Intersectional Methodology Application in the Graduate Setting: Unequal Hardships and Burdens at the Humphrey School

MPP Professional Paper

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I. INTRODUCTION

Graduate school, whether it be master's or PhD programs, professional-oriented careers, or academics, is notoriously difficult for most, if not all, students who choose to pursue it. It requires extraordinary time management, hard work, and sacrifice for the time in which you are a student, not to mention the ever-increasing cost of higher education across the board. But are all students afforded the same privileges in graduate school? How does a student's background-factors such as race, gender, and class, among others, affect their experiences in graduate school? Do students who are minoritized in greater society face higher burdens in graduate programs? While there exists some scholarship on the graduate school experience among minoritized students, primarily among specifically students of color, many such studies are extraordinarily small and/or narrowly focused. As the academy has historically excluded or limited participation by minoritized populations, examining such issues is highly necessary and relevant in our current climate of heightened racial tensions and suppression.

In the spring of 2023, select faculty and staff at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, a graduate school focused on master's programs concerning government policy and non-profit organizations, located at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities campus in Minneapolis, solicited the students of the PA 5933 Survey Methods course, taught by Professor Deborah Levison, to conduct what they termed a Hardships Survey. In their requesting statement, these clients argued that a survey of the master's students at the Humphrey School would "inform and motivate efforts to make the Humphrey School into a more student-ready institution." They defined a 'student-ready institution' as a "school where learning and engagement are designed to recognize, accommodate, and support the socio-economic needs and burdens experienced by students- as well as the unequal ways such needs and burdens are distributed across students".[1]

[1] Humphrey Survey Client Statement, Fall 2022.

These clients included Professor Joe Soss, an expert on social welfare policy, Professor Maria Hanratty, an expert on health and poverty economics, Anne Stepchuk, Program Coordinator for the Public Policy and Urban and Regional Planning programs, and finally former Director of Career and Student Success at the Humphrey School, Jennifer Guyer-Wood.[2] Questions such as inquiring about income, debt, expenses, time demands, and broader hardships were asked of the students. Uniquely, the survey also asked students about other aspects of their lives that they felt burden them in graduate school, including cultural commitments and caregiving responsibilities. The survey also allowed students to give written feedback, resulting in both quantitative and qualitative data on a variety of relevant topics.[3]

The Hardships Survey provides us with a unique opportunity to utilize the opinions and feedback of a significant portion of graduate students from one institution, varying in characteristics, identities, backgrounds, and experiences across their time at the Humphrey School. I have utilized relevant quantitative data from the survey, as well as outside literature and expertise, in an attempt to understand key questions about minoritized students in graduate school, including, but not limited to: do members of minoritized groups and/or marginalized identities face greater financial, personal, mental, or professional hardships than those from majority groups? How do factors such as caregiving status, cultural commitments, or gender and race affect how a student describes the hardships they are facing in their program? Particularly, how do these variables intersect to create compounding hardships that may create unduly unequal experiences for students with different identities?

II. CONTEXT

[2] Oliver, Hardships Survey Report, 2023.
[3] As the students of PA 5933 designed the survey, there were some small errors in the final questionnaire. One example includes two important hardship questions, one of which was scored from 0-7 while the other was scored from 1-7 (B18 and J16, respectively).

The survey was predominantly drafted, edited, and tested by Humphrey students themselves who were enrolled in the course. The Humphrey School offers multiple master's graduate programs, including a Master of Public Policy (MPP), Master of Human Rights (MHR), Master of Urban and Regional Planning (MURP), Master of Development Practice (MDP), Master of Public Administration (MPA), and Master of Science, Technology, and Environmental Policy (MS-STEP).

A significant portion of this student population were MPP students, at 48%, or 125 students. A distribution of students across programs can be found in Table One, which was created for use in the Hardships Survey Report. Understanding the various programs offered by Humphrey and the amount each cohort contains is important because, in some instances, student populations vary across programs. For example, the MPA program is designed for mid-career students, meaning there is a higher likelihood of differing economic and personal circumstances for students within that program. Comparatively, the MPP program contains more students straight out of their undergraduate program or just a few years removed. While this is not universal across the program, they are useful factors to consider. Considering the extremely small nature of the Humphrey School's PhD program, the Hardships Survey included only these master's students. Of these 378 master's students, 268, or 70.9%, partially completed the survey. 64% or 242 students completed the survey in full.[4]

Table One: Respondents of the "Hardship Survey" by Degree Program

Degree Program	**Percent**	**Number**	**Missing**
Public Policy, MPP	48	125	

[4] Oliver, Hardships Survey Report, 2023.

Urban and Regional Planning, MURP	18	48	
Public Administration, MPA	13	34	
Science, Technology, and Environmental Policy, MS-STEP	10	26	
Development Practice, MDP	6	15	
Human Rights, MHR	7	18	
Total	**100**	**266**	**2**

Source: Oliver, Hardships Survey Report, 2023, pg, 4.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

As I discussed briefly above, literature regarding graduate students' experiences is slim and often quite narrow. Studies about graduate students of color and other minoritized groups are also quite new, with samples being fairly small. Considering the survey's unique context, not all literature will be perfectly relevant to this project, but I hope to shed light on what other graduate students report concerning their hardships, stressors, and experiences. I have included here literature regarding specifically students of color in graduate programs as well as literature on class, financial standing, and first-generation status. Literature that investigates women as a whole and their experiences in graduate school were difficult to find, as most were either concerned with very specific groups of women (such as black women, or feminist women) or dealt mainly with Title IX issues.

In 2022, Augustine S. J. Park and Jasmeet Bahia conducted a small study (n=22) entitled *Examining the Experiences of Racialized and Indigenous Graduate Students as Emerging Researchers.* Park and Bahia conducted semi-structured qualitative interviews with graduate students, exploring their experiences through a framework of critical race theory (CRT) and instances of color-blind racism. The study found four major themes amongst graduate students of

color: positive experiences with advisors, unequal access to funding, experiences of self-tokenism, and a significant sense of responsibility to their communities. This response from Park and Bahia's study is especially relevant to the Hardships survey as the survey also asks a question regarding cultural commitments or responsibility to the community. The survey asked students to rate the extent (0-5) to which cultural commitments "to family, community, or religious organizations" are a barrier to their ability to succeed in their graduate program, if at all. In regards to their overall experiences, Park and Bahia report that BIPOC students experience 'battle fatigue' or "the negative effects on health and well-being from continuously battling racism. Indeed, BIPOC graduate students often struggle with the impact of racism on their mental health, which can also result in reduced academic engagement and greater difficulty in program completion".[5] While battle fatigue is difficult to measure, the Hardships survey intends to create a rounder picture of what many students, including BIPOC students, struggle with in graduate school.

Park and Bahia also reported that 9 of the 22 students they interviewed reported unequal access to funding. This finding is indicative of a larger problem as other scholars (Gooden et. al, Ramirez) have reported that "BIPOC students often receive inadequate funding that is less than the funding awarded to their white peers".[6] While we do not have access to this data from the survey or the Humphrey School, this literature can help us to get a better understanding of how financial standing or the need to work to support yourself through school can negatively impact a student in a graduate program, or create unequal difficulties. As one student interviewed by Park and Bahia reports, "If you're coming into the program and you don't have funding [versus]

[5] Park and Bahia, 2022, pg. 405.
[6] Park and Bahia, 2022, pg . 409.

somebody who has funding—of course, they can be at the library for ten hours a day. You may have to go to work for five to eight of those hours and then still have to study at night".[7]

Scholars David Brunsma, David Embrick, and Jean Shin also studied graduate students of color in 2016, with a focus on mentoring as well as the reasons students of color pursue graduate education and what they find when they get there. Brunsma, Embrick, and Shin find that, overall, there is an increased level of uncertainty across the board in graduate programs, writing that "...the intersection between graduate training for the professoriate and the institutional logic that seeks to make new wine using old bottles has left many academic disciplines sluggish, stagnant, and stubborn with respect to the variation of experiences it faces within its ranks".[8] Many of today's graduate programs, while striving to adapt to the changing demographics and situations of their students, are falling short. The systems and institutions themselves have not been designed to accommodate, support, and uplift minority students. This is evident both in the request for the Hardships Survey as well as the results. Students are having a much more difficult time navigating graduate school without significant financial or emotional burdens.

According to Bahia and Park, "BIPOC graduate students often struggle with the impact of racism on their mental health, which can also result in reduced academic engagement and greater difficulty in program completion".[9] Studies conducted with graduate students of color reveal that many report a "lack of meaningful and reciprocally trusting mentorship, belongingness and social integration, and mental health supports".[10] In their study *Addressing Race and Diversity in Graduate Education: Practices From Student Activism*, Wendy Chu and others theorize that this may be due in part to disparities in minority representation among

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[7] Park and Bahia, 2022, pg. 409.
[8] Brunsma, Embrick, and Shin, 2016, pg. 2.
[9] Park and Bahia, 2022, pg. 407.
[10] Chu et.al., 2022, pg. 7.

faculty. Citing fellow scholars, Chu, and co-authors also suggest that this phenomenon could be in part explained "by a lack of awareness or acknowledgment of the issues students face surrounding DEI, and by a lack of institutional mechanisms and programming that explicitly support students of color".[11]

Class and financial standing are important factors to consider when investigating burdens and inequities among graduate students. Allison Hurst and fellow co-authors report that there are "pipeline" inequalities among working and lower-class students, including "limited resources, disadvantages in knowledge and cultural capital, a desire or need to stay proximate to home, and lower levels of attendance at private and liberal arts undergraduate institutions".[12] These pipeline inequalities can make it more difficult not only to navigate graduate school but to feel as if you are part of the larger community of your program. Citing Deborah Warnock and Sara Appel's work on graduate student integration, Hurst states that "students who self-identified as working or lower class…often feel less academically prepared, are less socially integrated, and tend to be more financially disadvantaged than their peers".[13],[14] Ever-increasing uncertainty around work and aid only makes navigating graduate programs even more difficult for these students. All of these factors are intimately intertwined with a student's intersectional identity and background, all of which are also targeted within the Hardships Survey at Humphrey.

One important aspect of all these studies to take note of is that while studying diversity, equity, and inclusion, they did not use explicitly intersectional methods. This is clear to see in the generally siloed studies that I have discussed here, in which each study has one specific demographic on which they focus. While these types of studies help us to get a more detailed

[11] Chu et. al., 2022, pg .7.
[12] Hurst et.al 2023, pg. 150.
[13] Hurst et.al 2023, pg. 150
[14] Warnock and Appel, 2011.

understanding of some of the experiences of students of color or lower-class students in graduate school, they do not discuss the ways that all these identities can intersect in ways that compound these burdens and difficulties. While our sample is not large, the data set that the hardships survey provides us with is a unique opportunity to zoom in more closely on how graduate students themselves feel about the burdens and barriers they face in their time in school. This project intends to contribute to this literature on graduate school experience and DEI with an explicitly intersectional framework, outlined in detail below.

IV. INTERSECTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Applying an intersectional framework to this case study of Humphrey graduate students and graduate students on a wider scale is essential. In the client's initial request for the hardships survey, the authors outline that "students' basic needs and socio-economic circumstances play a critical role in shaping access to graduate programs, learning outcomes, degree-completion outcomes, personal well-being, and life trajectories after graduation." We must consider and investigate how those who hold minoritized identities are impacted differently than their peers in regards to the above factors – not just at the Humphrey School, but the graduate system and student experience as a whole. Due to the inter-dimensional and complex nature of social identity and experience, the intersectionality framework is the most appropriate to approach this question.

Pioneered in the black feminist field, "intersectionality" was famously coined by law scholar Kimberle Crenshaw in the 1980s.[15] In its simplest form, intersectionality theory posits that one's identities intersect, rather than run parallel to each other. Aspects of identity such as race, class, gender, or sexuality do not stand alone but run across dimensions to create a

[15] Crenshaw, 1989.

distinctive individual. Fundamentally, intersectionality theory posits that social categories "such as race/ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, and ability, are socially constructed, and dynamic".[16] Most importantly, intersecting minoritized identities create unique and compounding inequalities. Considering an individual or population's whole complex identity is critical to understanding their experiences and beginning to remedy the issues they face. While running cross-tabulations of certain identities and circumstances cannot capture the entire, complex individual or student, doing so can help us to reveal stark disparities and differences among the Humphrey School population. In concert with intersectionality theory and literature on already documented disparities among graduate students, I intend to investigate the possible existing hardships faced by minoritized students at the Humphrey School and offer recommendations for possible improvement in the future.

Implementing intersectionality as a research methodology has been notoriously difficult and complex to achieve, even among scholars across multiple disciplines, including women's studies, political science, and sociology. An additional layer of complexity is added by utilizing quantitative data due to the nebulous nature of drawing conclusive results from data sets that were often not designed intersectionally. There is also the looming issue of parsimony or the well-established scientific principle of choosing the simplest theory among many that fit the data well.[17] While there exists a vast literature and set of theories for implementing intersectional methodology, there are a few that I draw from in this project. These include Leslie McCall's categorical approaches, Hae Yeon Choo and Myra Marx Ferree's process and group-centered approach, and finally, Ange-Marie Hancock's application of the social science concept of fuzzy sets in intersectionality research.

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[16] Hoffman and Mitchell, 2016, pg. 2.
[17] Hancock, 2007, pg. 66.

By using intersectionality as a methodology in this study, I understand intersectionality as theory in action. As McCall writes in her approach to intersectionality as methodology, "Ideally, a methodology is a coherent set of ideas about philosophy, methods, and data that underlie the research process and the production of knowledge".[18] I find McCall's categorizations of intersectionality methodologies to be especially useful in this instance. McCall defines three common approaches: intra-categorical complexity, which focuses on intersections of "neglected points"; inter-categorical complexity, which "adopts existing analytical categories to document relationships of inequality *among* social groups and across dimensions" and finally, anti-categorical complexity.[19] Anti-categorical complexity eschews the use of a strict binary or categories to navigate identity oppression. As McCall writes, "…the premise of this approach is that nothing fits neatly except as a result of a stable and heterogenous social reality".[20] McCall here is pointing out that the very social and identity categories we use to define intersections are in themselves invented and oppressive. This, I believe, is an important distinction. While we as humans are incapable of removing ourselves entirely from working within identity categories, the anti-categorical approach pushes us to stay actively engaged in our intersectional framework. While the nature of the Hardships survey makes an anti-categorical approach difficult I would argue that its premise is an important one to keep in mind in any intersectional research.

More practically, a combination of McCall's inter-categorical and intra-categorical methods is most appropriate in this instance. As McCall writes, "the intra-categorical approach begins with a unified intersectional core—a single social group, event, or concept—and works its way outward to analytically unravel one by one the influences of gender, race, [and] class".[21]

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[18] McCall, 2005, pg, 1774.
[19] McCall, 2005, pg. 1785.
[20] McCall, 2005, pg. 1777.
[21] McCall, 2005, pg. 1786.

These methods lend themselves well to my project in the Humphrey school because each group I study exists in one setting (like in the intra-categorical model), yet I am applying limits to the groups I include and how I define them like in the inter-categorical model. I can contingently adopt traditional categories to get a better understanding of how those categories, and more importantly, their lived experiences amongst a group, play out, as structural inequalities and oppressions are often intimately intertwined in these socially constructed identity categories, without leaving my analysis open to the ambiguity of abandoning categories entirely.

Another potential stumbling block in an intersectionality framework is the sheer number of intersections and identities that you could include. Expanding your circle of categories threatens to defeat your very purpose of understanding a specific subset of people and experiences. For this reason, you must narrow your focus. There are a few ways to do this, as explored by sociology scholars Choo and Ferree, who write about group-centered, process-centered, or system-centered approaches to using intersectionality.[22] Being that their work focuses on broad concepts and the methods by which to employ intersectionality, I feel it is appropriate to briefly expand on what each approach means or entails. By choosing to focus on a subset of people, for example, you can focus more narrowly on that group. The same can be said for studying the process and systems by which groups of people uniquely experience things or face different inequalities or hardships. In this case, I have chosen to incorporate aspects of the group-centered approach by prioritizing a viewpoint stemming from my group's unique experiences and what factors influence that group's experience i.e. hardships faced in graduate school.

Hancocks' discussion of the incorporation of fuzzy sets and logic is helpful here. Originally and primarily a mathematical concept, fuzzy sets allow you to set “degrees of truth”

[22] Choo and Ferree, 2010, pg. 129.

or membership to predetermined groups in numbers or data sets, rather than simply binary ones and zeros or totally true vs. totally false.[23] Essentially, fuzzy sets allow for substantial grey area. Hancock makes the argument that fuzzy sets and fuzzy logic can be extremely useful to intersectional methodology because it allows one to "attend to the issue of within-group diversity in each category in a manner that is substantively and theoretically consistent with the claims of intersectionality".[24] Fuzzy sets help to solve issues about overlap or in-group diversity among intersectional groups, which is, in essence, the entire point of an intersectional approach. They help to create looser intersectional groups that make it easier to work with quantitative data intersectionally, as well as provide a solid foundation for the type of quantitative discretion I have needed to take with the Hardships data.[25]

V. METHODS

In a practical sense, I will be employing these intersectionality frameworks in the Humphrey case in the following ways. Through the use of both the Hardships Survey quantitative data and the Hardships Survey report, I aim to identify students of minority identities. At the time of the survey, termed formally as "Time Demands and Financial Hardships Survey", the Humphrey School's full master's student population was 378 students. Because the data comes from a survey meant to cover an entire population, it was not meant to be a sample but a census, and therefore statistical tests such as standard error cannot and will not be conducted. In other words, the data set I am examining is a sample (being a portion of the Humphrey student population), but was not produced using a random data-generating process. Those students who chose not to complete the survey fully, or at all, likely did so for a reason

[23] Cintula, Fermüller, and Noguera, 2021.
[24] Hancock, 2007, pg. 71.
[25] Hancock, 2007, pg. 72.

and therefore may be different in important ways than those students who did do so. Due to this fact, I can only describe the differences I observe from the data I have, and cannot conduct statistical texts that assume the sample is random.

From the survey, I chose as my primary groups: women, first-generation students, BIPOC students, students who reported hardships in their youth, and finally a reference group of white men who do not fall under any of those categories. and the unique hardships they experience at the Humphrey school. I do this in a few phases. You will see in Tables Two and Three simple demographic tables detailing the variables and their respective portions of the responding Humphrey student population. These variables were chosen both to limit the scope of the project in addition to their often minoritized status not just in graduate programs but society as a whole, as well as the fact that two major variables (gender and race) are an important focus in intersectionality. I chose to add first-generation status because of the educational setting of the project.

All of these core variables were questions directly asked of survey participants. In regards to the youth hardships variable, fellow student Margaret Oliver and I manually created markers in the data management system Stata to categorize students' youth hardships. The question asked of students was: “Reflecting on your social and economic situation when you were growing up, how would you assess the severity of hardships you and your family faced? 0 indicates not severe and 7 is very severe.” We then combined the responses into brackets of “not difficult”, “somewhat difficult”, and “difficult”. Because a direct class question was not asked of survey respondents, I am attempting to get at class and financial standing over a respondent's lifetime with this variable, especially regarding how their hardship in childhood may have affected them in graduate school.

Figure One showcases that many students who reported higher hardships in their youth also reported higher current overall financial hardship, and was derived using two questions from the survey in which students ranked their hardships for each category from zero to seven, and one to seven, respectively.[26] As Hancock writes, "[class is] a 'fuzzy' concept, most often operationalized as self-reported income…instead of merely using income as a proxy for class, an intersectional approach might define membership in a particular class not simply quantitative differences but theoretically relevant qualitative differences".[27] Utilizing the youth hardships variable in concert with this suggestive evidence that it may be related to overall financial hardships in graduate school is one more qualitative way to get a small view of a student's class throughout their lifetime. For use in my analysis, I then combined students who reported that their youth hardships were moderate, large, and very large burdens. Exuded from my sample were students who reported having little to no hardship and somewhat difficult hardships in their youth.

Figure One: Youth and Overall Financial Hardship

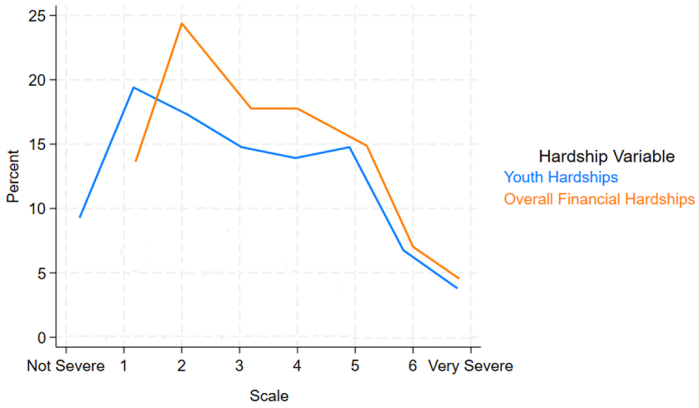

Figure One created by Margaret Oliver, Hardships Survey Report 2023.

[26]See Appendix for the full survey questions.
[27] Hancock, 2007, pg. 77.

From these core variables, I then created eight intersectional groups. Group zero contains all of the four core variables, and group seven contains none of them. Groups one through six then represent intersectional groups, crossed against each other one by one thereby creating six groups of double intersections. While a greater number of intersectional groups may be desirable, such as three or four-way intersectional groups, the size of this project and the number of respondents simply do not allow for such complexity and analysis. Each of these intersectional groups and their respective populations can be seen in Table Two. Of these seven groups, not all students were divided equally. 22 students ended up being in zero groups, 20 students were in one group, 20 were in three groups, and 16 were in all seven groups (i.e. intersectional group 0WBFY). The 22 students in no groups could be due to a variety of factors, including wider intersections that I did not include here, such as a black woman who faced minimal youth hardship. This also means that of each of the eight groups, many students overlapped into more than one group. This is intentional. While other methodologies may require that each group be mutually exclusive from one another, because of the intersectional approach of this project, it is to be expected.I will then be comparing each of these core variables against five relevant hardships asked about in the survey, which include caregiving responsibilities, cultural commitments, paid work, unpaid work, and food insecurity. The wording of each question can be found in Table Three as well as the Appendix which includes the data for each question as well. I chose these hardship variables because they cover both some of the more commonly reported burdens like work outside of school, but also other less discussed burdens, to include other factors that may uniquely affect certain members of my groups, such as women and caregiving responsibilities. These five variables provide me with a rounded, yet properly limited,

set of hardships that I hope will give me a good understanding of how these eight intersectional groups and the students contained within them feel about their graduate school experiences.

Table Three: Survey Questions for Each Core and Hardship Variable

Core Variables		
Variable	**Question**	**Response Options**
Women	Which of the following best describes your gender identity?	(1) Woman (2) Man (3)Non-binary (4) Agender (5) Gender queer (6) Gender fluid (7) Two-spirit (8) Prefer to self-describe
BIPOC	Do you identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color)?	(1) No (2) Yes (3) Prefer not to answer
First-Generation Status	Do you consider yourself a first-generation student (among the first in your family to go to college as an undergraduate)?	(1) No (2) Yes (3) I'm not sure
Youth Hardship	Reflecting on your social and economic situation when you were growing up, how would you assess the severity of hardships you and your family faced? 0 indicates not severe and 7 is very severe.	(0) Not Severe (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) Very Severe

Hardship Variables		
Caregiving	Some people have many demands upon their time in addition to being a student. Rate the extent to which the following time demands are a barrier to your ability to succeed in your graduate program, if at all. Cultural commitments (to family, community, or religious organizations)	(1) Not at all (2) To a small extent (3) To a moderate extent (4) To a large extent (5) To a very large extent
Cultural Commitments	Some people have many demands upon their time in addition to being a student. Rate the extent to which the following time demands are a barrier to your ability to succeed in your graduate program, if at all. Cultural commitments (to family, community, or religious organizations)	(1) Not at all (2) To a small extent (3) To a moderate extent (4) To a large extent (5) To a very large extent
Paid Work	Some people have many demands upon their time in addition to being a student. Rate the extent to which the following time demands are a barrier to your ability to succeed in your graduate program, if at all. Paid work responsibilities	(1) Not at all (2) To a small extent (3) To a moderate extent (4) To a large extent (5) To a very large extent
Unpaid Work	Some people have many demands upon their time in addition to being a student. Rate the extent to which the following time demands are a barrier to your ability to succeed in your graduate program, if at all.	(1) Not at all (2) To a small extent (3) To a moderate extent (4) To a large extent

	Unpaid work/internship responsibilities	(5) To a very large extent
Food Insecurity	Since the start of the academic year in September 2022, have any of the following situations applied to you? Have you worried about obtaining food?	(0) No (1) Yes
Misc.		
Degree Program	What masters degree program are you enrolled in? (If you are a dual degree student, please mark the correct degree here even if you are doing classes in the other degree program this semester.)	(1) MPP - Master of Public Policy (2) MURP - Master of Urban and Regional Planning (3) MPA - Master of Public Affairs (mid-career) (4) MS-STEP - Master of Science, Technology and Environmental Policy MDP - (5) Master of Development Practice (6) MHR - Master of Human Rights (7) None of these degree programs
Overall Financial Hardship	Overall how would you rate the financial hardships, if any, that you have faced while a graduate student? Please use a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 indicates no hardships and 7 indicates very severe hardship	(1) Not Severe (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) Very Severe

VII. ANALYSIS

Table Two: Intersectional Group Population

Group Number	Group Core Variables	Number
0WBFY (ALL)	Women, BIPOC, First Generation, Youth Hardship	16
1WB	Women, BIPOC	40
2WF	Women, First Generation	34
3WY	Women, Youth Hardship	53
4BF	BIPOC, First Generation	33
5BY	BIPOC, Youth Hardship	41
6FY	First Generation, Youth Hardship	47
7N (NONE)	Men, White, Not First Generation, Minimal Youth Hardship	43

Table Four: Demographic Statistics

Core Variables	Yes	No	Not Answered/Unknown	Total	Percent Yes
Women	149	97	0	246	61
First Generation	62	180	4	246	25
BIPOC	61	181	4	246	25
Youth Hardship (moderate, large, and every large burdens)	91	143	12	246	37

As you can see in Table Four, there are notable numbers of each core variable in the Humphrey student population that answered the survey. 60% (n=149) of the students identified as women, while 25% (n=61) of students identified as BIPOC. 25% (n=62) of students held first-generation status, and 37% (n=91) reported moderate to very large burdens in their youth. I dropped those for whom we could not determine any outcomes (n=16), as well as those for whom I could not determine any of their characteristics (n=6).

Table Five: One-Way Intersections Between Core and Hardships Variable

	Rating of moderate or more burden due to:														
GROUP	**Caregiving**			**Cultural Commitments**			**Paid Work**			**Unpaid Work**			**Food Insecurity**		
	N	**T**	**%**	**N**	**T**	**%**	**N**	**T**	**%**	**N**	**T**	**%**	**N**	**T**	**%**
Women	47	125	**38**	47	138	**34**	118	147	**80**	43	119	**36**	32	111	**29**
BIPOC	26	49	**53**	35	59	**59**	49	60	**81**	22	51	**43**	18	52	**34**
First Generation Status	27	52	**52**	28	62	**45**	54	62	**87**	24	53	**45**	20	54	**37**
Youth Hardship	36	77	**47**	37	87	**42**	75	87	**86**	36	75	**48**	25	75	**33**

*N=number of students, T=Total number of students who answered each question

Table five, a non-intersectional table, takes a look at each core variable one at a time, comparing them to each hardship variable. This helps to take a wider lens look at each core variable. Notably, you can see here that despite their smaller population among the Humphrey student body, BIPOC students consistently report high burdens for each of the hardship variables, especially for cultural commitments, which 59% of BIPOC students report to be a moderate or higher burden. Also notable is the paid work hardship, which across the board for

each student group was a shockingly impactful burden, with each group coming in at 80% or above. While just a small increase, I also feel it is important to point out that first-generation students saw a slight bump in the percentage of the group (87%) that reported that paid work was a moderate or larger burden in graduate school. In terms of caregiving responsibilities, first-generation students and those who faced moderate or higher hardships in their youth had the highest numbers of students who cited it as a burden, at 52% and 47%, respectively. Food insecurity was fairly consistent across all four categories at about 30%. First-generation reported the highest amount of food insecurity at 37%.

Table three outlines each of the eight intersectional groups, i.e. the intersections that they include, and the number of students that fall into each group. 16 students fall into all four categories. The largest group is group three, or 3WY, or women who faced moderate or higher hardships in their youth, at 55 students. The smallest group was 4BF or first-generation BIPOC students, at 33 students. This may suggest, as Hurst writes, the existence of pipeline inequalities, meaning that fewer first-generation BIPOC students have had the ability or privilege of reaching the graduate programs at the Humphrey School leading to their small numbers. 47 students fall into group seven, or those who are white, non-first-generational men who faced minimal hardships in their youth. This number does not include all white men in the entire survey population, but only those who fell specifically in those four categories.

Table Six: Intersectional Groups and Hardship Variables[28]

	Rating of moderate or more burden due to:

[28] Not all members of each group answered each question, leading to inconsistent totals between group populations and totals for each hardship variable. While unfortunate, I believe that this smaller groups can still be suggestive evidence for inequalities between groups.

GROUP	Caregiving			Cultural Commitments			Paid Work			Unpaid Work			Food Insecurity		
	N	T	%	N	T	%	N	T	%	N	T	%	N	T	%
0WBFY (ALL)	10	15	**67**	11	16	**67**	15	16	**94**	6	14	**43**	5	14	**35**
1WB	19	32	**59**	25	38	**39**	32	40	**80**	13	32	**41**	10	33	**30**
2WF	16	30	**53**	13	34	**38**	30	34	**88**	13	29	**44**	10	30	**33**
3WY	22	48	**46**	20	50	**40**	46	52	**88**	21	44	**48**	14	44	**32**
4BF	17	30	**56**	19	33	**57**	29	33	**88**	13	29	**45**	11	30	**36**
5BY	21	36	**58**	22	40	**55**	37	41	**90**	16	34	**47**	13	37	**35**
6FY	22	39	**56**	22	47	**46**	42	47	**89**	17	39	**43**	16	40	**40**
7N (NONE)	8	35	**23**	7	39	**18**	21	41	**51**	9	39	**23**	5	25	**20**

*N=number of students, T=Total number of students who answered each question

We can then move into the intersectional groups and the hardships variables. Table six above includes the number and percentage of students in each intersectional group who reported each hardship variable to be a moderate or more burden, and the total number of students in each group who answered the question. Each hardships variable is color-coded and the percent of each intersectional group is bolded, for ease of reading. I will go through all five hardship variables, one at a time, starting with caregiving responsibilities. Strikingly, large percentages of students in each group reported that caregiving was a moderate or more burden during their time in graduate school. In group 0WBFY, or the "all" group, 67% (n=10) of students who answered the caregiving question felt those responsibilities were a burden. Groups 4BF and 5BY, or BIPOC students who were first-generation students, and those who faced moderate or higher hardships in their youth, respectively, also held higher levels of caregiving burdens at 56% (n=17) and 58%

(n=21). Group seven held the lowest number of students in the caregiving category, with just 23% (n=8) of students.

Considerable levels of students in multiple intersectional groups also reported notable amounts of cultural commitment burdens. Groups 0WBFY and 4BF held the highest number of students under the cultural commitments category at 67% (n=11) of students and 57% (n=19), respectively, and group 5BY were right on their tail both being at 55% of students in each group (n=22). Groups 2WF, 3WY, 6FY, and 7N then drop by about 15-20%. Group 3WY, or students who were women who faced moderate or more hardships in their youth, held the second lowest amount of students in the cultural commitments from the category or about 40% (n=20) of students. Group 7N (the none group) had just 17% (n=7) of students in the cultural commitments category. Paid work by far had the highest percentage of students in all eight groups, averaging about 83% of students in every group. Groups 0WBFY held the highest number of students who reported paid work to be a moderate or higher burden, with 94% (n=15) of students in each group, and groups 4BF and 5BY were close behind at 88% (n=29) and 90% (n=37). Group 7N held the lowest amount of students under the paid work category at 51% or 21 students.

Unpaid work (meaning any work that is a demand on their time that un unpaid, including unpaid internships) is a different story. Significantly fewer students in each group reported that unpaid work was a moderate or higher burden. An average of just 41% of students fell into each intersectional group. Groups 3WY and 5BY (BIPOC students who faced hardship in their youth) held the highest number of students, each at about 48% at 21 and 16 students. The lowest number of students could be found in Group 7N or the none group, which held just 9 students or 23% of the group. Food insecurity holds the least amount of students in each group of all five hardship variables, at an average of about 32% of students. Across the board, all eight

intersectional groups held similar amounts of students who reported worrying about food. Group 7N held the biggest difference of all eight groups, at 20% (n=5) of the students in that group. While smaller than the other hardship variable categories, this is quite a significant number of students who report worrying about food.

VIII. DISCUSSION

There are several interesting and important suggestive results that we can take from these intersectional groups and hardship variables. Primarily, Table Six highlights patterns and aspects that are harder to see in the one-way intersections that we can observe in Table Five. While the one-way intersections give us some insight into the hardships faced by these students, the intersectional groups zoom in to reveal that certain students, who hold multiple minoritized identities, struggle in different ways and to different degrees. While each core variable group faces hardship, Table Six reveals that many of these students hold multiple minoritized identities and that at times their hardships are compacted because of their intersecting identities. This may have been difficult to ascertain if I had not taken an intersectional approach. These results seem to suggest that out of all five hardship variables that I chose, paid work, caregiving, and cultural commitments were the most burdensome for the students in each group. As I mentioned above, an average of 83% of all the students in each intersectional group reported paid work to be a burden. An average of 52% reported the same thing about caregiving and an average of 45% said so about cultural commitments. Unpaid work seemed to be a moderate burden, with some variation between the eight groups and an average of ~40% of students in each group. The hardship variable with the least amount of overall variation as well as total students was that of food insecurity, which as I mentioned above averaged at about 30% with every minimal variation between groups besides 7N.

Additionally, in three of the five hardship variable categories, group 0WBFY, the "all category" which includes first-generation BIPOC women who faced hardship in their youth, had higher instances of hardship than group seven, the "none" category that held non-first generational white men who faced minimal hardship in their youth. In the caregiving and cultural commitment categories especially, these differences were fairly large. There is a 44% more percentage point difference among group 0WBFY who expressed caregiving burdens, and a 50% more percentage point difference for students who reported cultural commitment burdens. While smaller, there were also slight gaps in paid work burdens between groups 0WBFY and 7N at a 43% percentage point difference.

Thirdly, certain intersectional groups constantly held higher numbers in most hardship categories, such as groups one and four, or students who were BIPOC women and those who were first-generation BIPOC students. As I mentioned earlier, many students in the total survey respondents pool fell into more than one intersectional group, so this may be the case with groups one and four. In a way, this helps to point out the multiple identity intersections and intersectional inequalities among this population. These results provide suggestive evidence that first-generation BIPOC women at the Humphrey School face higher burdens that affect their time in graduate school, more so than that of white non-first-generation men. Startlingly, the groups that contained BIPOC students, male or female, (groups zero, one, four, and five) consistently made up high percentages of students in each of the five hardship categories out of the other intersectional groups.

IX. CONCLUSION

What does all of this mean for the Humphrey School? Considering the noteworthy amount of students who reported that these five hardship variables were burdens on their time spent in graduate school, and the inequality of identities who shared they experienced such

burdens, it would be wise of the Humphrey School to consider these results as suggestive evidence of inequality of burden among their students. I must also point out the fact that these core and hardship variables are only a handful of the questions asked of Humphrey students in the survey, meaning there is much more data to explore using intersectional and DEI-focused methodologies. Truly understanding and implementing intersectional tactics and methodologies in a more widespread manner may help the school to better understand the hardships and burdens that I have discussed here rather than only factors that occur within the walls of the school itself. While the Humphrey School, and more widely, graduate programs as a whole, have a long way to go to create more equitable and justice-oriented spaces, I am hopeful that future versions of projects such as the Hardships Survey can help on that journey.

APPENDIX

Degree Program:
A1 What masters degree program are you enrolled in? (If you are a dual degree student, please mark the correct degree here even if you are doing classes in the other degree program this semester.) N=266
MPP - Master of Public Policy (1) 47.0% (125)
MURP - Master of Urban and Regional Planning (2) 18.1% (48)
MPA - Master of Public Affairs (mid-career) (3) 12.8% (34)
MS-STEP - Master of Science, Technology and Environmental Policy (4) 9.8% (26)
MDP - Master of Development Practice (5) 5.6% (15)
MHR - Master of Human Rights (6) 6.8% (18)
None of these degree programs (7)

Overall Financial Hardships:
J16 Overall how would you rate the financial hardships, if any, that you have faced while a graduate student? Please use a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 indicates no hardships and 7 indicates very severe hardship N=242

1 13.6% (33)
2 24.4% (59)
3 17.8% (43)
4 17.8% (43)
5 14.9% (36)
6 7.0% (17)
7 4.6% (11)

Core Variables:

Women:
B4 Which of the following best describes your gender identity? N=252
Woman (1) 60.3% (152)
Man (2) 35.3% (89)
Non-binary (3) 3.2% (8)
Agender (4) – 0%
Gender queer (5) 0.8% (2)
Gender fluid (6) – 0%
Two-spirit (7) – 0%
Prefer to self-describe (8) 0.4% (1)

BIPOC:
B8 Do you identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or Person of Color)? N=247
No (1)- 74.9% (185)

Yes (2)- 25.1% (62)
Prefer not to answer (3)
First Generation Status:
B12 Do you consider yourself a first-generation student (among the first in your family to go to college as an undergraduate)? N=244
No (1) 73.8% (180)
Yes (2) 26.2% (64)
I'm not sure (3)
Youth Hardship:
B18 Reflecting on your social and economic situation when you were growing up, how would you assess the severity of hardships you and your family faced? 0 indicates not severe and 7 is very severe. N=237

0- 9.3% (22)
1- 19.4% (46)
2- 17.3% (41)
3- 14.8% (35)
4- 13.9% (33)
5- 14.8 (35)
6- 6.8% (16)
7- 3.8% (9)

Hardships Variables:

C6b Some people have many demands upon their time in addition to being a student. Rate the extent to which the following time demands are a barrier to your ability to succeed in your graduate program, if at all.

Caregiving:
C7 Caregiving (for children or other people) or other home demands N=200

Not at all (0)- 44.0% (88)
To a small extent (1)- 21.0% (42)
To a moderate extent (2)- 19.0% (38)
To a large extent (3)- 10.0% (20)
To a very large extent (4)- 6.0% (12)
Not applicable (5)- 0%
Cultural Commitments:
C12 Cultural commitments (to family, community, or religious organizations) N=230
Not at all (0)- 36.1% (83)
To a small extent (1)- 29.6% (68)
To a moderate extent (2)- 23.0% (53)

To a large extent (3)- 7.8% (18)
To a very large extent (4)- 3.5% (8)
Not applicable (5)= 0%

Paid Work:

C8 Paid work responsibilities N=237
Not at all (0)- 8.4% (20)
To a small extent (1)- 16.0% (38)
To a moderate extent (2)- 29.1% (69)
To a large extent (3)- 24.9% (59)
To a very large extent (4)- 12.5% (51)
Not applicable (5)- 0%

Unpaid Work:

C9 Unpaid work/internship responsibilities N=204
Not at all (0)- 36.8% (75)
To a small extent (1)- 28.5% (56)
To a moderate extent (2)- 24.0% (49)
To a large extent (3)- 8.3% (17)
To a very large extent (4)- 3.4% (7)
Not applicable (5)- 0%

Food Insecurity:

H0b Since the start of the academic year in September 2022, have any of the following situations applied to you?

H5 Have you worried about obtaining food? N=179

No (0)- 71.5% (128)
Yes (1)- 28.5% (51)

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