent realism and liberalism, were applicable to Africa's inter... interstate wars. So, that's that book published in 25, it was very hard trying to get a publisher. I went down the list. Most of them either wouldn't consider it, because it's where most quantitative scholars in world politics do not focus on racism, much less White supremacist. That's what I call it. And I've been calling it that for, I don't know, 30 years. Um, and most folks who focus on racism don't do quantitative analysis in world politics.

Dr. Henderson: And it's unfortunate, too. And that's one thing I would encourage, certainly I hope absent others, a focus on, uh, Black scholarship in international relations. When I first got to Michigan, I knew I wanted to do something. I thought I wanted to study the, the, democracy, because I had taken quite a bit of interest in it. Um, but, uh, but then I realized I wanted to understand power, and I wanted to understand huge inequalities of world politics. And this was taking me back to, again and again, to war. And again, this is during the Cold War era. So, I knew I wanted to do world politics. That's what we call it in Michigan. World politics, not international relations. So, I wanted to do world politics. And I wanted to understand quantitative analysis.

Dr. Henderson: The idea would be like a carpenter. Have the right tool for the right job. And I got upset with folks who would, they would critique quantitative analysis, but they couldn't do it. They didn't know what they were critiquing. You know what I'm saying? And then, uh, likewise, I was upset with quantitative work because, substantively, it didn't focus on things that were important

to me in the way I thought it was important. So why do you talk about war when I'm talking about White supremacy? See? I'm talking about war and I'm talking about racism. I ain't talking about war and I'm talking about sexism. And, uh, I had this other interest as well in interpersonal violence.

Dr. Henderson: So, I... I published on that too with a former student from the University of Florida, Cruz Carradine-Raino, who's an economist. So, I published on feminist economics with that quantitative work in that regard as well. And it's excellent. So, so a lot of folks who, um, who, uh, encouraged me and a lot of folks' work, their work has been influential. And one of the things I like so much about what I've been able to do over my career, I didn't plan it this way, is I've worked on such different topics. There are five books. Um, the first book, the only page numbers are page numbers. The second book is quantitative. The third book is both. Then I'll tell you a little bit more about the fourth book.

Dr. Henderson: The fourth book, only numbers are page numbers. That was in 2019. The last book is heavily quantitative, uh, published in 2020 by Michigan. That book, the 2019 book, that the book that reflects more of what I was talking about from the projects, my earliest teacher. It's on Black revolution in the United States. It's called "The Revolution Will Not Be Theorized." Mm-hmm. The, uh, the subtitle, uh, I don't even know what the subtitle is, of, um, I think it's "Cultural Revolution of the Black Powered Heron." But the key there, I ripped off, you know, Gil Scott-Heron, of "The Revolution Will Not Be Theorized." But the idea is the revolution will not be theorized by y'all. It's artificial.

Dr. Henderson: You leave that to the White folks, the theory. And this will bother me so much. When we're talking about the social movement stuff, when you're talking about storming the barricades or whatever the, from the, or the free breakfast program, or free of the land, you know, whatever the, we're talking about that Black folks all in the forefront. Once you start talking about theorizing it, it got some White person, probably, uh, never even been here, from Marx to Gramsci, who's in, uh, one of Mussolini's prisons, while Du Bois is writing Black Reconstruction, which is a thesis on Black revolution in the United States, even if Du Bois don't call it that. So, I build on W.E.B. Du Bois.

Dr. Henderson: I build on, uh, Alain Locke as theorist. I look at the Black Power Movement folks as theorists. And it's just something, sister. I would come to some of these folks, or some of my new personnel, and I would ask them, I tell them, I'm not in story. I don't care who was sleeping with who. I'm interested in theory. And it took a while. And some of it, you can see, you can see

how it affected them. And they were like, nobody's asked me that before. What I do with General Baker and Mary Kramer, the League of Revolutionary Black Workers, or the old heads from, uh, the Black Panther Party, from us, what is this? From the Republic of New Africa. Mario Vidal, Sid Willy, Mario Vidal.

Dr. Henderson: Nobody's asked me about the theory. You see what I'm saying? And I think that's what I would encourage. So, theory is strategy. And what I saw was they had a theoretical argument. And I go back to, I go back to the slave era. And then I apply, I talk about the Black Power Movement in terms of the theoretical argument that was right under their feet. I'm not mad at them. He said, I'm not mad at them. They're doing a lot of things. You see what I'm saying? But they're trying to mimic and they take revolutionary theory from abroad. They didn't study the revolution under their feet. What was that? It was the slave revolution of the U.S. Civil War.

Dr. Henderson: There was a slave. I showed them evidence and I showed from these Black scholars. And then I showed Steve Hahn, who had never been Black in his life. Uh, he's that president won Pulitzer Prize for saying pretty much what Du Bois said in 1935. He wins the Pulitzer in 2004. He argues that's a slave revolution. You see what I'm saying? So, I said, you won't take it from me. They're from Steve Hahn. Stephanie McCurdy in Confederate Revenue. She said, Davis and others said, my slaves are in revolt. How did they do it? How did they strategize it? What was their strategy? It's beautiful to appreciate. But unfortunately, the Civil Rights Movement - they don't understand it. They didn't reflect on it, I'm sorry.

Dr. Henderson: And it's unfortunate that Black Lives Matter today is something about, and Robert Smith talks about we have no leaders. But one of the problems is they have no theory that applies to Black people in the United States that developed from the actual liberation struggle of Black people, in particular the slave revolution. So, in your view, what is necessary in order to further diversify the discipline and make it more equitable and welcoming to scholars of color in the profession? That's excellent. Um, challenge and overturn White supremacy. It's as simple and direct as that. When I'm talking to folks who actually want to address these issues, I say racism in the United States. Racism is a management problem in the profession. It's a management problem. Let me make it plain.

Dr. Henderson: There was a time when there were no women in the political science department. When they said they were going to have their first woman professor in the political science department, picture the department meeting. They have to understand that once she comes, before she comes, we've got to make some changes. We've got to make, if nothing else, we need a new

bathroom, a new lavatory, restroom. If nothing else, there are structural changes that have to be made once you address sexism and once you have your first woman professor. I would argue when it comes to having your first Black professor or your first Black tenure professor or your first Black full professor, these issues are not even raised, much less addressed. You see, so what happens when you have your first Black professor?

Dr. Henderson: One thing, you have to do something about the evaluative criteria. These White folks often have never had a Black professor, clearly, in your department. Many of them also had never had a Black authority figure they had to answer to. You see, how do you weight evaluations for these types of factors, knowing that the context is racist? I'm just going to go with the first. Let's keep it simple. I'm the first tenured professor in the history of Penn State, the Penn State's political science department. They've been teaching Penn State, political science at Penn State since the 19th century. I'm brilliant, but I'm not that damn brilliant. No, and it wasn't until, I believe, 2019 that they tenured an assistant at all.

Dr. Henderson: They still have not tenured a Black full professor, you see. Now, notice what I'm saying, race is a management problem. But this professor, tenured professor, is not going to be evaluated by overwhelmingly White professors. Watch me now. Who've habituated themselves to not having Black professors as peers. And they're going to do the peer evaluations? I'm saying you need to address it. See, notice I'm saying this. You don't have to call the folks racist or whatever. I'm saying, but you see, it's a management issue. How do we address it systematically? You know, Harold and I, we go on the links every now and then. We go off, you know, I know it's children. Oh, that's not systematic or institutionalized.

Dr. Henderson: Because what happens when you have those that don't, they don't like her or go off for a chill trip, you know what I'm saying? That shouldn't be a requirement. What are the institutional, and I argue that those things have not been implemented. And when you have things like the police killing of George Floyd leading to these things. I've told them at Penn State, I've been making this argument for 20 years here. You know something? George Floyd wasn't a student here. If what? What motivates you is not something from your own universe and your own context, you won't change your context. You'll change the way that public whose George Floyd's killing affected tremendously. You'll do something for the public, you'll do something for PR.

Dr. Henderson: But systematic changes right here. So that's what's key. Also, when you have someone like me who challenges White supremacism, also does quantitative work. How do I get it published? You send it to the editors who've presided over the journals. International relations,

I'm focusing on now. Who never published an article about White supremacy? Ever, ever, ever, ever. You see what I'm saying? But they are going to be the ones to determine if this is scholarship. This has been published. We haven't even gotten to the canon yet. You see? So, this is what you challenge White supremacy by challenging White supremacy. If you're talking about race relations, you ain't got it. Just like you challenge patriarchy by challenging patriarchy.

Dr. Henderson: You see, anything else doesn't go to the heart of this. Now, I want to be clear. I'm not knocking other folks who are doing different aspects of this work. I want to be clear. This is just what I've carved out. I want to focus on White supremacy worldwide. And I got an argument for that. Why? It's the dominant form of racism in the global system. You see, I got an argument for that. Why I choose this. I'm not knocking what other folks are doing. Who's going to help to nurture students who are doing this? And there are students who are doing this now. I'm not comfortable saying, but they're for the historical. There's a wonderful student at UC San Diego, Bianca Freeman, who's doing work on racism and international relations.

Dr. Henderson: This is a sister. She's a twin, too. So, this is actually part of her business. And one of my students, one of the things I'm most proud of at Penn State, Frank Baumgartner, probably the White person who does more with and for Black folks in political science. Frank knows more Black folks than I do. He's constantly asking me about these people as prospective hires. He brought us to Penn State. He brought five Black folks at once in 2002. But he was the chair of the department. He also went to the same university that I did. He went to Michigan. He was the same high school as I did. He's one of those White folks from that era who actually lives in Detroit.

Dr. Henderson: You know, below eight mile, eight mile is the barrier. This is Frank Baumgartner. He's also brilliant. He's at University of North Carolina. Frank Baumgartner and I... I want to be careful with my language because we use it like jokingly. And I don't want it to be triggering. But, but you probably think of what we mean. We went to all these different conferences, different places, looking. We were looking. And we found three. I call them the triplets. Kenesha Vine, sister, Ja'Konna Thomas, sister, and Martha Thomas. And I call them the triplets. When I got to Penn State, there were no Blacks in the PhD program. That's zero. Zero. I asked some of the leadership, both from Michigan. Well, why is that? What do you think about that?

Dr. Henderson: They said, well, but we're making progress. I said, you're both Michigan-trained PhDs, as am I. That's not what I infer from zero, progress. So even their response is superficial. It's just being frank. We went out looking. We brought these three. Two of them became our highest placements from Penn State. Not the highest placements of the Blacks, but the highest

placements. One of them, sister Ja’Konna, called the queen of queens. She’s the queen of New York. She’s about this big, itty bitty. So, it’s just exceptional. She went to Michigan State, got early tenure at Michigan State. Now she’s out in San Diego, and Bianca Freeman’s there. And that’s what I say. And I’m not saying they work together, but here’s an international relations scholar.

Dr. Henderson: And especially Ja’Konna and Kenesha, they went into the security side, where there are even fewer women, fewer White women in the security, what we used to call the bombs and rockets, the security side of international relations, which is also exceptional. I tried to get the White chair of the department to put their pictures on. We have pictures on the department to put their pictures on. I talk about this in an article. I wrote in 2019, January, I wrote an article. I made a piece for the student paper called Being Black at Penn State. I encourage folks to read that and to read that from a tenured professor who wrote that. And you can write being Black wherever you are. That was the idea.

Dr. Henderson: I took it from the students at University of Michigan, being Black at U of M. So, it talks about this. And I want people to see. Sometimes people say, well, maybe when I get tenure, I can do this. No, you won’t. I’ve done this since I was a student. We led a protest during COVID. It’s the police killing of Osagie Osagie in State College. You see, he’s right there. He’s still leading protests. I’m not just talking about what I did back then. And I get this from a sister. She was telling me, in Detroit, she was helping us and working. Working different movements with us, downtown Detroit, Kennedy Square. She said, she said, Errol, I never liked what people said. This was in the late 80’s, early 90’s.

Dr. Henderson: She says, Errol, I never liked what people say, what they did in that time. She said, until I take my last breath, this is my time. And I will kiss those gorgeous cheeks of hers and say, and long thereafter. Her name was Rosa Parks. You see? So, she’s working with us. So, I’m not listing people and what they did in their time. Ok, just miss me with all that. But the other part is, when you say you want to do it when you get a ticket, no you’re not. Based on what? You have no experience doing it. Do it, encourage your students, but don’t make it a requirement for them learning your subject, accuracy and not advocacy. But I’m often encouraged that you can do both and you should do both.

Dr. Henderson: So, the university can invest in that. The last thing I said about activism, I call that, people put that on service. But I also put it on, what do you call it, when people do it for the defense department. What’s the word I’m looking for? Consulting. So, I’m consulting with a community-

based organization. I call that consulting work. See what I'm saying? So, to recognize these different types of work that have been going on for a long time. Just like we recognize management issues. And I can leave with this quotidian one that doesn't involve race. A department chair, and you'll see why I say this. A department chair who is married, has no children. The department meetings are typically from about 2:30 to 4:30.

Dr. Henderson: So, those of us with children are like, that's where we're going to pick them up from school. You know what I'm saying? But he has no children. So, it's not an automatic response to where it's for us. We're like, whenever we have a department meeting, it can't be done at that time. 2:30 is what? Are you serious? For the department? No. So, you don't have to have children. You just have responsibilities associated with when school lets out. So that's again, management issues. How do you do that in the context of racism?

Interviewer: So, this is the last question I have. And building off of that, in addition to existing diversity, equity, and inclusion programming, what is your advice to associations like APSA or NCOBPS on how best to support Black scholars in the profession as they approach milestones in their career?

Dr. Henderson: And this may seem to be strange, probably for me, to invest in Black folks and especially Black folks who are not doing race. You see, my first published article was with Black Nationalism in Rap Music. I'm not going to make my career on that, but I'm proud of that 1996 article in the Journal Black Studies. I'm a political scientist. I'm an international relations scholar. Much of my focus has been when I talk about debunking some of these prominent theses. Well, the prominent theses often don't implicate race, they don't mention them. I just said that what they require is serious familiarity with the literature, an extensive familiarity with the literature, and first-rate quantitative skills, or better, first-rate empirical skills.

Dr. Henderson: It can be surveys, interviews, to encourage that. And then for me, as an international relations scholar, even today, I think that APSA and NCOBPS, the focus is not on international relations, that Black scholars, we must be doing comparative politics or American politics. And I tease my American politics friend because I do world politics. So, I tease them, and I say an Americanist is really a comparativist who can only focus on one country at a time. At Michigan, we had a picture of world politics, and it had a picture of the globe. And underneath, Cigar had written, we focus on one small territory. So, I have some of that too. But to invest in Black folks who do a range of this, but also those who do race in places, in places or in spaces that generally don't do it, like international relations or only do it when it's a Black thing.

Dr. Henderson: So, you can tell me about the work in Africa or something. So, me debunking or challenging the democratic peace thesis. And when I would do it, I would go to the International Studies Association Conference. And you may be a commentator, sister. I know others have commented. I go to the International Studies, they see my past and they look at me. They're like, "Errol Henderson." And was like, "You're Errol Henderson?" And you know what they mean. Because in the book, there's no picture. I mean, it's a quantitative analysis. So, they're like, they have questions. And I had that as a follow up. Like, you're sure? You wrote this one? And I've done this type of work. So, I encountered that.

Dr. Henderson: So, to encourage that in the spirit of, like I said, the two PhDs in political science, African-Americans from the United States, male and female, Ralph Bunche and Merce Tate, they both focus on international relations. So, book prizes and things, they often won't focus on international relations. I was upset. There was a Ralph Bunche, my African realism book, I think it opens with, I think it was Ali Mazroui or something. They got the boys. I mean, they're not in a relationship. But it don't get nowhere. Now you get mine. People call it code switch and I don't care. But there's no Ralph Bunche prize for me. There's no... I'm doing stuff with these other folks that haven't touched. Building on Black folks who have.

Dr. Henderson: I've been citing Merce Tate since the late 90's, early 2000's. And, you know, first time I heard Merce Tate, first person who told me that, that's a graduate school from David Singer. I asked him, hey, do you read any Black scholars? And he said, if you want to go on this, I remember in '42 that Morgan thought prayers. He told me a bunch and Merce Tate. But I didn't know she was the first until I think I was leaving the NCOBPS conference and I bumped into this one sister and she started telling me that her name Diane Pinderhughes. So, there's so much of nurturing that can be done. But I think that we're at a space where you can focus on the talent in international relations because, simply put, and my best technical point is, we are the world... world politics. Ok, stop.

Interviewer: Thank you so much, Dr. Henderson. That concludes our interview.

Dr. Henderson: This was a wonderful experience.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time today.

Dr. Henderson: Oh, I appreciate it.