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The perils of integration

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TITLE: The Perils of integration: Exploring the experiences of African American and black Caribbean students in predominately white secondary schools

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ABSTRACT:
Racial minority students who attend predominately white schools in the United States and England face unique challenges in their learning environments that are connected to their status as non-white students. Scholars have documented the experiences of racial and ethnic minority students in mixed-raced schools in the U.S. and the UK for over four decades. However, the authors explore new research territory by employing Critical Race Analysis (CRT) to further articulate the similar experiences shared by African American and black Caribbean students' in mixed-race schools. Using data two different studies, one in the United States and one in England, the authors highlight the resemblances between the experiences of African American and black Caribbean students in predominantly white suburban and rural secondary schools. To increase racial equity in education, we must accurately understand the structural and societal barriers that racial minority students face as they continue to access education resources and quality schools.

Introduction

Racial minority students who attend predominately white schools in the United States and the England face unique challenges in their learning environments that are connected to their status as non-white students. In the United States, predominately white secondary schools are primarily located in suburban neighborhoods that surround urban districts; while in England, these schools are located in rural areas of the country. Scholars have documented ethnic minority students' complex sets of experiences in mixed-raced schools in the U.S. and the UK for over four decades (Gillborn 2003; Mac an Ghaill 1989; Ogbu 1978). Although the academic benefits of majority white suburban schools are well documented, (Tefera et al. 2009), researchers continue to investigate the "mixed-bag" of student outcomes, in which racial minority students are exposed to rigorous college-bound curricula and extensive academic and social opportunities, while facing racially discriminatory practices and developing low self-esteem and racial identity conflict (Lewis and Diamond 2015).

To further explore the challenges that racial minority students experience in mixed-race education environments, the authors use Critical Race Theory (CRT) to examine the similarities between African American and black Caribbean students' experiences. Employing a critical race analysis of students' perceptions of their school interactions, the researchers articulate the continued impact of race and racism on the schooling experiences of racial minority students in predominantly white state (public) schools through teacher-student relationships, student-student interactions, and school policies and practices. Lewis-McCoy states, "Education policy and discourse have focused more and more on resource provisions, and less and less on how classrooms, schools, and micro-level interactions matter for school equity" (2014 p. 118). In these suburban and rural learning environments, the barriers to school engagement stem from the

ways that African American and black Caribbean students, in particular, are stereotyped and over-surveilled, particularly by school adults, in high schools. Importantly, to increase and tailor support systems for racial minority children and families, educators must more accurately understand the structural and societal barriers that these students face in various learning environments such as predominantly White schools and segregated education enclaves (Lewis-McCoy 2014; Lewis and Diamond 2015).

<div align="center">**The Changing Landscape of U.S Suburbs and Rural England**</div>

The racial landscape of U.S. suburban and English rural secondary schools is drastically changing as racial minority families seek opportunities for economic growth and stability outside urban spaces (Bhopal and Myers 2011; Frankenberg and Ayscus 2013). Frankenberg and Orfield state, "Outdated stereotypes of a 'suburban district' no longer fit the reality. And issues of racial change are central questions for the future of suburban communities" (2012, p. 2). Because the presence of racial minority students disrupts the racial and cultural homogeneity in these contexts, these students face particular academic and social challenges in these learning environments (Chapman and Bhopal 2013).

Changing Suburban Demographics in the United States

U.S. suburbs are defined as independent districts outside the city center with a substantial population of residents commuting to the metropolitan center for employment. "Unlike earlier decades, today's suburban schools are no longer always located in racially homogenous, high-income communities. Instead, the suburbs of the 21st century often represent the frontier of racial change in America" (Tefera et al. 2011, p. 1). In the twenty-five most populated cities in the U.S., suburban school enrollments grew from 8.6 million to 12 million students between 1990 to 2006 (Frankenberg 2012). As white populations decline, there has been an increase of 800,000

Latino and 500,000 African American and Asian American students in suburban schools. Yet, most of the suburbs in the country's largest metropolitan areas retain a majority white student population and a higher percentage of white students in suburban schools than urban schools (Frankenberg 2012). Frankenberg states, "…the ongoing demographic change presents an opportunity for suburban communities that have been homogenous to develop high quality schooling for all students in racially and ethnically diverse schools and to create educational opportunities that have not been available in cities where demographic change occurred decades earlier (2012, p. 5). Given the demographic changes and possibilities for student success, it is imperative that researchers continue to study these particular educational enclaves.

Changing Rural Demographics in England

Similarly, Britain's racial and ethnic minority families continue to move into previously homogenous white rural spaces. From 2001 to 2011, rural populations in England and Wales grew 6.4% (Office for National Statistics, 2013). Cline et al. state, "The great majority of teachers across the country may now expect to work with minority ethnic pupils at some point in their career, and mainly white schools in almost all areas may expect to admit minority ethnic pupils more frequently than in the past" (2002, p. 8).

Moreover, in the Department of Education and Skills report, researchers asserted that, "Research on the education of minority ethnic pupils needs to move out of inner city areas because that is what families have been doing" (Cline et al. 2002, p. 8). As racial minority families access education across England, researchers document how parents from different racial minority backgrounds use their social and economic capital to choose 'good' schools by relocating to areas with more desirable and high performing schools (Gillborn et al. 2012; Weekes-Bernard 2007). Weeks-Bernard states, '…many BME [black Minority Ethnic] children

are being educated in ethnically segregated schools where they either form a clear pupil majority, or a distinct minority' (2007, p. 9).

Mixed Outcomes of Mixed-Race Schools

The low percentages of residents with indicators of disadvantage in England's rural areas, and the low numbers of students living in poverty in U.S. suburban areas often reflect more economically and social stable communities, and in turn, quality schools. In the U.S., education researchers find that racial minority students in racially mixed schools had higher levels of achievement, stronger test scores, and lower levels of drop outs and truancy than their counterparts; also, these students gain access to more academic and professional networks that facilitate their college and career success, earn higher degrees, and earn more money than racial minority students graduating from segregated schools (Orfield et al. 2008; Tefera et al. 2011; Wells et al. 2009). Additionally, U.S. researchers determine that the more time racial minority students spend in racially segregated schools, the greater the academic gap between their white peers (Frankenberg 2009; Goldsmith 2011; Lleras 2008).

In the UK, Cline et al. (2002) document that the proportion of black Caribbean students outperformed their urban counterparts in racially mixed schools in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams. Forty percent of black Caribbean students from schools with low minority ethnic populations achieved 5+ higher grade passes on the GCSE versus 26% from a racially and socially and economically comparable London boroughs. While black Caribbean students in schools with low minority ethnic populations did not outperform their London counterparts on other school exams, the researchers conclude from the survey results of over 34,000 students in suburban and rural schools with low minority ethnic populations and London schools with substantial racial and ethnic diversity that the students in low racial

minority schools benefitted more from school resources than the students in racially diverse urban areas (Cline et al. 2002).

Drawbacks of Predominantly White Schools

Although there may be significant positive outcomes for racial minorities in predominantly white schools, drawbacks persist. U.S. scholars assert that African American students' levels of engagement in predominantly white schools rise with greater populations of racial diversity (P. Carter 2010; Johnson, Crosnoe and Elder Jr, 2001; McNeely, Nonnemaker and Blum 2002; Zirkel 2004). Likewise, researchers in the U.K document unsupportive learning environments for black Caribbean students in England's schools and the negative effects of these environments on students' self-esteem and academic motivation (Askins 2009; Ball et al. 2013; Bhopal and Myers 2011; Gillborn 2003; Modica 2015). Researchers document that children from racial minority backgrounds often experience racism, such as persistent name calling, in predominantly white schools. Despite the negative experiences, the research documenting the academic positive outcomes of these students serves as a partial rationale for why African American and black Caribbean parents integrate their children into predominantly white education spaces (Chapman et al. 2014).

Critical Race Theory

The authors rely on tenets of critical race theory to analyze the schooling experiences of African American and black Caribbean students in predominantly white high schools. Critical race theory (CRT) in education pushes against deficit discourses of racial minority students and families to explain the past and present policies, practices, and relationships that guide people's choices. In this paper, the authors use racial realism, intersectionality, and counter-stories to

illuminate how the education experiences of racial minority students are stratified by race in ways that prevent students from fully engaging within their education contexts.

A growing number of CRT scholars utilize the voices of African American students to assess how *institutional structures and school relationships* contribute to students' perceptions of their learning environments and their ability to access the schooling opportunities and resources (Carter 2008; Chapman 2013; Diamond 2006; Diamond, Lewis, and Gordon, 2007; O'Connor et al. 2011). Researchers conducting CRT analyses on data from predominantly white high schools conclude that students' negative relationships with and perceptions of peers and teachers and institutional structures, such as severe tracking, limit trust and damage the support networks students need to cultivate positive and productive learning environments (Carter 2008; Chapman et al. 2014; Henfield, Moore, and Wood 2008; O'Connor, et al. 2011). More Additionally, researchers document how African American students are over-surveilled by school staff and administrators, receive harsher discipline than white students, and are relegated to the lower academic tracks in highly-resourced suburban high schools (Chapman 2013; Lewis and Diamond 2015; O'Connor, et al. 2011).

While CRT has been more widely applied to the U.S. contexts of education, British scholars also employ critical race theory to articulate the marginalization of racial minorities in England (Gillborn 2006; Youdell 2006; Warmington 2012). Comparable to research conducted with African American students in predominantly white schools, scholars use the voices of black Caribbean students and parents to demonstrate how institutional policies and relationships with school adults influence student academic outcomes (Gillborn, et al. 2012; Thomas 2012). Thomas (2012) documents how racial stereotypes concerning black Caribbean students as hostile or challenging authority lead to poor teacher-student relationships, over-surveillance, and

excessive discipline. Similarly, Gillborn et al. (2012), using interview data from 62 black

Caribbean middle-class parents, document students' tenuous relationships with school adults,

marginalizing institutional policies and practices, and parents' past remembrances of similar

negative school interactions. CRT in the United States and England centers issues of race, ie.

racial realism, to underscore education inequalities and explain the disparate academic outcomes

between racially marginalized students and white students.

Racial Realism

Racism is "a systematic set of theories and legally sanctioned institutionalized practices deeply

embedded in the American polity and endorsed at the highest levels of the land" (Mills 1998,

p.12), which limits the humanity of non-white people through pseudo-science, mythology, and

institutional and societal legacies of injustice (Bell 1992; Mills 1998). Critical race theory

positions "race" at the center of research analysis because, "exploring an ontology of race will

contribute to (though not exhaust) our understanding of social dynamics" (Mills 1998, p. 44). In

CRT research on African American and black Caribbean students in majority white schools, an

analysis of race, specifically, how the academic and social marginalization of people of African

descent is manifested through school policies, programs, and students' interactions with adults

and peers, is necessary to target and challenge inequitable schooling practices (Warmington

2012).

Representational Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a model to explore how combinations of different social indicators such as

race, gender, class, sexuality, age, disability and religion interact with social, political, and

economic factors to create moments of marginalization and privilege, individualism and

collectivism, and power and oppression (Crenshaw 1991). Representational intersectionality

focuses on stereotype constructions that impact (wo)men's relationships with individuals and groups and their perceptions of themselves (Crenshaw 1991). African American and black Caribbean students' experiences are stratified by race, but also social class and gender (Chapman and Bhopal 2013; Gilborn et al. 2012; Henfeld et al. 2008). The intersections of race with gender and class result in different education experiences for African American and black Caribbean students; these differences often explain stratified outcomes within racially marginalized groups.

Counter-Story

Critical race theory values the experiences of people of color as a means to *counter* limited and/ or deficit explanations of people's actions. Counter-stories reveal people's perceptions and interpretations of policies and practices through their socio-cultural and political lenses, and provide a means to understand education processes and outcomes through the perceptions and re-telling of experiences of marginalized groups and individuals (Gillborn et al. 2012). Together, the counter-stories of African American and black Caribbean students in the U.S. and England reveal the how students navigate their learning environments within racially unwelcoming spaces, which are often viewed as ideal learning environments, to promote future career success.

Research Studies

The authors use a study of suburban secondary racial minority students in the U.S. and a study of rural racial minority families in England to highlight the difficulties experienced by racial minority students in predominantly white high schools. While both researchers document the marginalization of multiple racial and ethnic groups in each of the two studies, the parallels between the experiences of African American and black Caribbean students merits particular attention and discussion. Thus, the analysis and findings from the two studies only reflect the

experiences of the black Caribbean and African American participants. In the following analysis, the voices of African American and black Caribbean students, as African descendants and primarily Christian populations, were selected because there are similar themes among the two groups of students. As early as 1979, Wirt explains,

> [Caribbean] Immigrant schooling problems here [England] are reminiscent of the African American experience… There have been echoes of what has occurred in the United States as both seek a liberal response to the problems of race and schooling. (p. 34)

Researchers continue to document how African Americans and black Caribbean students negotiate seemingly unwelcoming school contexts (Chapman 2013; Diamond 2006; Gillborn 2006; Thomas 2012; Youdell 2006; Warmington 2012). In both the U.S. and UK studies, students similarly express their frustrations with teacher-student relationships, peer relationships, and institutional norms and policies.

Study 1: African American Students in U.S. Suburban Schools

A research team conducted 22 focus group interviews with racial minority students from six schools in four districts in America's Midwest region. The semi-structured interviews focused on three categories: general questions, adult relationships, and academics. Because of the different levels of experience, students were split into 9th to 10th grade and 11th to 12th grade levels for the focus groups, which held four to six students in each group. The 74 of the 97 participants were African American and ranged in age ranged 14–19 years. Two-thirds of all the participants were girls. The disproportionate number of African American students aligns with the demographics of the suburban schools and the demographic proportions of racial minority groups in this region of the U.S.

Using a systematic process adapted from Le Compte (2000), the team followed a particular analytic sequence: 1. marked the interviews with comments directly following the interview, 2. compiled individual initial taxonomies and sub-categories of all the interviews, 3. identified recurring themes, 4. identified the initial themes within each interview, 5. compiled data for each theme across the focus group interviews. To ensure validity all five members of the research used identical protocols for the data collection and data analysis throughout the collective analysis process.

Study 2: Black Caribbean Students in Rural Schools in England

The larger British study is based on in-depth interviews with 30 racial minority students, born in the UK, in two rural secondary schools with small populations of racial minority students. Eight of the participants were black Caribbean, and their ages ranged from 13-16. Face to face interviews, which covered topics such as relationships with other pupils and relationships with teachers, were conducted on the school premises, audio recorded, and transcribed. The interview data were analyzed a using constant comparative analysis to generate and refine key themes through thematic analysis (Roulston 2001). The analysis consisted of 1. generating initial codes from the data, 2. developing themes from the codes which were identified across the whole data set 3. reviewing the themes to ensure there was sufficient data to support them, 4. defining and naming themes which was based on determining which aspect of the data each theme captured, and 5. checking each theme within and across the data set.

Findings

The researchers in Study One and Study Two documented how predominantly white schools functioned as hostile spaces for African American and black Caribbean students. In both

11

settings, students were racially stereotyped by their peers and teachers as academically inferior and/ or behavioral problems. Examples of racial stereotyping and the over-surveillance of black bodies are prime examples of how predominantly white learning contexts marginalize racial minority students. The ways in which racial minority students respond to the actions of their teachers and peers, ie. limiting their overall engagement in school, denies the students from fully accessing these resource rich learning environments (Rumberger and Palardy 2005).

Racial Stereotyping

In both studies the researchers found that teachers' racial stereotypes of racial minority students influence the types of treatment the students received. Students noted how their teachers and peers often conflated race with deficit perceptions of their academic performance. In his ethnography of a suburban elementary school, Lewis-McCoy (2014) explains this phenomenon through white teachers' fear of offending African American students and being labeled as racist. Rather than risk being perceived as holding low-expectations for students, white teachers often "shifted their standard of practice" (Lewis-McCoy 2014, p. 123) to over-encourage African American students and hold the students to lower academic expectations to avoid conflict. Whereas the teachers believe they are being culturally responsive, the students perceive their actions as setting lower expectations for African American students. In the U.S. study, the African American students described incidents where their teachers exhibited low-expectations for their behavior and academic achievement.

> **African American Female Student:** There are certain things like they even make jokes about it, like if there is a white kid who is late they're [teacher] surprised. Why are you late? What happened? But if a black kid is late, "Oh, I see…you're late. This is what you do. You just don't care about your education.

12

In this instance, the student perceives the teachers' differing reactions as related to the student's competence and academic motivation. When the teacher asks the white students why they are late, they expressed an understanding that the student would not be late without a good reason; whereas, the assumption is that the African American students do not have a compelling reason for being tardy. Conversely, when a teacher tries to demonstrate his/her support for African American students by making sure a student receives good attention during class or by over-celebrating a student's achievement, the students once again perceives the teacher's actions as a show of perceived student inferiority.

> **African American Female Student**: Mrs. S, she teaches geometry, and I am real good in Geometry, and I have taken my quiz and everything. But when I look at her, her eyes are only on me. She is not looking at any of the kids throughout the class, eyes on me…. She watches me when I am doing my homework…. Her eyes are always on me. She will kind of look away when I look at her, but then she will be right back at me. If I get the best grade on the test, she will announce it to everybody, but she won't do it with anybody else.

In this instance, the teacher could have been trying to show interest and support for the young lady by paying her extra attention and praising her work; however, the teacher's means of cultivating the young woman's academic talents are interpreted as stemming from deficit notions of African American students. According to Lewis-McCoy (2014) and Lewis and Diamond, (2015), few teachers relate to racial minority students with conscious animus, yet they do not understand how to show interest and concern for the racial minority students in culturally relevant ways. Thus, their attempts to develop relationships with racial minority students are often problematic. Across the six schools in the U.S. study, the high performing African

American students felt that they were treated as exceptions to stereotypes about African American students' academic performance. Because the students perceived the teachers' responses to their academic ability as inappropriate, regardless of the response being positive or negative, the students perceived these classroom interactions as reinforcing negative stereotypes of themselves and African American students, in general.

Incidents where students perceive an event as hurtful, regardless of the intention, are labelled as "racial microaggressions." "Racial microaggressions are articulated and performed through seemingly slight but persistent daily reoccurrences that serve to remind persons of color that they are judged to be different, not trustworthy, less intelligent and inferior as compared to their white counterparts" (Rollock 2012 p. 518). Thus, when a teacher unnecessarily drew attention to an African American student's strong academic performance and assumed negative rationales for behavioural infractions, the students\perceived this as a personal slight and a comment on their racial group.

In a study of mixed-race primary schools in Britain, Connolly stated, "Some teachers may be influenced (whether directly or indirectly) by a set of racist beliefs which encourages them to think of white children as being more intelligent and well behaved than black children" (1998). Relatedly, black Caribbean students suffered from microaggresions associated with racial stereotypes that were similar to the experiences of African American students. A black Caribbean male student explains,

> There is a certain way that they [teachers] see you. On the one hand, some of the other
> kids think we're cool because, I guess, we are cool to them because of the music that we
> like. But on the other hand, they are threatened by us. The teachers don't quite know how

to take us because there are not that many black kids in the school. So those stereotypes,

they have come through. But at the same time, you can see that they want to hide them.

The students perceive that their teachers are relying on stereotypes and generalizations of racial groups. These stereotypes place black Caribbean students in opposition to the model minority stereotypes teachers' express about Asian minority groups; thus, Asian students do well in school and do not cause problems, while black Caribbean students do not excel in school and need behaviour modifications. Black Caribbean students recognized that their teachers' limited interactions with non-white student populations encourages their teachers to rely on stereotypes about students' academic ability and social behavior. In an early study of black Caribbean students in England, Mac an Ghaill explains that white teachers adopted "a discourse of deficit, the main social images constructed by this approach, portray the black community as a "problem" (1989). The students' perceptions of their teachers coincide with research findings documenting the stereotypes white teachers hold about African American and black Caribbean students who integrate homogenous white schools, and the lack of teacher training to properly engage with diverse student populations (Cline et al. 2002; Gillborn 2003; Haviland 2008).

Given the ways in which teachers characterized racial minority students, the African American students in the U.S. and black Caribbean students in England shoulder the burden of disproving racial stereotypes of academic inferiority (Carter 2008; Chapman 2007; Diamond 2006; Thomas 2012; Youdell 2003). Students in both contexts expressed high levels of anxiety from being perceived as academically inferior. A black Caribbean female student explains,

black Caribbean Female Student: My parents always tell me that if people want to judge me, I have to have something that they can judge me from. So I have to ensure that I do well

15

at school and get a good education, because then that means I will be in stronger position to be judged against someone who is richer than me, from a better background.

Students assume the added psychological weight of trying to counter racial stereotypes through their school performance and behavior (Lewis and Diamond 2015). The students understand that they are racialized and judges as a group, and not as individuals. Carter explains, 'It is a resistance for survival in that these African American students' psyches are constantly under attack in a learning environment in which their racial group membership is often associated with anti-intellectualism and/ or intellectual inferiority' (2008 p. 478). U.S. and British students expressed their frustrations at having to be 'twice as good' as their white peers because of their race.

African American Female Student: You are a black female and no one is going to take pity on you. No one is going to feel sorry for you. You have to work twice as hard as a white female and that is the way it is. Every time a grade comes in a C, maybe a D she [pointing to friend] don't like. She [black friend] is working twice as hard.

black Caribbean Male Student: My parents always say that thing that you hear over and over again – if you are black you have to work harder than everyone else…

Racial minority students often feel pressure to academically achieve for their future success as well as to demonstrate the intellectual acumen of their race (Diamond et al. 2007; Lewis-McCoy 2014). In both studies black Caribbean and African American students felt they received inferior treatment from adults and students who assumed they were incapable of rigorous work. Additionally, in the U.S. study, students said the prevalence of stereotypes about their academic abilities deterred them from seeking extra help from teachers and asking questions in class. The cumulative effect of racial stereotypes about their academic abilities, such as being viewed as

16

academically inept, prevented students from full academic engagement (Chapman 2007, 2013; Diamond 2006; Diamond et al. 2007; O'Connor et al. 2011).

Racial Surveillance

Racial stereotypes also become manifested in the ways that racial minority students are criminalized by school adults through racial surveillance or 'racial spotlighting' (Carter-Andrews 2012). Racial minority students suffer from a double-standard of discipline and surveillance in majority white schools. Chadderton problematizes how new surveillance school policies affect racial minority students in the UK,

> As racial minorities are already frequently positioned as threatening or suspects, and are already more scrutinised than whites, it makes sense to assume that school surveillance is likely to impact more harshly on racial minorities than their white counterparts, and these discourses are likely to build on longstanding notions of perceived essentialised links between minority ethnic bodies and criminality and threat (Oztas 2011). (2012, p. 841)

In the U.S. and England researchers have documented the racial discrepancies between disciplinary measures for African American and black Caribbean students (Gillborn 2003; Losen 2011). Students described uneven disciplinary acts based on the over-surveillance of African American students in classrooms, hallways, and the cafeteria. Lewis and Diamond explain two ways in which racial minority students become more susceptible to discipline and punishment.

> …differential selection (institutional practices that might lead minorities to get picked out for wrongdoing more often than their white colleagues, despite similar levels of

misbehaving) and differential processing (institutional practices that might lead

minorities, once singled out or wrongdoing, to receive different sanctions for similar

transgressions). (2015, p.46)

Inequities in school discipline, both in the policies and practices, that marginalize African

American and black Caribbean students reinforce students' how students perceive their schools

and unwelcoming and hostile. "Disciplinary patterns serve as a barrier to creating such a sense of

belonging among students when they contribute to producing what some social psychologists

refer to as a "threatening environment"— "settings where people come to suspect that they could

be devalued, stigmatized, or discriminated against because of a particular social identity" (Lewis

and Diamond 2015, p.48). Students perceptions of themselves as devalued and stigmatized by

school practices and policies lead students to have limited school connectedness, which

translates into students limiting the opportunities and adult-student relationships that foster

academic and social growth, as well as create competitive candidates for elite colleges and

universities.

Moreover, students described instances of both *differential selection* and *differential*

processing where white students committed the same infraction, and received no reprimands, as

well as times when African American students were blamed for more infractions.

African American Female Student: Sometimes I feel like when a black person was to

do something wrong and a white person was to do something wrong, it doesn't equal out.

Sometimes it seems like a black person gets more punishments than a white person. Not

fair. It is like, what can we do about it?

African American Female Student: Also, just say there is like a double standard. It

seems like if a black [student] is doing something [talking]… But like, white kids are

sitting there talking and the black person gets pointed out. Like, why are you yelling at

him? You know? It is a double standard.

In both studies, the students explained that teachers, administrators and staff were more likely

overlook or ignore the transgressions of white students; whereas, racial minority students were

more likely to be sanctioned and sanctioned more harshly than their white peers (Chapman et al.

2014; Lewis and Diamond 2015; Youdell 2003). Additionally, African American students stated

that they were more likely to be labeled as being disrespectful, or "talking-back" when they

challenged their teachers' authority. Similarly, Gillborn (2003) documented how white teachers

in England, who perceived black Caribbean students as overly aggressive, gave harsher

punishments to black Caribbean students.

<u>Intersections Between Race and Gender</u>

Notably, students' racialized experiences with discipline frequently intersected with their gender

in ways that connote representative intersectionality. Researchers in both studies document the

stereotyping of African American and black Caribbean boys as aggressive. Because of social

discourses that portray African American males as violent, the police assumed that the young

man was part of a gang, rather than a student waiting to go home. Researchers also have

documented how school adults' assumptions concerning the criminality of black Caribbean

males reinforce black Caribbean students' perceptions of schools as hostile and unwelcoming

places (Connolly 1998; Gillborn 1997). One black Caribbean male student explained:

They [teachers] and the other kids have certain perceptions of you if you're black and

more so if you are male. They see these images on the media and on youtube and think

you are a gangster or you are into hardcore violence. They don't come across real black

people and so take everything they see from the media – and that is wrong.

The black Caribbean students, specifically the young men, felt that they were over disciplined compared to their white male peers. Their perceptions of school practices are supported by the research data on disciplinary incidents in the U.S.A and UK. Lewis and Diamond explain,

> Whether or not these students are engaged in more actual rule breaking than other students, their behavior is noted and understood as qualitatively different. It is also seen as collectively meaningful in a way that individual white students' misbehavior is not. The rule breaking of white students is understood as an individual phenomenon not generalizable to the group, while the "acting out" of a few "boisterous" black males is talked about categorically. (2015, pg. 67-68)

More discrepancies exist between white and black students in mixed-race schools than between these two groups of students in segregated schools; thus, in mixed-race schools, black males continue to be over-surveilled and categorized as a problematic and dangerous group in need of behavioral reinforcements, rather than academic support systems and social opportunities. Many of these outcomes stem from implicit racial bias from school adults who have limited skills and dispositions for addressing stereotypes and myths about marginalized racial groups (Lewis-McCoy 1014).

Research on racially discrepant disciplinary outcomes is equally problematic for the black girls (Losen 2011). In both studies, girls also were aware of the increased scrutiny they received from school adults. To avoid being characterized as discipline problems, the black Caribbean girls tried to not draw attention to themselves. A black Caribbean female student said,

> We [black Caribbean girls] stand out, but we tend to try and get lost in the crowd more, and as a girl I think you can do that. It's harder for the ethnic minority boys and they get

labeled in a certain way as well. If they get into trouble once, then it's hard to shift that

label.

The representational intersectionality of the girls "standing out' because of their race, but

sometimes "blending in" because of the gender, becomes another means of "othering" African

American and black Caribbean females. However, both African American and black Caribbean

girls were aware that the possibilities of being invisible are few. In the U.S. study girls also

spoke about 'trying not to stand out' and attempting visibility due to their racialized positioning

by teachers and students. An African American female student stated, "I know I am black, but if

I am going to get through a day, a school year, I kind of have to put that aside, and kind of

become colorless, just to get through it." Thus, students feel that school only values and engages

them as partial human beings, while it negates or penalizes them for their racial identity.

Students' attempts to "get lost in the crowd" or "become colorless" become

unmanageable when phenotypic markers identify them as "other" among a group of white

students (Youdell 2003). For example, African American female students said that they were

more likely to be sent home for common infractions, such as dress code violations. African

American girls asserted that their shapes, namely their hips and buttocks, exacerbated their dress

code infractions (leggings and "bootie shorts") because the white girls lacked the same physical

features. An African American female student explained,

They [Teachers] will tell one student one thing, the example being leggings. She

[African American student] walks around with leggings, she going home within the first

30 minutes. Let a Caucasian come in with the leggings. She could wear them the whole

week.

African American also girls explained that overtime they became less likely to participate in classroom discussions or other answers because they feared being labeled as aggressive. Students' behavior modifications to deflect attention, counter stereotypes of low intellect, and avoid confrontations demonstrate how students create mechanism and strategies to navigate school. However, their strategies, such as remaining silent in class so that are not perceived as challenging the teacher, limits their opportunities to learn and engage with the course instruction and content knowledge.

Conclusions

Although racial minority families relocate to predominantly white spaces to access the privileges of white families in the form of excellent schools, stereotypes and racial surveillance prevent African American and black Caribbean students from completely attaining the types of privileges associated with these schools. Thus, institutional and structural barriers create unequal outcomes and disparate experiences African American and black Caribbean students in these resource rich educational contexts (Chapman 2013). While these students in predominantly white schools are likely to have higher GPA's and rates of college attendance than their urban school peers, they suffer from racial anxiety, "threatening environments" (Lewis and Diamond 2015, p. 48), and a lack of adult support in ways that can significantly affect their schooling outcomes. And although these effects may be less visible, and not measurable, the cost to students' self-esteem and academic confidence is serious. These experiences may result in chronic "racial battle fatigue" and "stereotype threat," which affect students' academic, social, and psychological well-being. Lewis and Diamond (2014) explain that the continued surveillance and negative perceptions and treatment from school adults in mixed-race schools perpetuates anxiety and resistance that takes a psychological toll on the well-being of black students. Additionally,

students may experience symptoms of stereotype threat that result in the underperformance of black and brown students on standardized tests and in predominantly white academic disciplines (Steele 2011).

When assessing the accumulation of data on the experiences of racial minority students in predominantly white education settings, deficit frameworks that position black Caribbean and African American students as unmotivated and hostile begin to unravel as researchers continue to document the institutional and systemic rationales for students' negative patterns of behavior and academic under achievement. The negative schooling experiences erode African American and black Caribbean students' lack of motivation to engage in school programs and with teachers and students (Peters 2007; Wiggan 2007). Students are less likely to participate in class, which reinforces teachers' perceptions of African American and black Caribbean students as academically incapable and unmotivated to learn due to cultural norms and genetics. More importantly, because students are reticent to fully engage in schooling, they miss other opportunities to grow academically and socially like their white peers (Chapman et al. 2014). Without investigating how schools cultivate and reinforce racist school practices, educators are likely to re-inscribe racial deficit explanations of the student cultural and community contexts to explain students' lack of school engagement (Haviland 2008; Hayne et al. 2006); ostensibly, this allows schools to disavow their complicity in racially stratified student outcomes.

Implications

The pervasive contexts of race and racism in predominantly white schools suggests that researchers need to further examine school policies, teacher practice, and student relationships in racially diverse schools (Stevens 2007). Continued support for racial integration, and the

resources and social capital these spaces hold, must be paired with a critical analysis of these

learning communities. Bell (2005) reminds us,

> But, as individuals and groups, we have to challenge assumptions of white dominance
>
> and the presumption of black incompetence. We do so by refusing to accept white
>
> dominance in our schools, places of work, our communities, and yes, among those whites
>
> who consider us friends. (p. 1066)

Bell's words remind researchers that educators, parents, and concerned citizens cannot continue

to embrace the discourse of integrated schools as racial reform without a sharp and critical view

of how predominantly white schools marginalize racial minority students. Researchers need to

unearth policy and practice solutions that combine the rigor and experiences of integrated

schools with educational spaces where racial minority students can thrive and access an equitable

education (Griffin and Allen 2006).

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