

ARE THE RACIAL DISPARITIES IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE THE RESULT OF OR
A FUNCTION OF SYSTEMIC RACISM MEDIATED BY EDUCATORS'
DISPOSITIONS?

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Alfred Duane Ferrell III.

I lost more than a friend, relative, cousin...I lost a brother. I lost a part of me. I lost a part of who made me who I am today. But more than that, I lost the chance to tell him how much I loved him and that my heart always yearned for the relationship we once had. Our life choices laid out different paths, but I let that divide separate me from doing what I should have done. I was so focused on saving and changing the world, I never saved or changed myself from my own compliancy and inability to focus on someone who meant so much to me. I am sorry. I am sorry for forgetting you. I am sorry for forgetting us. I remember the things we shared, the things you taught me, the laughs, the video games, the eastside skating rink, nights over, stories about girls, you eating on one side of your mouth, but above all, I miss how close we once were. I am sorry for not being there when I know I should have been. In your time of need, I turned my back; I would always ask others about how you were doing, but I never asked you how you were doing. For that I am sorry. However, I know I will stand shoulder to shoulder with you once again as brothers when that day comes and I can tell you in spirit how sorry I am. In class or when someone asks, why did choose to pursued a Ph.D. – I have always answered, “To prove a point.” To prove that I am no different from you cus’ nor any different from those like us. The system allowed me to slide through, but not all of us can escape its grip and that is the biggest injustice. I want you to know that my accomplishments are your accomplishments.

I love you and will see you when it times for me to come home. Rest in heaven my brother.

Acknowledgments

The data collected for this dissertation was part of a larger two-phase research project funded by the William T. Grant Foundation through Indiana University's Equity Project located in Bloomington, Indiana.

The Equity Project is a consortium of projects dedicated to providing high quality data to educational decision-makers in order to better understand and address issues regarding educational equity and bridge the gap between research and practice. Its mission is *to provide evidence-based information specific to issues of school discipline, school violence, special education and equality of educational opportunity for all students.*

This research project was conducted over five years and included multiple researchers, graduate students, and team members. The project was the result of a collaborative effort from a diverse group of researchers who collectively provided expertise, resources, intellectual assets, and gave of their time. If it was not for their efforts and the IU Equity Project, this dissertation could not be possible.

Preface

At 12:14 am, I awoke from a disturbing dream. In this dream, a white¹ male officer in plain clothing attempted to rob me with a chrome-plated pistol while I rode a bike in my childhood neighborhood. I informed the officer that I did not have any money and I would pay him later. Seemingly, I must have known the officer, though I do not recall his face, but his presence in my old neighborhood did not feel out-of-place. He walked away looking back at me over his left shoulder. Feelings of hostility and angst overcame me, similar to the feelings of impending violence from a school bully, so I rushed to my parent's home to request a gun from my father. It is at this point that the dream trails off from my memory and becomes a blur.

Struggling to get back to sleep, I notice my shirt is off and to the side of the bed. I have been sweating profusely. Tossing, turning, frustrated, slight stomach aches, and my mind racing about the disturbing dream, I find myself not being able to return to my slumber. Flipping over, my wrist slams the scuffed nightstand that my wife and I bought some years back when we first married. Grabbing my phone, I'm blinded by the background light from the swiping of my finger across the screen to check the time. Recognizing the late hour, I know the verdict is in. The web browser on my phone defaults to a popular national news outlet and across the top of the website in white font against a black background it reads, "Ferguson erupts in violence." It was apparent what the verdict of the grand jury was and its reception from those patiently waiting. Sluggishly I walk to the television to watch multiple news stations detail actions unfolding in Ferguson, Missouri and across the nation. As I stare at the screen

emotionless, I recall a simple question that still haunts me to this day and will more than likely haunt me for the rest of my life.

Some weeks prior, I was watching a news caster talk about a policeman and how he successfully botched a home robbery and was able to apprehend the suspects with no harm. Then in a clear, yet minute voice, my 3-year-old Black² son asked, “Daddy, do cops kill people?” Even though our backs were facing each other, I could still feel my wife’s face cringe, much like my own, as she immediately stopped making my daughter’s plate. To some, this may be circumstantial or just the curiosity of a maturing mind. However; and despite his adorable character, I found myself at this moment negotiating how to answer this question to a Black boy who will soon grow up to be perceived as a dispensable threat and merely “collateral damage to racial tyranny for being born Black and male (West, 2014).” After a slight pause, I answered, “Yes Gabe, they do. And that is why we don’t trust them.”

This short but memorable exchange between my son and I plagues my conscience whenever I hear of conflicts between Black males and police officers in the national news. Additionally, the memory of our conversation arises when reflecting on my research and the growing national concern of the school-to-prison pipeline (Wald & Losen, 2003). It is easy for us, researchers who study racial disparities in school discipline, to get lost in the large datasets we analyze and forget that those numbers represent a life and sadly, far too often those numbers represent children who look like my own. As a parent of Black children, an educator, a community activist, and a researcher, I have to navigate multiple dualities (Du Bois, 1903) of my scholarship, parenthood, and advocacy when approaching this research.

My formal introduction into the scholarship on racial disparities in school discipline came from my graduate work at the Indiana University (IU) Equity Project located in Bloomington, Indiana. It was there that names and labels were attached to things and events I felt and experienced in years prior. Though I would not describe myself as a *frequent flyer* of my principals' offices, I had my fair share of scolding from school administrators. It was not until reflecting upon my actual experience as a classroom teacher that the research I was conducting and reading about at the IU Equity Project became more of a solidified topic to pursue for my dissertation. My personal philosophy of handling discipline in my classroom was more about keeping the student in the room and out of the hands of school police or other discipline authorities. Being the only male teacher in my building, I was routinely called upon to diffuse physical altercations or to shoo students away from smoking weed in the back staircases. Being a large male added to my intimidation and I leveraged that in redirecting students' behavior. Never once did I call down to the office for assistance to handle any discipline issue in or outside of my classroom because I could not trust that the discipline response assigned to any of my students would be equitable and just.

Those experiences taught me a great deal about the nuances and less documented happenstances of discipline response in the school setting. Additionally these experiences have become assets and points of reference not only in my research, but also in my collegiate teaching. Being a professor of pre-service teachers (aspiring teachers), who share stories about classroom discipline response or the lack thereof in classrooms across the city, has afforded me the privilege to view school discipline response from many vantage points. Through my students' experiences, I have had the opportunity to

hear about the good and not so good examples of how discipline is being handled across grade levels and districts that are not part of the larger discourse on disproportionality. One of many stories from my students actually resulted in a meeting between myself and the superintendent of the largest district in a Midwestern state as well as district-wide policy change.

Specifically, one of my students came to my office to tell me about an unsettling experience he had in a local high school where he was student teaching. He informed me that multiple officers (both school police and local city police) came into the classroom unannounced and told students to place their hands on their desks. The officers then proceeded to search every student's person and personal belongings one-by-one. My student felt scared and shocked by what was unfolding. He explained to me that the students appeared numb to what was occurring and apparently this occurrence was not uncommon. Only after the completion of the unsolicited and unconstitutional search of the students did the officers explain that this was part of a "random" search conducted across the entire school. The officers continued to explain that they would select a number between zero and nine and that every room in the building that ends in that number was selected for the "random" search.

After informing me of the story, I reached out to an associate who was a sitting board member of the same school district and told her of the story. We both reviewed board and state documents to determine if this "random" search was constitutional and/or was included as a provision of power under the bylaws of the district. Such searches were not. After some email communications, a presentation to the board, and a face-to-

face meeting with the district superintendent, the unwritten policy for “randomly” searching students was immediately stopped.

From a student in an urban school district to a teacher within that same district to an advocate for those from my community who attend that same school district and surrounding ones, to being a parent of Black children who are only a couple years away from kindergarten, the issue of racial disparities in school discipline is very close to who I am as a researcher, activist, and parent. From the slaying of Trayvon Martin to Mike Brown to those students being unconstitutionally searched for simply being in a classroom that ends in a zero – I am constantly troubled by what Pedro Noguera (1995) speaks to as the continual criminalization of Black youth as a result of systemic racism. It is for these reasons I write this dissertation. This dissertation and its implications are important to who I am blossoming into as a scholar, but more significantly, to who I am as a Black man who loves Black children.

Nathaniel Andrew Williams

ARE THE RACIAL DISPARITIES IN SCHOOL DISCIPLINE THE RESULT OF OR
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With over 40 years of research on the well-documented issue of racial disparities in school discipline, scholars have begun to explore a plethora of plausible causalities for this phenomenon. Recent literature on the causal agents have centered on cultural differences and/or racial prejudices held by educators. Building from this emerging logic, this dissertation specifically focused on the disposition (e.g. enduring traits, character type, mentality, and temperament) of educators and its influence, if any, on discipline-related outcomes. Additionally, this exploratory study sought to build a conceptual map for future research to explore how educators' dispositions may act as conduits between systemic racism and the historic racial disparities in discipline-related outcomes.

Through an intensive, multiyear embedded case study of four middle schools with both high and low rates of racial disproportionality in school discipline and with the creation and use of the *Four Domains*, this dissertation explored whether discipline-related outcomes are the result of systemic racism mediated by educators' dispositions. Findings from the analysis suggested the existence of shared characteristics among the dispositions of those categorized as high and low referring. Specific to those findings, trends within low referring teachers suggested that low referring teachers maintain high and consistent expectations of student behavior, but allowed for flexibility in how their discipline response was mediated out among their students. Despite a deferred approach

within discipline response, low referring teachers were consistent and did not show favoritism.

On the contrary, high referring teachers were inconsistent with their responses and demonstrated biases in actions and beliefs. Accordingly, it was found that high referring teachers held racially deficit beliefs about Black students and their families. Additionally, high referring teachers were more represented by the *Four Domains* in comparison to lower referring teachers. As a result, findings from the *Four Domains* support the existence of a causal link among systemic racism, higher referring teachers, and racial disparities in school discipline. In particular, it was found that classroom teachers engage in and hold racially deficit views of Blacks and these same teachers disproportionately refer Black students for out-of-school suspension.

James Joseph Scheurich Ph.D., Committee
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CURRICULUM VITAE

Chapter I

Introduction

On a raining February night in Sanford, Florida a 17 year old Black male was fatally shot by a 28 year old multi-racial white-Hispanic man. The 28 year old, neighborhood watchman believed that the 17 year old high school student posed an immediate threat to his life and declared that the shooting was in self-defense. The months to follow forced America into a racial discourse on racial profiling, the American justice system, racial prejudice, and systemic racism. Much of the conversation was held in the public arena via electronic platforms such as media forums and social media websites. Multiple well-known Black clergymen, activists, and scholars declared that the case was a direct reflection of the historical racial oppression and judicial plight of Blacks in America. Numerous views of self-identified white citizens professed that the incident was not racially motivated and that Black Americans were being hypersensitive about the situation. Online forums permitted unidentified and rarely-shared beliefs of Americans of various races to be disseminated without personal ridicule. These forums allowed for anonymity through screen names, which many whites used as a launching pad to express their malcontent towards Black Americans. For example;

Black people, would you please stop crying and bitching? It's getting old. Time to man up, fellas. Time to quit acting like a bunch of mouthy ho's, ladies. I swear, you're a bunch of professional victims, and quite frankly, I'm tired of you butchering the English language, dressing like street trash and thinking everyone owes you something. Grow up, black people. Enough is enough.

The above comment from a national news outlet received over 1000 thumbs up from other online users after only being posted for 6 hours. The post received multiple replies that affirmed the belief of this particular online user. Here are some of the responses:

“Amen”, “I’m white and I really get tired of hearing black people using the race card”, “Blacks are always calling people racists when it benefits them”, and “The world is better with another nigger dead”. Even though some of the replies to the above post were extreme views that most may not agree with, the commendation of the post and the belief system it boasters were familiar trends across many forums on the slain youth.

Celebrities and other famous figures also contributed to the public conversation on the slain youth. Multi-billionaire Mark Cuban (2014), who is also the owner of the mostly all-Black (10 of the 12 players) National Basketball Association (NBA) team *The Dallas Mavericks*, made the comment,

I mean, we're all prejudiced in one way or another. If I see a black kid in a hoodie and it's late at night, I'm walking to the other side of the street. And if on that side of the street, there's a guy that has tattoos all over his face -- white guy, bald head, tattoos everywhere -- I'm walking back to the other side of the street.

In his seemingly racially-transparent comment of personal biases, he unequally paints any Black kid with a hoodie as a possible threat, yet provides specific descriptors for the threat of a “white guy.” The same rhetoric of plausible threat or the imposed idea of a uniform of mischief behavior, which seems unilateral across Black kids, was also used by the 28 year-old neighborhood watchmen who stalked the young teenager before the altercation that resulted in the young Black kid’s death.

The criminalization of Black youth has been captured in social science literature for some time (Blalock, 1967; Rios, 2006; Davis, 2007). Beyond the confines of well-off neighborhoods in Stanford, Florida or the multitude of New York City streets under the militarized Stop-in-Frisk policies, the criminalization of Black youth persist. A new concern of this criminalization emerging in literature (Baker et. al, 2001; Wald & Losen,

2003; Losen, 2013) and by politicians (Duncan, 2014) is the school-to-prison pipeline and the possibility of educators' contribution to it by some inherent biases.

Similar to the personification of violence, intimidation, and insubordination that is promoted in popular culture about Black youth, especially Black boys (Rome, 2004), such an ideology can be seen in discipline response patterns highlighted in literature for some time. The seemingly racialized fixation of intimidation, disobedience, or defiance associated with Black youth has increasingly become more of a focal point in conversations around the overuse of harsher discipline response on Black students. This issue is gaining more attention as what has been documented in research becomes common place in public discourse. For example, Skiba, and his colleagues (2002) conducting a year-long analysis of office discipline referral data found that Black students on average were referred more often for disrespect, excessive noise, threat, and loitering, which are more subjective judgments on part of the referring agent (teachers). On the other hand, white students were significantly sent to the office for less subjective infractions (e.g. smoking, vandalism, leaving without permission, and obscene language). After ruling out other prevailing causal effects for racial disparities in school discipline (e.g. socioeconomic disproportionality), the researchers concluded that “systematic and prevalent bias in the practice of school discipline, (p.338)” may be the primary causality for the disparity. The findings of Skiba and his colleagues are echoed by Attorney General for Civil Rights Thomas E. Perez (2010) when he stated,

Regrettably, students of color are receiving different and harsher disciplinary punishments than whites for the same or similar infractions, and they are disproportionately impacted by zero-tolerance policies – a fact that only serves to exacerbate already deeply entrenched disparities in many communities.

Historical context. Published and released through the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial, an early 1970s book highlighted a growing national trend of “pushout students.” According to attorney, John Jordan (1974), “It [the book] essentially found that in school systems that are under desegregation orders or have recently attempted desegregation, there seems to be a dramatic rise in the suspension of Black students (p.2).” A year later, the Children’s Defense Fund (1975) reported on similar suspension practices, in particular, researchers found that Black students were suspended at a rate highly disproportionate to their total enrollment. Now, some 40 years later, in national-, state-, district-, and building-level data, Black students have been found to be suspended at rates two to three times that of other students, and similarly overrepresented in office referrals, corporal punishment, and school expulsion (Skiba, Chung, Trachok, Baker, Sheya, & Hughs, 2014). In concentrated urban areas of the country, the disparity between Black and white students is as great as a 22 times (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace & Bachman, 2008).

In March of 2014, the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR) released a brief that focused on school discipline practices across the nation. The report provided a disaggregated view of school discipline disparities—specifically for Black students and students receiving special education services—across the nation during the 2011-2012 academic school year and highlighted trends that have plagued American schools for decades. In particular, the report stated that Black students represent 16% of the national student population, but 32-42% of students suspended or expelled. Additionally the report found that Black children represent 18% of preschool

enrollment, but 42% of the preschool children suspended once, and 48% of the preschool children suspended more than once.

Efforts from scholars (Skiba, Shure, Middelberg, & Baker, 2011), to government officials (Duncan, 2014), to the President of the United States (e.g. My Brother's Keeper Initiative, 2014) have highlighted the significance of this issue. Legislative provisions under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and OCR have been put in place to monitor and capture school districts' compliance with mandates that seek to curb the historical overrepresentation of marginalized groups in exclusionary discipline practices (in- and out-of school suspension, and expulsion). Not only used as a monitoring metric, the Civil Rights Data Collection division (CRDC) collects data from thousands of schools and districts across the nation to produce biannual policy briefs for public awareness (i.e. the snapshot report previously discussed).

Efforts to better monitor discipline practices are in place to protect students from the well-documented adverse effects of exclusionary discipline responses (Bradshaw, Mitchell, O'Brennan, & Leaf, 2010). For example, suspension has been found to be associated with more misbehavior, additional suspensions, and eventually expulsion and/or dropping out (Mendez, 2003). Furthermore, studies have indicated that school suspension is often unsuccessful in discouraging the misbehaviors that it seeks to eliminate (Fenning & Rose, 2007). Moreover, those students who are frequently suspended are more prone to become involved with the juvenile justice system (Baker et al. 2001). This particular link illustrates what more recent scholars are referring to as the school-to-prison pipeline (Losen, 2013). Though the use of exclusionary discipline

responses, and its effects, are of much concern to me, this dissertation however aims to explore what antecedents contribute to disproportionality.

During a 1974 panel discussion on the National Public Radio, previously cited, a student at George Washington University stated,

[their] school was desegregated in 1971. Some of the Black students were branded as Black Militants and troublemakers by the white administration. There was even what was known as the Black List on which many of these students' names appeared. These students in many cases were bullied by the white administration. These were students fighting for their rights. Many Blacks were suspended or expelled for such things as chewing gum in class, waving to someone outside the classroom, being suspected of fighting, being suspected of burning a poster and supposed insubordination (p.1).

This panelist's story and similar ones began to bring attention to an issue blossoming during the early 1970s which imposed a plausible connection between racial composition and discipline-related outcomes. Surprisingly, it would take nearly 40 years before academic scholarship (i.e. Welch & Payne, 2010; Vaught, 2012) would highlight the relationship between racial composition, discipline-related outcomes, and its possible linkage to systemic racism.

During the same panel discussion, attorney John Jordan (1974) stated, when referencing a school district in Texas that, "In one school district the school superintendent testified in open court that institutional racism was the reason for the disproportion (p.3)." Attorney John Jordan and other panelists continued with suggesting that teachers' biases or attitudes and attitudes of administrators had much influence on the over-suspension of Blacks in comparison to their white counterparts. Now some 40 years later, this dissertation seeks to revisit this intersection of racial biases of educators and discipline-related outcomes. In particular, this study aims to examine the influence of

teacher attitudes and biases, which will be referred to as disposition and its contribution to racial disparities in school discipline. More precisely, the research focus centers on this guiding question; *Are the racial disparities in school discipline the result of or a function of systemic racism mediated by educators' dispositions?*

For the purpose of delineation, I will separate institutional racism from systemic racism and define educator. Drawing from the work of Pearl, 2002 and DeJesus, 2005 institutional racism refers to the praxis of racism enacted at the organization level, which is usually mediated by governmental or collective bodies of control (i.e. districts, schools, police departments, and organized religions). Feagin (2010), Fanon (1952), and Critical Race Theory (CRT) scholars (Harris, 1993; Banks, 2000; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000) refer to systemic racism as more of the everyday experience of racism that is embedded into our society's norms, which are mediated by legislation, policies, institutions, and actors who protect white superiority through social reproductions. The theory of systemic racism used specifically for this study will be unpacked in more detail in chapter 2 (see page 37). The discipline response process (e.g. referral, discipline-related outcome) is a system within itself and includes multiple actors. Even though educator and teacher are used interchangeably in the review of literature, I include both teachers and school administrators when using the term *educator*. If needed, I will delineate between the two by title to explain or demonstrate similarities and differences.

40 years after the conversation at George Washington University, the issue of the overrepresentation of Black students receiving harsher discipline responses has been thoroughly documented and researched, yet mostly under theorized.. We have known discipline disproportionality to be a problem for some time; however, much of the

discourse on causalities for this phenomenon or its antecedents has been proximal to indicators associated with the issue (e.g. behavioral difference, SES, and school locale). Until recently (Valles & Villalpando, 2013), limited theorizing on larger systemic issues such as: public education, educators' dispositions or systemic racism, and their relationship to racial disparities has been missing in the literature. More pertinent to this study is the lack of scholarship exploring the imposed intersection between an influx of Black students due to desegregation, educators' disposition, and the over suspension of Black youth, which was raised as a concern over 40 years ago.

Statement of the Problem

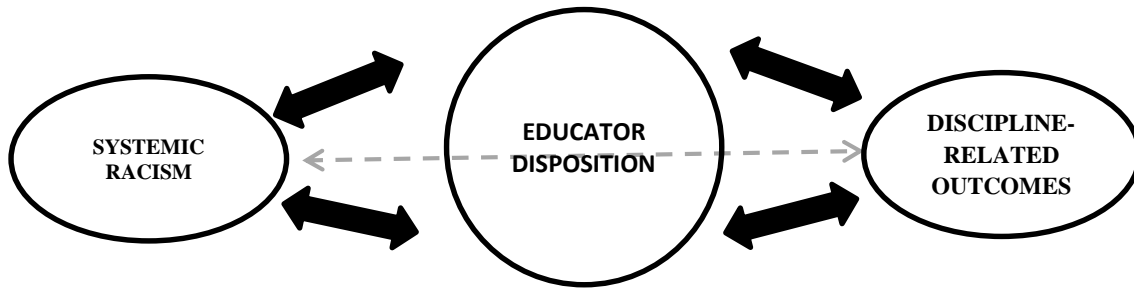
This polemic raised decades prior and discussed in the previous section is where this study seeks to enter the larger body of literature on racial disparities in school discipline. The well-documented and researched issue of discipline disproportionality has proposed multiple causalities for racial disparities in school discipline (discussed in more detail in chapter 2), much of which fall into four categories, *socioeconomic reasons*, *behavioral differences*, *cultural mismatch*, and *fear of Black children*. The first two have been consistently found to not fully explain away the persistence of racial disparities in school discipline (see Wallace, 2008; Noltemeyer & Mcloughlin, 2010; Brantlinger, 1991; Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Skiba et al., 2002; Hinojosa, 2008; Poguerro & Shekarkhar, 2011; Eitle & Eitle, 2004; Singham, 2003). The latter two encompass more emerging themes in the literature, which support the intersection previously discussed, and propose that the issue or casual reason is not situated in the student, but either/and/or situated in educators' disposition (Zimmerman, Khoury, Vega, Gil, & Warheit, 1995; Townsend, 2000; Ferguson, 2001; Vavrus and Cole, 2002; Johnson & Reiman, 2007) or

some larger systemic issue (Welsh and Payne, 2010*ab*; Vaught, 2012; Valles & Villalpando, 2013) enacted out by educators in the classroom.

This Study

This exploratory study seeks to explore if there is (are) a connection between systemic racism and discipline-related outcomes, which is mediated through educators' dispositions. This is not to be confused with situational disposition. Yet this study is testing if the actual essence, characteristics of character, and the biases and beliefs of educators is influenced by and/or influencing racial disparities because of systemic racism. Although this study will focus on classroom teachers, school administrators will be included in the sample in recognition to the conventions of the discipline process. Additionally this study seeks to explore if there are similarities among those categorized as high referring and those categorized as low referring. Logic established in chapter 2 supports the idea that high referring teachers possess the strongest racialized views of Black students, as such, this study will explore if there are some shared qualities among high referring teachers, those who refer students to the office at a disproportionate rate in comparison to other teachers in their buildings, as evidence of systemic racial biases that occur across sites. This will be tested using the Four Domains (*see* chapter 3). **Figure 1.1** provides an illustration of the problem explored in this study. Components of this study will explained in more detail in chapter 2.

Figure 1.1



Guiding question. Are the racial disparities in school discipline the result of or a function of systemic racism mediated by educators' dispositions?

Study specifics. This exploratory study uses data collected from a larger multi-year and multi-site case study comprised of two phases. The first phase primarily examined state-wide data through quantitative analysis from a Midwestern state. Utilizing results from the first phase, the second and more concentrated phase included an embedded multi-case study (Yin, 2013) of four middle schools differing on dimensions of disproportionality and school locale. This method was selected because multiple cases are regarded as yielding more robust and compelling evidence (Herriott & Firestone, 1983). The overarching inquiry of the second phase was to explore and better understand how the discipline process operates at the school level. Of the dozens of subunits studied during this phase, this exploratory inquiry [this study] will include the following subunits: (a) classroom dynamics, (b) the disposition of teachers, (c) discipline techniques, (d) referral process, (e) rate of referral, (f) racialized subtext, and (g) overall discipline policy.

This exploratory study was designed to begin framing future scholarship in order to answer the guiding question. It is important to note that this study is exploratory in

nature and cannot conclusively answer this question as it is stated in its entirety. Yet, the motivation behind this study is to begin testing methods to better inform future scholarship specific to its aim. Specifically, emerging themes from school discipline literature suggests that the cause of disproportionality is situated in bias actions taken by educators and this study's aim is to explore if educators are enacting learned racialized biases through discipline response. Moreover, this study seeks to explore if the racial biases present in the deposition of educators are contributing to racial disparities in school discipline. To test this, subunits selected will be examined for themes and subunits will be cross-analyzed against each other for theming and similarities. Secondly, I will utilize domains (n=4) of emerging themes and related literature in a rubric fashion, to explore possible connections among discipline-related outcomes, educators' dispositions, and systemic racism. An overview of this process will be discussed in the following section. In reference to teachers, a working logic supported by school discipline literature, which will be discussed in depth in chapter 2, suggests that higher referring teachers contribute more to racial disparities. Accordingly, this logic would conclude that higher referring teachers are more likely to enact out racially biases beliefs in the classroom. For that reason, I hypothesis that high referring teachers will be substantially represented more in the four domains.

Four Domains (brief description). To test the hypothesis and explore if racial biases enacted by educators and/or how discipline-related outcomes may be a function of systemic racism, four domains were comprised together based upon related and supported literature and will be used for analysis. The four domains have a total of ten indicators which serve as markers for data specific to their respective domains. The domains are

comprised from emerging themes from school discipline and teacher education literature; Deficit thinking (Valencia's 1997; 2010), Cultural mismatch (Townsend, 2000; Ferguson, 2001; Vavrus and Cole, 2002), Fear of Blacks (Blalock, 1969; Welch & Payne, 2010; Vaught, 2012), and Colorblind racism (Bonilla-Sliva, 2010).

The indicators are tenets of each of the domains and represent specific actions or sayings that will be used to capture observance in the data. Data within and across the domains will be themed to examine for similarities in the characteristics of the disposition of those captured by the domains. In theory, there should be higher representation of those who are categorized as high referring and/or those who have more racial bias in the four domains. Such conclusions would support a relationship between the disposition of teachers and their contribution to racial disparities in school discipline. The domains and indicators will be explained in full detail in chapter three.

Endnotes

¹Conventions of writing, specific to APA formatting, would claim that if I capitalize the first letter of Black that I must do the same for white when referring to those of the white race. However, I consciously lower-case this letter in response to the inherent dominance of white-skinned privilege in the United States and in academic writing.

²In 1899 W.E.B. DuBois stated in his first footnote of *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*,

I shall throughout this study use the term 'Negro' to designate all persons of Negro Descent, although the appellation is to some extent illogical. I shall, moreover, capitalize the word, because I believe that eight million Americans are entitled to a capital letter. (p.1)

In that same vein, I too shall from this point on capitalize Black, as it is representative of a cultural, lifestyle, reality, and ideology of my people - so for that reason, we are entitled to a capital letter.

Chapter II

Introduction

Teachers bring themselves—their life experiences, histories, and cultures—into the classroom. They bring their assumptions and beliefs about what a good teacher is and does, their knowledge of education theory, research, and human development, and their love and knowledge of content areas. They bring their personalities and teaching styles that are shaped by social and cultural interactions. (White, Zion, Kozleski, Fulton, 2005, p.2)

The racial attitudes (Bank, 1997) of the public are well known and documented yearly by social scientists, scholars, and researchers, yet the racial attitudes of teachers are less known and documented (Hinojosa & Moras, 2009). This is not to detract from multicultural education researchers (Gay, 2004; Banks, 2004), social psychologists (Steele, 1997; Hinojosa, 2009), Socio-educators (Delpit, 1995; Foster, 1996; Hollins, 1991; Ladson-Billings, 2009), and curriculum theorists (Apple, 1990; Waugh, 1995) who have for some time pointed to the close relationship between teachers, the racial beliefs and values teachers bring into the classroom, their pedagogy, and the outcomes of their students. However; little has been done to see how racialized practices in society influence educators and therefore are replicated in the classroom by teachers. The thoroughly-researched topic of racial disparities in school discipline provides the platform to not only test this notion, but to hopefully shed light on a plausible causal agent of the racial disparities.

This chapter presents a review of literature related to racial disparities in K-12 school discipline, educators' (teacher and principal) dispositions, and the systemic racism that influence educators' disposition. The following chapter will be divided into three sections, which each have smaller components based upon the above listed categories.

These categories were selected in order to provide support for the conceptual mapping that is being used in this dissertation. Although each category could be a standalone topic for any dissertation, this study seeks to provide a framing for further research through a comprehensive overview of each listed category in hopes of exploring this study's guiding question, "*Are the racial disparities in school discipline the result of or a function of systemic racism mediated by educators' dispositions?*" An overview of the categories will be explained for the establishment of a larger theoretical framework centered on large macro-level social systems enacted at the micro-level.

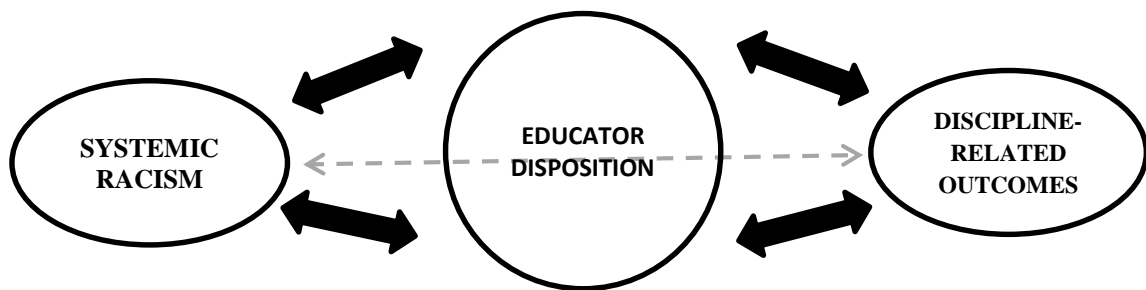
The first section will begin by reviewing the establishment and existence of systemic racism in America's laws and statutes. Specifically, the first section will explore the legal roots of racial bias treatment against Blacks through chattel slavery, the creation of racial categorization in psychology, and conclude with the manifestation of colorblind racism in a contemporary America. The second section will concentrate specifically on literature pertaining to educators' dispositions and discipline-related outcomes. The final section will provide an overview of the school discipline disproportionality research that was conducted in the 1970s. In particular, the section will focus on dismissed and emerging causalities for why these disparities persist.

Conceptual Mapping

This study seeks to provide a framework for exploring if and how discipline disproportionality is a function of systemic racism mediated by educators' dispositions. This framework is less about a methodological or theoretical framework, but more of a diagram that connects theoretical and empirical links, found in the literature, among systemic racism to educators' dispositions and to racial disparities in school discipline. In

particular, this study wants to examine the dispositions of high and low referring teachers and school administrators and, if at all, the connection between the disposition of educators and systemic racism. The causal linkage among the three categories is illustrated in **Figure 1.1**.

Figure 1.1



The literature review seeks to explore the correlation between systemic racism and discipline-related outcomes of students byway of educators' dispositions. Accordingly, the purpose of this review is to suggest the need for further investigation if the disposition of educators mediate, to any extent, the overrepresentation of Black students receiving harsher school discipline. **Figure 1.1** attempts to illustrate this notion. Bi-directional arrows illustrate the relational aspect of each domain included in the figure and how they inform each other. Presented in a linear fashion as left-to-right, racial biases, whiteness (see page 28), beliefs, and values are translated through each category.

The connection between educator disposition and discipline-related outcomes will be supported in theory by Dewey (1904, 1916, 1929), affirmed through tests by Kohlberg (1958;1963) and confirmed by Rest and his colleagues (1999), Johnston and Lubomudrov (1987), and Johnson and Reiman (2007). Along with the disposition informing discipline-

related outcomes, the review of literature also discovered that disposition informed classroom management. Vaandering (2013) has pointed to the close relationship of discipline style or classroom management and pedagogy. The work of Wentzel (2002), at the primary level, and the work of Gregory, Nygreen, and Moran (2006), at the secondary level, help to demonstrate how educators' dispositions, acted through decisions, can inform how disciplined is addressed and handled in the classroom, which may result in racial disparities. Lastly, in this body of literature, it clear that there appears to be a connection among teachers' perceptions of Black students (Townsend, 2000; Vavrus & Cole, 2002), their relationships with Black students (Gregory and Weinstein, 2008), and how Black students are disciplined (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). These findings all are contingent upon the disposition of educators. Findings of such a relationship would not definitively prove the present theory because the direction of causality could be argued just as could the mediation of such a relationship. However the present study serves as an in-progress body of work to move in the direction of a more solidified metric for testing said theory.

Section One: Systemic Racism

The U.S. Constitutional Convention [1787], the first such in the democratic history of the modern world, laid a strong base for the new societal "house" called the United States. Yet, from the beginning, this house's foundation was fundamentally flawed. While most Americans have thought of this document and the sociopolitical structure it created as keeping the nation together, in fact this structure was created to maintain racial separation and oppression at the time and for the foreseeable future (Feagin, 2010, p. 9).

In Feagin's (2010) gripping account of how this nation's foundation is rooted in racialized oppression, he draws from multiple data points and historical events that he argues have resulted in systemic racism. He claims systemic racism shapes every "major

part of the life of a white person or a person of color” (p. x) Starting with the nation’s roots, Feagin and other scholars (Frederickson, 1988; Smedley, 1999) point to multiple legal bills and perspectives of America’s founders who laid the groundwork for the systemic racism lived today. Though education is [wrongfully] casted as the panacea of our society (Tyack, 1995), it is not divorced from the influence of the larger social system from which it is situated. Just as scholars suggest that educators, “bring themselves—their life experiences, histories, and cultures—into the classroom...” (White et al., 2005) then they too bring in the same racial prejudice of systemic racism. Utilizing this logic, it is not surprising that racial disparities within schools ranging from academic performance (Ladson-Billing, 2006), to school resources (Lee & Wong, 2004), to discipline response (Skiba et al., 2014) exist.

In efforts to streamline the history and establish the relationship between America' racialized past and practices to systemic racism of today, this study will begin with examining conditions within the America’s history that contributed to a system of advantage and discrimination rooted in a racial caste system, that morphed into whiteness as a metric of property, and property attainment. Moving chronologically forward, the section will continue with the strong relationship among whiteness, property, humanity, and access to said property through skin pigment, or white-skinned privilege. Then the section will conclude with how systemic racism is enacted today through colorblind racism (Bonilla-Silva, 2010). Recounting this history is important to establish the existence of systemic racism and highlight the infectious nature of racial biases in the larger sociocultural space that schools and educators operate in, which may provide some linkage to racial disparities in school discipline.

Race as a category. Understanding the foundation of racial categorization is essential to recognizing America's systemic racism. Pinning down the exact time or event in history that was the catalyst for the current state of racism in America is challenging and highly complex. Even more challenging, is simply answering the question, "When was race created?" Numerous historians, theorists, anthropologists, and sociologists propose conflicting origins for the current ethnic/phenotypical intergroup racial conflict of today. It is important to note that intergroup conflict between factions, cultures, and nations of people has been occurring since recorded history, but it wasn't until the last millennium and expansion of colonialization of the Western world that these intergroup conflicts became synonymous with skin pigmentation or phenotypical characteristics. Frederickson (1988) stated that before European explorers ever step foot in the Americas, there was preexisting prejudices against Blacks. He noted that Englishmen's early contact with Africans through trade lead to a prejudice based in association of "blackness" with savagery, heathenism, and general failure to conform to European standards of civilization and propriety.

The English were not the first to come to the Americas, so it is important to note that the possible formation of racial oppression in the Americas developed differently for different colonies and regions (Lovejoy, 1982). Historians look to the English as the marker for our social interactions due to much of our political system and social traditions are the result of sequential liberation from British rein (Bean, 1972). Smedley (1998) suggested that the English had already practices of enmity towards non-Englishmen and it was evident in their treatment of the Irish, that they boarder. Smedley

goes on to propose that the antagonism for non-Englishmen fueled the distaining of Englishmen colonies from the indigenous people of the Americas.

Allen (1997) argues that the particular "invention" of the white race took place after an early, but unsuccessful, colonial revolt of servants and poor freedmen known as Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. Colonial leaders subsequently decided it would be useful to establish a division among the masses of poor to prevent their further collaboration against the governmental authorities. As African servants were vulnerable to policies that kept them in servitude indefinitely, and European servants had the protection of English law, colonial leaders developed a policy backed by new laws that separated African servants and freedmen from those of European background. Over the next half century, colonials passed numerous laws that provided resources and benefits to poor, white freedmen and other laws that restricted the rights of "Africans," "mulattoes," and "Indians." Harris (1993) points to decades prior to the Bacon's Rebellion that contributed to the racialization of "otherness" due to chattel slavery, which provided the "us" and "them" dichotomy between Blacks and whites.

With the complexity of early colonization in the Americas and such diverse perspectives on what set of events initiated the formation of the racial caste system that we know today, it would be more practical to track the development of racial categories in formal scientific literature. Historians agree that the white male domination of both the hard sciences (pathology, astronomy, astrology) in Europe was established well before the seventeenth century and this trend continued into the development of the social sciences for instance psychology and anthropology (Harding, 1996). Scholars have pointed to the research of Carl von Linnaeus (1735), whose meticulous categorization of

species made “racial” distinctions based on color of skin, temperament, customs and habits, as a definitive point that started the racial stratification (Burmeister, 1853). The term “race” was introduced into scientific literature by Buffon (1750), in his *Histoire naturelle Generale et Particuliere* (Georges-Louis, 1811).

According to Robert V. Guthrie (2003) anthropology provided psychology with the racial system needed to justify the existence of some sort of intellectual differences among human beings. Psychology and anthropology have shared elements that overlap throughout their history, but after Darwin and into the latter half of the nineteenth century the two disciplines became bedfellows (Guthrie, 2003). The link between psychology and anthropology was initiated with P.W.A. Bastain (1871) when he insisted on the connection between ethnology and psychology. Ethnology is a division of anthropology that is focused on the study of race (Saint-Hilaire, 1856). In 1910, Haddon expanded the term ethnical psychology to include the “uncivilized” (Haddon, 1910). Haddon redefined ethnical psychology as “the study of the minds of other races and peoples, of which, among the more backward races, glimpses can be obtained only by living by means of observation and experiment” (Haddon p.6 , 1910).

The German physician, physiologist and anthropologist, Johann Friedrich Blumenbach (1824) created a method for visually judging cranium variation (Barzun, 1935). The *norma verticalis* was used as an accurate technique by scientists of that era and according to Barzun (1935) scientist performed their assessments in this manner: [T]he skull was placed between the feet of the observer and after examination from above, classed as oblong, round, and so forth, for the purpose of determining the race to which it belonged (p.242).

Blumenbach's procedures were not only used for the classification of race to the skulls previous host, but were used as a mechanism to distinguish skulls that were from a "civilized" or "uncivilized" human (Guthrie, 2003).

In 1817, F.J. Gall and G. Spurheim published *Anatomy and Physiology of the Nervous System* and in this they speculated that different behaviors were produced by different sections of the brain. In reference to contemporary theories, this is true, but they also speculated that the outer shape of the skull had a correlation to the shape of the brain inside it. From this theory, they suggested that there is a direct link between skull capacity and mental capacity and other studies following this one were conducted that reinforced this notion. In 1847, Isadore Saint-Hilaire divided human facial structures into orthognathic (oval face with vertical jaws, upright jaw, White), eurynathic (high cheekbones, vertical jawed, Asian), and prognathic (projecting jaws, forward jawed, Black) (Saint-Hilaire, 1856 & Guthrie, 2003).

From the findings of Saint-Hilaire and other researchers, the academic and layman community associated the facial characteristics of Blacks with apes. An example of this would be anthropologist Franz Boas's 1922 publication of *The Mind of the Primitive Man* when he stated:

We find that the face of the Negro as compared to the skull is larger than that of the American, whose face is in turn larger than that of the white. The lower portion of the face assumes larger dimensions. The alveolar arch is pushed forward and thus gains an appearance which reminds us of the higher apes.

Evidence of racial stratification can also be seen in the works of G.O. Ferguson when he published *The Psychology of the Negro: An Experimental Study* (1916). In this study, Ferguson (1916) suggested that Blacks did not inherit the ability to think abstract and that

the Negro was, “yet very capable in the sensory and motor powers” (p.47). He continued with suggesting that training and education for Blacks should be focused on manual skills and that this would guarantee a better economic investment.

The impact of white’s perception of Blacks and their mental capacity as contributors to the economy during the turn of the century can also be seen in the policy and classification of the U.S. Government. In 1910, the U.S. Senate commissioned Daniel and Elnora Folkmar to prepare, for the Immigration commission, A Dictionary of Races or Peoples (Folkmar, 1911). Under an official United States Government document Negro (Blacks) were described as, “belonging to the lowest division of mankind from an evolutionary standpoint”. The reminiscent of racism are not solely localized to dogmatic racial categorizations, yet it has had a long standing presence in the fabric of America’s history since its inception.

U.S. (United under Slavery). During the 1787 Constitutional Convention, there was much debate over slavery. Feagin (2010) suggested that much of the conflict among well-educated men of the North and South centered on the protection of the bourgeoisie class and the sequential protection of their property. As a result, the infamous three-fifths compromise was born. This law legalized a process of dehumanization (Freire, 1970) of enslaved “others” – mostly of African descent – by considering them less than a white man. Additional articles protected, maintained, and legalized such dehumanization. For example, Article 1, section 2 and section 9 allotted the taxation of those in slavery as property under the three-fifths formula as well; Article 4 section 4 required the federal government to assist state governments in combating slave uprisings.

Much of chattel slavery and the laws that protected it established the legalization of dehumanizing Africans. For example, state and federal laws outlined that Blacks or Africans¹ who were enslaved, born of a woman who was enslaved, were property of their master. As such, children and their parents were seen as valuable property for profit. Thomas Jefferson stated in 1805 that, “I consider the labor of a breeding woman as no object, and that a child raised every 2 years is of more profit than the crop of the best laboring man.”

Additional provisions were enacted to withhold humanity from Africans who were enslaved. The 1790 Naturalization Act prevented Africans who were enslaved in America from naturalized citizenship, even after being born in America. Such provisions to humanity were even denied further by restricting access to education. White southerners feared that literacy would expose them to abolition literature and for that reason, southern states passed laws between 1800 and 1835 that prevented Africans who were enslaved from being educated. Spring (2007) argues that in a broader framework, such actions of denial to education “often ensures compliant and inexpensive workers.” This notion dovetails nicely to the strong relationship between slavery, property, humanity, and whiteness.

Blackness as a source of profit. Beyond the horrific physical acts against humanity that became the cornerstone of the US economy (see, U.S. Const. amend. XIII), the act of making one’s essence property was just as inhumane. What was unique about the formation of human as profit via slavery in the Americas was the colorism, discrimination based upon skin tone, embedded in the law (Banks, 2000). Simply, *Blackness’s* association with heathenness (Frederickson, 1988) made it palatable and

justifiable for marketing. For example, a creole, person of mixed heritage of African and European descent, was the result of and testament to the colonization of western Africans and indigenous people of the Americas. Spring (2007) points out that most of the enslaved Africans arriving at Jamestown in 1618, had English or Hispanic names, and, in some cases, spoke European languages and had both African and European ancestry.

He continues by highlighting the lived tension of Creoles who found themselves at odds with both Europeans and other Africans who were enslaved. Their partially assimilated experience was rivaled by the distaste of Europeans who resented Creoles for wearing European clothing and adopting their customs. Creoles were also met with resentment from non-Creole Africans because, in many cases, Creoles were socially considered part of the same class as indentured servants and could purchase their freedom and even own slaves. Their unsuccessful assimilation through skin tone provided a script for what will once again solidify a white superior complex in America, during antebellum and would be known historically as “separate, but equal.”

The Plessy v Ferguson decision of 1896, which resulted in the creation of the Jim Crow era and centered on a Creole man from New Orleans, brought upon decades of legalized [*ish*] bombings, lynchings, and mob violence against Blacks perpetrated by whites (Alexander, 2010). Yet, more importantly, embedded in the arrest of plaintiff and Creole Homer Plessy, the Supreme Court’s decision (163 U.S. 537, 1896) and laws similar to the “one-drop rule,” was the notion of whiteness as purity. A purity personified by the protection of it and its separation from Blackness.

Critical Race Theorist scholar Cheryl Harris (1993) discussed her grandmother’s ability to leverage her fair skin as a method for improving her economic situation. Harris

stated that her grandmother's lighter complexion and European physical features benefited her economically because she was able to pass as white and hide her ancestry. She recounted her grandmother's bus route from their Black neighborhood on the south side of Chicago to her clerical position among all white colleagues. Her grandmother's skin color served as a proxy for race and her ability to pass provided entrée into the economic privileges denied to those who lived in her own neighborhood. Harris states, "The persistence of passing is related to the historical and continuing pattern of white racial domination and economic exploitation that has given passing a certain economic logic" (p.1773).

Harris' example illustrates how race as property became forever intertwined due to slavery and its legalization of dehumanization. Drawing from slave codes, the status of Blacks as chattel slaves, Harris asserts that laws, which prevented Blacks from traveling without permission, assembling publicly, having access to formal education, or owning property provided racialized identity that worked as markers for who was free and who was not. Specifically, she implies that "slave" and "free" become interchangeable with "Black" and "white." Harris then suggests that the intersectionality of race, slavery, and economic domination provided the grounds for the protection and maintenance of whiteness due to the close relationship of property and humanity.

Whiteness: A vehicle of systemic racism. In theory, if any linkage among systemic racism and discipline-related outcomes mediated by educators' dispositions is established in this study, then understanding whiteness is essential to broaden the understanding of how racialized practice, enacted racial biases, contribute to racial disparities in school discipline. Richard Dyer (1997) made the claim, "[T]o apply the

colour white to white people is to ascribe a visible property to a group that thrives also on invisibility.” Attempting to make a correlation between systemic racism and any racial inequity outcome (i.e. income disparities, real estate redlining) or plainly attempting to make whiteness visible is quite an achievement for any research endeavor. Yet, this study attempts to lay the groundwork or mapping for how this may be possible. As previously explained, laws and statues protected whites and their property and racism became a tool of deciphering intelligence (Guthrie, 2003) through categorization while maintaining white-skinned superiority and imperialism.

Borrowing form the works of postcolonialist Alfred Lopez (2005) and Harris (1993), whiteness refers to a marker of international “hegemony and imperialism” identifiable by its set of “assumptions, privileges, and benefits” of being and obtaining white. Its entrenched nature into the narrative of our society provides a script for which we define reality, value, Truth², and humanity in a postcolonial world. Rightfully so, it also classifies what is not valuable, what is good scholarship, who has ownership, and who is subhuman. Whiteness becomes a *vehicle* of systemic racism meaning that whiteness is not context or individually specific, yet it is a fluid belief system embedded and manifested as *functions* within institutions. *Functions* of systemic racism refer to operationalized practices of maintaining whiteness in institutions.

This does not mean that all whites have access to the same *benefit packages* of other white elites nor does this mean that Blacks and other nonwhites do not have any access or work to maintain whiteness as “ordinary business” (Critical Race Theory pun intended). For example, the history of colonialism has provided plenty of Black faces with white masks which as Fanon (1952) claims, “serve to convey to their fellow soldiers

[other Blacks] the master's orders, and they themselves enjoy a certain status." Evermore complicating this paradigm is whiteness's subversive manifestation in daily practices, as Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2010) would describe, now-you-see it, now-you-don't racism. As he details further in his explanation of such invisible racism, color-blind racism and the endorsement of such ideology "is central to the maintenance of white privilege." More precisely, Harris (1993) states,

To define race reductively as simply color, and therefor meaningless, however, is as subordinating as defining race to be scientifically determinative or inherent deficiency. The old definition creates a false linkage between race and inferiority; the new definition denies the real linkage between race and oppression under systematic white supremacy. (p.1768)

Feagin (2010) claims that in order for systemic racism to persist itself, it requires reproducing of organizational structures and ideological processes that perpetuate social reproductions. Couching his argument in monetary and social wealth, that is transferred across generations, Feagin states that institutional systems make the socioeconomic conditions malleable for the domination of subordinate racial groups by maintaining whites' possession of major economic resources and "possession of political, police, and ideological power."

Systemic racism enacted today. In an era of Obama and the notion that the US has transcended into a post-racialized society, this further complicated the recognition and identification of systemic racism today. Feagin (2010) asserts

Today, most whites underestimate the degree to which the United States remains a very racist society. They underestimate the extent of white racial privileges and resources and the degree to which these privileges and resources have been passed down from their predecessors. Social inheritance mechanisms are imbedded in society and disguised to make inter-temporal inheritance appear fair. (p.19)

The swearing in of the first Black president in US history led to a mainstream conversation about the idea of a post-racialized society. At its core, the idea of a post-racialized society is contingent upon the idea of race neutrality or colorblindness.

Conflating this notion of a post-racialized society, by proposing equal opportunity exists and the idea of meritocracy, further pushes racialized practice to more subversive, less explicit, levels. Scholars for some time have asserted that the subversive or implicit biases in racialized practices help to protect and maintain white supremacy (Du bois, 1920; Baldwin, 1963; Allen, 1976; Morrison, 1992; Frankenberg, 1993). To not only highlight functions of systemic racism at the individual level in the contemporary context, this study will utilize the work of Bonilla-Silva's (2010) colorblind racism to capture practices of racial bias in participants in this study, which will be explained in greater detail in chapter 4. Due to the use of Bonilla-Silva's overall framework for colorblind racism in analysis of this study, I will use his four frames of colorblind racism to demonstrate how systemic racism is enacted today. It is important to note, that Bonilla-Silva exclusively assigns characteristics of his frames to whites, yet I do not prescribe to this view because I believe racism is easily conflated with the enacting of whiteness and as such, racism is more nuanced and because of this I believe all races participate.

Bonilla-Silva's Frame: Abstract liberalism. The liberalism that he is referencing is not to be solely interchangeable with modern or social liberalism, which is associated with progressive thinking, the Democratic Party, and an overall ideology of being more socially acceptant of different lifestyles. He is speaking more to classical liberalism of individualism and choice combined with the more modern [per]version of equal opportunity. Bonilla-Silva states that whites can appear "moral" and "reasonable", when

opposing remedies to de facto racial inequalities. Under the abstract liberalism frame, he argues, whites rationalize racial inequities by claiming equal opportunity. In a meritocratic society, reward is equivalent to a work output, yet many whites believe that discrimination is not the reason why Blacks are worse off than whites, yet the difference is due to work ethic. This individualism moves to legitimize opposing policies to offset racial inequality because these policies would be group specific rather “case by case.”

For example, as part of Bonilla-Silva’s research it was found that 64.3% of whites agreed to a survey prompt, “We should expand the services that benefit the poor;” however less than 40% agreed with proposition “The government should make every effort to improve the social and economic position of Blacks living in the United States.” Even more telling was the over 75% of respondents who approved increasing federal spending for the environment and nearly 60% for social security, but only 31.7% approved such increases for programs to assist Blacks.

Whites further support a meritocratic approach by defending the most qualified candidate. One participant in Bonilla-Silva’s study provided an antidotal story of how hiring decisions should be like purchasing beer and based on the best, which results in competition. However; as Bonilla-Silva asserts, the market has its fair share of racial inequities and that more than two-thirds of jobs are obtained through informal networks. Hence, if particular subordinate groups like women and Blacks are and have been historically marginalized in the market place, they have a severe disadvantage versus dominates groups. The summation can be captured in the following excerpt from Bonilla-Silva (2010), “if minority groups face group-based discrimination and whites

have group-based advantages, demanding individual treatment for all can only benefit the advantaged group” (p.36).

Bonilla-Silva’s Frame: Naturalization. At the core of this frame is the ideology that “folks of a feather, flock together.” Explicitly, whites can claim that the segregation of races is due to some natural attraction or affinity to associate with “their kind.” Bonilla-Silva notes the phrases “natural” or “that’s the way it is” is often utilized to “normalize events or actions that could otherwise be interpreted as racially motivated (i.e. associating with only white people or residential segregation)” (p.37). He continues by asserting these events have little to do with “natural” occurrences and more to do with social processes and that this illusion is embedded in this frame. For instance, he demonstrates that residential segregation is due to white buyers searching for white neighborhoods who are assisted by realtors, bankers, and sellers. Then enclaves of white spaces are created by whites and the influence of Western Eurocentric ideology, which he argues results in whites interpretation of “their racialized choices for white significant others as ‘natural’...are the ‘natural’ consequences of a white socialization process” (p.39).

Bonilla-Silva’s Frame: Cultural racism. This frame is represented by large sweeping claims such as “Mexicans are lazy” or “Blacks are ratchet and violent” and are used as justification for their socioeconomic standing in society. Bonilla-Silva states that whites may no longer perceive biological inferiority as a rationale for their conditions, yet they assign determinants like, lack of fathers in the household or lack of morality as substitutions. What is problematic with these conclusion, apart from being deficit in orientation (Valencia, 2010), is the idea of cultural deficiencies are the result of cultural

norms and not external social process or occurrences. The sudden and substantial decline of stable fathers in Blacks households during the 1960s and 1970s has been attributed to the Heroin epidemic in urban contexts, which disproportionately effect Blacks living in poverty, and disproportionate mass incarceration of Black men as a result of the war on drugs (Alexander, 2010).

Bonilla-Silva's Frame: Minimization of racism. Couched in the ideology of progression or “it’s different now,” this frame hinges upon minimizing the impact of racism on current social conditions. Bonilla-Silva provides the following notion for this frame, “there is discrimination, but there are plenty of jobs out there” (p.29). Similar to the abstract liberalism frame, this frame supports the illusion of plenty opportunities for advancement and race is not an obstacle to prevent upward mobility. Survey responds indicated a significant percentage (higher than 80%) of both Black and white respondents “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” with the statement “Discrimination against Blacks is no longer a problem in the United States.” However only 32.9% of white respondents in comparison to 60.5% of Black respondents “agreed” or “strongly agreed” to the statement, “Blacks are in the position that they are today as a group because of present day discrimination.” Additionally interesting in this study was that college students were more likely than other respondents to provide more “lip service” to the presence of discrimination, but few college respondents believed discrimination and institutionalized racism are the explanation for minorities’ current social conditions.

Conclusion of section one. Teacher education research has for some time claimed that educators and their disposition impact their pedagogy and their students’ academic achievement (Gay, 2001; Ladson-Billing, 2009). Similarly, multicultural

education scholars have claimed that teachers bring their identity (disposition, character type) into the classroom. For example, White and his colleagues (2005) stated, “Experience, culture, and personality are just part of who teachers are, and they go wherever teachers go—including their classrooms.” (p.2) If this true, then teachers knowingly and unknowingly bring racial biases embedded in America’s society into the classroom. With the evidence of systemic racism presented in this section and how it has and continues to operate in both laws and social practices; there is room to suggest some plausible linkage between why there are racial disparities present in society (i.e. earning gaps between Blacks and whites) as well as in school.

Section Two: Educator Disposition

Troubled area of study. As stated previously, the process of discipline response is a system within itself that includes multiple actors. The primary actors and focal point of this study are teachers and school administrators, referred to collectively as *educators*. However, this terminology is not common practice in teacher education and education psychology research, of which this study draws from. Moving forward, it is important to note that terminology referencing teachers’ dispositions in the literature reviewed in this section is being used as a proxy for both classroom teachers and school administrators. The rationale to support this decisions centers on the premise that the majority of all sitting principals were at one time a classroom teacher. Of three sections of the literature reviewed for this dissertation, this section has been the most challenging. When reviewing literature for a specific connection between discipline-related outcomes and teacher disposition and/or proxies for disposition (i.e. personality type, demeanor, character); it was discovered that this portion of the literature in teacher education and

education psychology research was under-researched and relied heavily on inferred relationships between disposition and academic occurrences. To be clear, scholars for some time have pointed to the significance of or a relationship between educators' dispositions and its impact on teacher-student relationship (Kirylo, 2009; Meehan, Hughes, and Cavell, 2003), educating nonwhite students (Gay, 2000; Cline & Necochea, 2006; Woodson, 1929), building a community of learners (Rogoff, 1994), curbing aggressive behaviors (Meehan, Hughes, & Cavell, 2003) and positive academic outcomes (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Moreover, multiple studies (Hollins, 2011; Grossman et al., 2009; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Steel, 2005) on teacher quality indirectly implied the need for alterations to "professional character" to better inform teaching practices.

For example, Hollins (2011) proposal for a holistic practice-based approach in teacher education focused on teachers acquiring particular knowledge-based competencies to better inform their practices. Implied in what she refers to as the most import aspect, *knowledge of learners* – which is the idea of knowing their learners' "growth and development are situated in cultural and social context of family and community" (p. 398), would in turn better inform teacher pedagogy. Yet, the proposed remedy of the acquisition of knowledge-based competencies does not question the positionality of the teacher, nor does it promote self-reflexivity (Lopez, 2005) in the social systems that have informed their own disposition, nor does it call for critical analysis of how that disposition mediates their own knowledge acquisition and the knowledge acquisition of their students. This is not to take away from Hollins' scholarship or to suggest that her conclusions are not substantiated. Furthermore, the

discussion of this gap and the lack of research connecting disposition to discipline-related outcomes is not to suggest that I disagree with the notion of the existence of a relationship between disposition and discipline-related outcomes. However, in attempting to create this conceptual mapping of a link between systemic racism, educator disposition, and discipline-related outcomes, I must acknowledge this gap in the literature.

This gap was also echoed during a 2005 AERA panel on research and teacher education where Cochran-Smith & Fries (2005), in their synopsis of teacher education quality research, stated:

Some researchers (and reviewers) work from the premise that teachers' learning (e.g. enhanced subject matter knowledge, changes in beliefs and attitudes about working with diverse populations. And development of a disposition or stance toward inquiry) is a justifiable and important outcome of teacher preparation because of its impact on instructional decisions, relationships with pupils and families, and the nature and quality of learning opportunities made available. This is based on the premise that teachers' knowledge frames and belief structures [i.e. dispositions] are the filters through which teachers' practices, strategies, actions, interpretations, and decisions are made. The assumption is that knowledge and beliefs always mediate teachers' practices in schools and classrooms and this knowledge and beliefs greatly influence pupils' learning opportunities, their achievement and other educational outcomes [i.e. discipline-related outcomes].

Cochran-Smith & Fries continue with stating that the premise is not fully substantiated by rigorous scholarly work.

Due to this dilemma, I chose recent empirical studies that specifically examined an explicit relationship between teacher disposition and discipline-related outcomes (Johnson & Reiman, 2007; Johnston & Lubomudrov, 1987) in my field of concentration, education psychology. An overview of scholarly work on teacher disposition in education psychology often starts with the work of John Dewey (1906;1916). For the critical nature

of this study, using Dewey is problematic, because of the overwhelming critiques of his work being homogenous in nature (Killen & Hart, 1995), sexist (Gilligan, 1982), and lacking in cultural differences (Vine, 1986). Yet, both in education psychology and teacher education, many scholars start with Dewey. In an attempt to make a seamless connection between disposition and discipline-related outcomes, I start with Dewey [theoretical] and then progress overtime to empirical studies (Johnson & Reiman, 2007) rooted in Dewey that support the notion of a connection between teacher disposition and discipline-related outcomes.

From Dewey to present. Nestled in Stoic philosophy, which dates back to Athens and centers on moral and intellectual perfection (Brennan, 2007), Dewey speaks of a need for a modification in emotional and intellectual disposition of teachers from one that is science oriented to one that is philosophic. He proclaims that this transition is essential in order to obtain an ideal disposition which he describes as reflexive, sensitive, enduring, and moral (Dewey, 1916). Seemingly framing educators as a moral compass for their students, Dewey's earlier work on the moral self further defines an ideal educator's disposition as one that is willing to sacrifice self for the greater good (Bergman, 2005).

More recently, scholarship has also sought to explore the connection between the negative effects of adverse teacher disposition on student performance and negative discipline-related outcomes (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Skiba et al., 2002; Wentzel, 2002). Master Educators, highly accomplished and awarded educators with decades of teaching, and scholars (Delpit, 2005; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2009) have emphasized that teachers' dispositions inform them as educators and drives their

pedagogy. Yet, less researched has been conducted about the direct relationship between types of disposition or level of moral character in teachers and discipline-related outcomes. Some scholarship has also begun to suggest the moral character or disposition of a teacher and their effectiveness in classroom management practices are connected. For example, Richardson and Fallona (2001) found that effective classroom management skills and the moral character of a teacher are “interwoven” (p.724). Moreover, effective teachers have been found to spend more time on teaching than on classroom management or behavior redirection (Molnar et al., 1999).

In this section, Dewey’s definition of disposition will be used as the foundation to support the correlation between the disposition of teachers and how teachers’ disposition influence on instruction. Then I will discuss literature that speaks to the relationship between teacher disposition and classroom management. Lastly, I will review literature which specifically seeks to establish a connection between educators’ disposition and the historic racial disparities in school discipline. Because this section pulls from differing bodies of literature, this section, specifically, will use *teacher* and *educator* interchangeably at times.

Complications with diction. This study is gathering literature from multiple disciplines and bodies of research. In the process of doing so, often times language, specifically diction, is used interchangeable and as a result may conflate terms used for this study. This becomes especially problematic when pulling together literature around the disposition of humans. Specifically, early-to-mid 20th century philosophers and psychologists use morality when referencing characteristics of character, character types, and dispositions. This becomes challenging when bringing in literature from teacher

education researchers and sociologists who also speak about disposition, but from a more nuanced perspective. To be clear, sociologists (Gilligan, 1982) and some critical psychologist (Killen & Hart, 1995) contest historical philosophers and psychologists (i.e. John Dewey and Kohlberg) use of morality without questioning the social constructs associated with term *morality*. Morality has been framed historically from a position of purity and benevolence and lacks criticality to the engagement of individuals within larger social constructs of power and how those individuals can engage in paternalistic behavior unknowingly.

For this study, I cautiously pull together a diverse-body of literature with the full understanding that the language around human disposition must be carefully examined and purposefully used moving forward. I acknowledge the sensibility of the term morality and how it was framed historically and I will use term solely for capturing the longstanding notion that disposition (morality) is closely associated with decision making in the classroom.

Disposition framed as morality in philosophy and psychology. John Dewey (1929) frames education as ongoing participatory-actions that begin at birth. He claims education is continually shaping an individual's powers [and oppressions], is embedded and anchored in the social existence, and is reflexive in nature. At the school level, Dewey believes that education is the exchange of social consciousness between teacher and student with the intent of social reconstruction. He claims that "true education" (p.33) only occurs through the stimulus of a child's social powers which are mediated by the context that the child is birth into (Dewey, 1929). Centered on instinctive actions, Dewey asserts education has two sides, psychological and sociological. Demanding that

neither trump the other, he claims that psychology is the basis for how students bring their powers or interests to the classroom and should be cultivated by educators.

Positioned as society's paramount moral obligation, Dewey views education as a means to leverage an individual's needs with larger societal ideals. Specifically, he believes that through education "society can formulate its own purposes, can organize its own means and resources, and thus shape itself with definiteness and economy in the direction in which it wishes to move" (p. 39). In order to achieve this "true education" Dewey emphasizes the importance of an educator's disposition. John Dewey (1904; 1916) frames this disposition as a reactive and active state of being that is formalized by the training and upbringing of an individual. He claims the disposition of an educator must be integrated and aligned to the emotional, social, and psychological needs of their students. Furthermore, Dewey's definition of such an ideal disposition suggests that the educator must be willing to neglect personal fulfillment for the sake of society's ideal interests (Brennan, 2007).

Level headedness, possessing tenacity, selflessness, and remaining grounded are just some of the characteristics of the ideal moral disposition of educators proposed by John Dewey. Building off and from the work of Dewey (1904), moral psychologists Lawrence Kohlberg contributed many ideas to the field of morality, teacher education, and psychology. Drawing also from the work of Piaget (1932), Kohlberg's stages of moral development and his work on macro and micromorality were major contributions to the fields of psychology and human development (Cain, 1985). Kohlberg's (1958) theory of the six stages of moral development was born out of his work with youth in Chicago. More concerned with reasoning, Kohlberg proposed dilemmas to his

participants and from his analysis, he developed the six stages. Similar to Dewey's notions of an active exchange between teacher and student to accomplish the goal of a "true education", Kohlberg (1963) maintained that a person only moved up in a moral stage (of development) when active metacognition was mediated by interactions – most likely with peers. Though Dewey and Kohlberg differ slightly on the significance placed on educator versus peer, they shared the idea that the ideal teacher is more of a facilitator (i.e. Socratic teaching) than an instructor of knowledge that bestows facts to their pupils. Furthermore, both emphasized the disposition of the teacher and its role in the development of learners.

Kohlberg's other work centered on his concepts of the macro- and micromorality. Micromorality can be best described as face-to-face interactions that people have on a daily bases. An example of a micromorality would be demonstrated through acts of helpfulness and valor. Micromorals could also be described as the actions taken by an educator who possess Dewey's ideal disposition. Macromorality, on the other hand, is concerned with formal structures of society as defined by rules, roles, duties, and institutions (Rest, Narvaez, Bebeau & Thoma, 1999). An example of such would be Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech or the Occupy Wall Street movement. Macromorals can also be described as actions taken by someone who has embodied Dewey's prescribed ideal disposition of an educator, but the difference between the praxis of micro-and macromorals hinges on the level of manifested behavior. For example, micromorals are manifested at the individual level (teacher-student) and macromorality is manifested in behavior and actions at the public or policy level (i.e. voting, public service). In assessing for macro- and micromorals, Kohlberg would have

participants solve dilemmas (similar method he used in stages of moral development), explain their choices, and from these results, he would rate and rank their level of morality. Whether acting out of principles or nonpartisanship (macromorality) or devotion to others through actions of honor (micromorality), each of Kohlberg's concepts build upon the reflexive, sensitive, enduring, and moral disposition described by Dewey.

Kohlberg's work has been met with skepticism. Similar to Dewey, Kohlberg's work has been viewed as homogenous in nature (Killen & Hart, 1995), sexist (Gilligan, 1982), and lacking in cultural differences (Vine, 1986). For the scope of this project and the overarching focus on educators' disposition and its connection to teaching philosophy and philosophy of discipline, more detail about the strengths and weakness of Kohlberg's theories of morality or moral development will not be discussed. However, it is important to illustrate the importance of his work and how it speaks to the relationship of a larger context in how one [in this instance an educator] would morally act out larger issues (macromorality) using micromorality as a delivery system.

Using the work of Kohlberg, as well as paying him homage in his writings, the self-described Neo-Kohlbergian, James "Jim" Rest (1979) took the concepts of macro- and micromorality and developed a revised version of Kohlberg's Defining Issues Test (DIT), which is used for obtaining moral judgment data. Moving from the "hard" and "soft" views of stages proposed by Kohlberg, Rest and his colleagues (1999) applied a version of DIT that was informed by schema theory. Schemas are best understood as knowledge structures that are refined over time and reside in long term memory. The brain takes bits of information that are closely associated and then schemas are reinforced or altered through stimuli that are closely associated with root schema (Gauvain, 2001).

For example, a baby processes that a stove is a place where food is prepared or a place where food comes from before it is placed on their plate may be represented in the brain as a schema of food or nutrition. Now as a toddler, that same child burns his hand on the same stove. The schema for food/nutrition is interrupted and because something that was viewed previously as provisions for food is now also viewed as a danger. In this instance, the schema for food/nutrition has now been modified.

Rest et al. (1999) developed moral based schemas that highlighted the duality of the personal (micromorality) while maintaining norms (macromorality) which was similarly present in Kohlberg's and Dewey's work. Acknowledging some of the critiques of Kohlberg's work, Rest and his colleague differed in their view of moral development from Kohlberg's framing of "stages" and the importance of cognitive operations. Specifically, Rest et al. viewed the progression in morality as more of "shifting distribution" (p.298) than fixed stages and he recognized the cross-cultural limitations in universality proposed by Kohlberg under cognitive operations.

Scholars have clashed on the alignment (Mitchell, 1983) or conflicting (Carlin, 1980; Phillip, 1988) work of Kohlberg to that of John Dewey. Jim Rest and his colleagues neo-Kohlbergian work attempted to fill in some of the gaps between Kohlberg and Dewey's Work. For example, Rest et al. schema application to the Kohlberg's DIT was attuned to the social nature of educators' existence that Dewey speaks of in *My Pedagogic Creed*. Furthermore, the moral schemas suggested by Rest et al. moves to divorce the notion of any "pure" moral stage proposed by Kohlberg and in doing so further align their work to the idea of a reflexive disposition suggested by Dewey.

Judgments and actions: The byproducts of educator disposition. Though we would like to hold teacher's in high regard when it comes to matters of morality and tolerance, yet scholars (Hinojosa & Moras, 2009) have found that teacher were significantly more likely to hold views that are less tolerant than similarly educated non-teachers. In a study of eight teachers, Johnston and Lubomudrov (1987) used the DIT to examine teachers' level of moral development and their articulation of school rules and teacher-student roles in the classroom. They found that teachers of the lower quartiles of moral development believed that rules were "inevitable and desirable in the classroom" (p.70). Furthermore, they revealed that these same teachers took a very authoritarian view of order in the school and believed that rules were in place to be followed as prescribed. This view was highly contingent upon the teachers' views of social order, which was mediated by teachers' dispositions. On the other hand, teachers of a higher moral reasoning took a more diplomatic and interactive approach to resolving discipline issues. For example, a participant in the study spoke about how she would ask the student questions about the choices she made in order to walk them "through...to see what they were doing and see if they can see what effect that was having" (p.74). Another participant explicitly stated that her ability to relate with students [her disposition] curbed discipline problems. Many of these similar techniques are being implemented in (Latimer, Dowden, & Muise, 2005).

Johnson and Reiman (2007) took the research of Johnston and Lubomudrov, Kohlberg, and Rest further by using the DIT-2 (Rest and his colleagues version) to analyze beginning teacher disposition in teacher education. Summarizing the work of scholars previously discussed in this project as well as others (Oser, Dick, & Patry, 1994;

Shulman, 1998;), Johnson and Reiman claimed the constructs of morality are reflected in the actions and judgments of teachers. Using Dewey's definition of disposition as their foundation, Johnson and Reiman sought to investigate how the disposition of three beginning teachers (less than 3 years of experience) framed the teachers' judgments and actions in the classroom.

In their analysis, the researchers used the DIT-2 as a metric for judgment and utilized Flander's (1969) Guided Inquiry Analysis System (GIAS), which is a classroom observation tool that examines type of teacher-student interaction, for recording actions among their participants. Similar to Johnston and Lubomudrov (1987), among their findings they discovered that teachers of the postconventional scheme (high level of morality) employed more student center and interactive instruction. Apart from meeting the needs of diverse learners, the postconventional teacher allowed rules to be shared and scrutinized in the classroom, and "show[ed] more tolerance of socially defiant behavior" (p. 681). Their findings suggest connections between an educators disposition to classroom management.

Educators' dispositions informing classroom management. More recently the connection between an educator's disposition and classroom management has gain more ground in research agendas. Recognizing the potential risks associated with childhood aggression, Meehan, Hughes, and Cavell (2003) designed a 2-year investigation that examined the association between the quality of teacher-student relationships and children's level of aggression. Results from their study revealed that positive teacher-student relations curbed aggression in second- and third-grade students, especially for Black and Hispanic children.

At the secondary level, Kathryn Wentzel (2002) conducted a study where she utilized theories of parent socialization as a proxy for measuring teacher-student relations and its impact on student motivation and academic achievement. After conducting analysis of surveys of both teacher impressions of students and students' perceptions of teachers at two middle schools, Wentzel found that "teachers can be characterized in terms of the socialization contexts they establish for their students" (p.296). Also, there was a positive relationship between nurturing teachers and student academics and social behavior. These findings speak to the significances of the model or moral compass, as described by Dewey, that teachers display for their students.

Described as a failure to recognize ingrained cultural assumptions and beliefs, Gregory, Nygreen, and Moran (2006) in their chapter discussed how teachers of different experience and areas of discipline contribute to the racial disparities in school discipline and in the process normalized failure. In this case study of a west coast school, whose district is attempting to revamp the image of the school and its policies on discipline, Gregory, Nygreen, and Moran claim that despite the hard work and well-intentions of teachers and staff, the use of involuntary transfers to a "dumping ground" and the current format of discipline response of the school, they only replicated many historic issues of racial disparity seen in school discipline research. For example, in describing a detention room which was used as a way to keep students on the campus instead of traditional out-of school suspension, the researcher spoke about opening the door to a specialized program to find a room comprised of mostly Black students.

They addressed how the failed attempts of intervention by the district and attrition of school administration contributed to a pervasive climate that affected both students and

teachers. They stated that “students who have been labeled failures invariably internalize the label [failure or trouble maker], and over time it can profoundly shape how students see themselves” (p.144). Furthermore, teachers were found to internalize a social ideology that inferred “criminality” was in a person and as such the person is the problem and should be removed. The research team noted that these same teachers were resistant to change even after being presented with data that indicts them as being part of the same group of teachers who write the most referrals. It can be postulated that this finding supports the significance of Dewey and others who posited the need for teachers of the highest moral character.

Teacher disposition and racial discipline disproportionality. In previous portions of this section, the disposition of educators was mostly centered on morality and the sequential actions and judgments formalized from the degree of morality posed by teachers. Moving forward in the review of literature, it is important to note a significant shift in the language about teacher disposition and its role in the classroom. Much of the contemporary language outside of psychology (scholarship from 1990s and beyond) about teacher disposition centers on relationships, interactions, and caring. Students’ perceptions of their teacher’s disposition in regards to care, love, and academic expectations have been linked to achievement (Gay, 2000; Ladsing-Billings, 2009). However, only recently has research begun to explore the linkage between a teacher’s disposition and discipline-related outcomes.

Townsend (2000) suggested unfamiliarity between white teachers and Black students may contribute to racial disparities in school discipline. Similarly, Ferguson (2001) documented unconscious process of racial stereotyping by teachers, which may

contribute to higher rates of school punishment for young Black males. Both of these studies and similar ones represent a trend from emerging literature about potential causalities for disproportionality. Of which will be discussed in more detail under section three of this chapter.

Gregory and Weinstein (2008) attempted to explore this possible connection between teacher disposition and discipline-related outcomes by conducted a two phase study at a large urban high school. Using office discipline referrals (ODR) as the variable of analysis, they discovered that 67% of all referrals were for defiance. Even though only representing 30% of student body, Black students received 58% of all ODR for defiance. In comparison, white students made up 58% of the student population, but only 5% of ODR for defiance.

In the second phase of Gregory and Weinstein's (2008) study, they conducted surveys to analyze the relationship between students who received an ODR(s) and the teachers who assigned their last ODR as well as teachers the students got along with. Utilizing multiple data analysis (Hierarchical Linear Modeling & *t* test), their study supported findings that closely mirrored that of Johnson and Reiman (2007). Teachers who referred a student rated the same student lower than teachers who students deemed trustworthy and caring. Furthermore, referring teachers (as they were described in the study) perceived the students less engaged than the caring teachers. Students' survey responses corroborated with responses of teachers. Students self-reported that they were less resistant to adult authority with caring teachers verses that of referring teachers.

The positive correlations among referring teachers, their perceived lack of care from Black students, and negative discipline-related outcomes for Black students suggest

a direct relationship between a teacher's disposition and discipline-related outcomes. However Gregory and Weinstein (2008) did not postulate that teacher's disposition is exclusively mediating the overrepresentation of Black students in exclusionary school discipline. Yet, their findings suggest that there is a particular type of disposition, framed as lack of caring and trust, which may contribute to the overrepresentation of Black students receiving ODR.

What is known about disposition and discipline response. This current section of the literature review sought to explore the correlation between educators' disposition and discipline-related outcomes of students byway of teachers' instruction and classroom management. In this body of literature, it appears that there is a connection among teachers' perceptions of Black students (Townsend, 2000; Vavrus & Cole, 2002), their relationships with Black students (Gregory and Weinstein, 2008), and how Black students are disciplined (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Such conclusions are not far removed from what has been suggested in recent research. For example, researchers have shown that children are sensitive enough to recognize the nuances of covert and overt differential treatment (Weinstein, 2002). Based upon over a century of research from philosophy (Dewey, 1904;1906;1916), to psychology (Kohlberg years; Rest years), to teacher education (Johnson & Reiman, 2006), and to research on racial discipline disproportionality (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010) there appears to be a relationship between an educator's disposition and discipline-related outcomes that are worth further exploration. Yet, there seems to be a gap in the literature about how educators' dispositions are explicitly mediating discipline-related outcomes as

well as how, if any, are those dispositions are influenced by larger social systems, such as systemic racism.

Section Three: Racial disparities in school discipline

With the expanding body of literature on discipline disproportionality and the school-to-prison pipeline (Losen, 2012), there are a growing number of possible explanations (Skiba, 1997; Skiba et al., 2008; Welch & Payne, 2010; Wu et al., 1982) for why racial disparities persist. Most explanations or causalities for the overrepresentation of Black students in school discipline can be placed into two domains. The first domain centers on deficit-oriented (Valencia, 1999; 2010) diagnoses for racial disproportionality in school discipline. Some have postulated that the overrepresentation of Black students receiving harsher school discipline responses could be the result of students' family financial capital (Tenet 1) or differential behavior among Black students (Tenet 2). Noguera (1995) stated he experienced most of these deficit assumptions from resistant teachers who suggest that students have intrinsic qualities that cause them to misbehave in the classroom. Even more interesting was that these same deficit assumptions were variables of analyses in earlier work on discipline disproportionality (e.g. Wu et al., 1982 & McCarthy & Hoge, 1987).

This is not to assume that these researchers replicated such deficit perspectives when approaching their work on this topic, but it is worth noting that conceptual frameworks for their analyses were not clear or present to suggest otherwise. More importantly, their approach of not disclosing or making transparent their positionality demonstrates how traditionally trained researchers operate in a false colonial notion of academic "objectivity" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) and miss the realities occurring upon

those they study. Despite not entering the point of analysis from a perspective that examines the systems in place that may cause a student to misbehave (i.e. systemic racism), researchers of discipline disproportionality soon discovered that the deficit oriented explanation did not correlated to harsher discipline responses for Black students(see domain one).

The second domain centers on the relational and contextual factors that contribute to the overrepresentation of Black students receiving harsher discipline response. Many of these hypotheses propose that the racial disparity in school discipline may be the result of a combination of culturally based complex factors that are enacted by teachers and school administrators. For example, some have proposed that it is the result of a cultural mismatch (Ferguson, 2001; Zimmerman, Khoury, Vega, Gil, and Warheit, 1995) between the mostly white teaching force and increasing diverse student body (Tenet 3) or simply the fear of Black students (Tenet 4) as the result of systemic racism (Feagin, 2000). In the coming sections, a review of the literature of each domain will follow and continue with findings from the literature on each tenet within the two domains. Then the entire chapter will conclude with a critical examination of the literature and areas for further exploration that dissertation seeks to examine.

Domain 1: Debunking the deficit paradigms. Explicit in the theory of deficit model thinking (Valencia, 1999; 2010) is the notion of blaming the victim. Deficit-oriented explanation of why racial disproportionality in schools persist, despite efforts at the national and local level, centers on the “compensatory” approach of education which believes that Black students are lacking or have inherent deficits that must be corrected rather than building on the assets within the child. When discussing a professional

development experience he had while doing work in a large urban school, Noguera (1995) talked about teachers who were resistant to a workshop on student discipline and explicitly told him of their dissatisfaction with the idea of having to know their students to teach them. Noguera goes on to say that when teachers and administrators remain ignorant of the culture and ways in which their students live, that they [the teachers] “fill the knowledge void with stereotypes based upon what they read or see in the media, or what they pick up indirectly from stories told to them by children” (p.22).

Noguera’s claim of what happens to many teachers who are unfamiliar with their students’ lives dovetails nicely with how Valencia (2010) described the pseudoscience of deficit model thinking. Valencia claims that laypeople (in this case, educators) and scholars are guilty of violating scientific method by making inferences based upon antidotal assumptions. In the instance of explaining why discipline disproportionality exists and persists in schools is the deficit assumption that it is because Black students come from low-income families and/or it is because Black students don’t know how to behave in school.

Tenet 1: It’s because of low income families. Researchers have found that there is an overrepresentation of students of low socioeconomic status (SES) in cases of harsher disciplinary response (Skiba et al., 1997). For example, Nichols (2004) found that students receiving free or reduced cost lunch (an indicator of low SES) were suspended three times more often than students paying full price. Although there is evidence that lends support to a relationship between students’ SES and harsher discipline response, researchers on school discipline suggest that SES is limited in explaining the existence of the racial gap in discipline response (McCarthy & Hoge,

1987). Using logistic regressions, Wallace and his colleagues (2008) controlled for indicators of socioeconomic status (e.g., parental education, family structure) and found a relatively small impact on explaining racial and ethnic differences in school discipline. Accordingly, studies have repeatedly concluded that racial differences in discipline rates remain significant even when SES is controlled (Skiba et al., 2002). For instance, Noltemeyer and Mcloughlin (2010), in a multivariate analysis of variables contributing to suspension across a single state, reported poverty was a significant predictor of a school's rate of suspension, but not of disproportionality in suspension. Thus, researchers have established that SES is found to be a risk factor for school suspension (Brantlinger, 1991), yet when the relationship of SES to disproportionality in discipline has been explored directly, race continues to make a significant contribution to disproportionate disciplinary outcomes independent of SES.

Tenet 2: Black students don't know how to act. Implicit in the poverty hypothesis for disparities in school discipline is the assumption that the more challenging family and community settings that nonwhite students come from then the more likely they are to engage in higher rates of disruptive behavior (Skiba, 2010). Additionally Valencia (2010) discusses such a deficit view of behavior in his section on the educability of [Black] students in deficit model thinking. Valencia claims that deficit thinkers of the social and behavioral sciences like to offer “descriptions of behavior in pathological or dysfunctional ways” (p.14). Such conclusions would support the idea that Black students’ overrepresentation in out-of-school suspension is a byproduct of impoverished behavior. Similar inferences can be seen in the work of Oscar Lewis (1966), Herrnstein and Murray (1994), and Ruby Payne. This pathology is described by Feagin’s (2010) colonial concept

that places the perceived social deviance on those who are racially oppressed and is explained as a ‘natural characteristic of backward [Black] people.’ Yet multiple studies have refuted such a claim. Scholars discovered that the disparities by race had little to do with the amount of misbehavior of Black students, but more to do with how misbehavior was being defined by teachers.

For example, even though out-of-school suspension (OSS) is regarded as an extreme disciplinary response (Brooks et al., 1999) to student behavior, most OSS throughout the nation are for minor infractions of school rules like defiance and classroom disruption (National School Board Association, 1994; Rosen, 1997; Skiba et al., 1997; Skiba & Peterson, 2003). Gregory and Weinstein (2008) reviewed suspension data and reported that defiance was the single most common reason for referrals to the office. Furthermore, they stated that Black students were significantly more likely than white students to be referred for that specific reason. Moreover, Skiba et al. (2002) found that white students were referred to the office significantly more frequently for offenses that appear more amenable to objective documentation such as smoking, vandalism, leaving without permission, and obscene language. In contrast, African American students were referred more often for disrespect, excessive noise, threat, and loitering; behaviors that seem to require more subjective judgment on the part of the referring agent. Shaw and Braden (1990), investigating race and gender bias in the administration of corporal punishment in a single Florida school district, reported that although Black students were more likely to be referred for corporal punishment, white students were referred more often for corporal punishment for more serious rule violations.

Braden (1990) findings highlight what scholars discovered when statistically holding misbehavior type consistent when examining racial/ethnic contributions to rates of suspension and expulsion, type of misbehavior only yielded slight decreases in the racial disparity of discipline response. For example, Hinojosa (2008) reported that the rates of Black student suspension as compared to white rates decreased from 3.50 to 3.43 times when controlling for student behavior. In similar studies, (e.g. Poguero & Shekarkhar, 2011, Eitle & Eitle, 2004) the contribution of race has never been reduced to non-significance once the severity of student behavior is entered into the multivariate model. From such evidence, the poverty hypothesis of differential behavior, as a result of SES social ills, loses validity, and these findings would better support the claim that the subjective interpretation of behavior by teachers and administrators is more impactful in the assignment of types of discipline response and in predicting who receives such discipline response.

Consequently the perception of students' behavior is vital to the behavioral trajectories that are imposed on students by teachers and administrators. Accordingly, there is research to suggest that perceived behavior of particular students, especially at an early age (Moffitt, 1990), sets the foundation for future academic success for some and differential disciplinary response for others (Alexander & Entwisle, 1996; Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1993; Dodge, Pettit, & Bates, 1994; Sbarra & Pianta, 2001). A plethora of consistent findings within school behavioral literature have suggested that white students, relative to their Black counterparts, are regularly rated higher on measures of competence and lower on externalizing problems (Sbarra and Pianta, 2001; Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 1993). For instance, the Bradshaw et al. (2010) study on the

overrepresentation of Black students who received office disciplinary referrals (ODR) found that Black students were at significantly greater risk for receiving ODRs even after controlling for teachers' rating of student behavior. In addition, previous studies on teachers' rating of student behavior have shown substantially greater levels of disruptive behavior for Black students as compared to their white counterparts. Moreover, research conducted across the nation has consistently shown that teachers rate Black students higher on ADHD-related behaviors than white children (Epstein, Willoughby, Tonev, Abikoff, Arnold, Hinshaw, 2005). These findings counter the idea of differential behavior as a strong predictor for the racial disparity and further support the causality of racial disparities in school discipline may be situated in educators' perception of "disruptive" behavior and/or the teacher-student interaction.

Domain 2: Putting the onus on teachers and administrators. After repeated findings from studies which demonstrated that disproportionality could not be easily explained away by deficit-oriented explanations, researchers began to explore the role of the teachers in how discipline was implemented in the classroom (Gregory & Weinstein, 2008; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Thereafter explanations began to emerge that suggest that this phenomenon could be the result of a cultural mismatch between teacher and student (Ferguson, 2001) or the result of larger seeded issues of racial discrimination as implied by Welch and Payne (2010) when they used Racial Threat Theory.

Tenet 3: Cultural Mismatch. With a teaching force which is predominantly white and female (Zumwalt & Craig, 2005), the possibility of cultural mismatch or racial stereotyping as a contributing factor in disproportionate office referral cannot be

discounted. Townsend (2000) suggested that the unfamiliarity of White teachers with the interactional patterns that characterize many Black males may cause these teachers to interpret impassioned or emotive interactions as combative or argumentative. Ferguson (2001) documented the seemingly unconscious process whereby racial stereotypes may contribute to higher rates of school punishment for young Black males. There is some indication that teachers do make differential judgments about achievement and behavior based on racially conditioned characteristics. In an extensive study of teacher ratings, Zimmerman, Khoury, Vega, Gil, and Warheit (1995) found evidence that African American students were more likely to be rated as having more extensive behavior problems by both Hispanic and non-Hispanic White teachers. In addition, teachers were more likely than parents to rate African American students as more problematic and less likely than parents to rate White students' behavior as more problematic. In a more restricted sample set in a high poverty, inner-city setting, Pigott and Cowen (2000) found no evidence of a child-teacher race interaction in teacher ratings of their students, but found that all teacher groups reported a higher incidence of race-related stereotypes for African American students.

Vavrus and Cole (2002) analyzed videotaped interactions among students and teachers, and found that many ODRs were less the result of serious disruption than what the authors described as "violations of...unspoken and unwritten rules of linguistic conduct" (p. 91) and that students singled out in this way were disproportionately students of color. In a study of office referral practices in an urban high school, Gregory and Weinstein (2008) found that, among a sample of African American students with ODRs, differences in classroom management style significantly contributed to student

attitudes toward both classroom management and actual disciplinary outcomes. Further, even among students with multiple referrals to the office, only certain student–teacher combinations resulted in higher rates of office referral.

Tenet 4: Fear Black students. Welsh and Payne’s (2010) multivariate analysis reported that schools with a greater percentage of Black students were more likely to use harsher forms of punishment, such as suspensions, in-school suspensions, removal of privileges, and detentions. Their analysis concluded that Black enrollment was the strongest statistically significant predictor for punitive disciplinary practices within schools. They found that the focal independent measure of racial composition is the most powerful predictor for both zero tolerance and extreme punitive disciplinary response for all students in schools with greater Black enrollment (>30%). Also they determined that the only significant predictor of the degree to which schools use a zero tolerance policy is racial composition. Their findings align with other studies that report that Black students do not misbehave or participate in delinquency at higher rates than white students (Skiba, 2001; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987), and such findings would suggest that Black students are treated more punitively than white students absent the effect of misbehavior, SES, and academic performance (Welch & Payne, 2010; Skiba, 2001; Wu et al., 1982,). Ultimately, this provides evidence of some individual racial bias in school discipline response and supports Feagin’s (2010) argument for the social reproduction of systems of oppression via unequal power relationship between Black students [groups] and teachers [individuals].

Policy as a mechanism for reducing racial disparities. Similar findings of the use of zero tolerance and the rationale behind such decisions were echoed in the recent work

of Valles and Villalpando (2013). This work is some of few that are begin to analyze the problem of racial disparities in school discipline from sociocultural perspective. In their Critical Race Theory policy analysis of zero tolerance policy in a western mountain state, they found that Chicano students were more than twice as likely to be disciplined for zero tolerance violations than white students within the same district. What was even more alarming was that Chicano students represented about half of the population of white students in that same district (33% to 66%). Such injustices are also being echoed in higher government. For example Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Thomas E. Perez in 2010 said, “Regrettably, students of color are receiving different and harsher disciplinary punishments than whites for the same or similar infractions, and they are disproportionately impacted by zero-tolerance policies – a fact that only serves to exacerbate already deeply entrenched disparities in many communities.”

Conclusion

Feagin (2010) claims systemic racism is possible by the functions of institutional systems which make the socioeconomic conditions malleable for the domination of subordinate racial groups by maintaining whites’ possession of major economic resources and “possession of political, police, and ideological power.” (p.XX) Additional scholars (e.g., Harris, 1993; Lopez, 2005) suggest large-scale [macro] recurring and unequal relationships between groups and individuals are acted out at the micro-level by individuals found within institutional systems (i.e. schools).

When exploring the causalities of the issue of racial disparities in school discipline and/or the starting point of the school-to-prison pipeline, much of the current attention is placed in the classroom or at the school level. This logic would support

understanding how discipline disproportionality is enacted at the classroom level, yet it limits the scope of theorizing outside local antecedents that have been dismissed in the literature (i.e. behavior differences amongst races, SES). Little scholarship has been conducted that pulls back from the school-level and analyzes this problem through the macro-level social systems, which are mediated at the individual level. Some scholarship has already done such; in particular, the work of Lisa Delpit. In her nationally best-selling book *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*, Lisa Delpit (1995) draws from her extensive experience as both a classroom teacher and professor of teacher education to suggest that many educators (primarily white) operate from a larger system of beliefs based on a “culture of power.” Delpit contends that issues of power, which she claims are reflective of larger issues of power, privilege, and access in society, are enacted in the classroom. Her notion is very similar to that of Feagin (2010). She claims the pervasive effects of the “culture of power” have an adverse effect on Black students and better serves those who have the power [whites].

Also, Sabina Vaught (2012) took a more critical approach as to how racial disparities in discipline reify white supremacy. Using Harris's *Whiteness as Property* (1993) as a theoretical framework, Vaught claimed that white teachers practice Whiteness as property through organizations, policies, and practices. Harris's “Whiteness as property” can be described as the culmination of historical rights associated with being white and owning property while nonwhites were historically viewed as property. Throughout history, Harris (1993) suggests that the intersectionality of race, privilege, and material possession has given white citizens the rights to humanity, the determination of what is humanity, and serves as a “vested interest” for them to protect and maintain.

Vaught's (2012) work at a school housed inside a prison for juveniles lead her to the conclusion that the all-white staff enacted institutional racist melancholia (grieving process) that cemented whites' grip on humanity, as defined by Harris, by subjugating the 98% Black students population to a subhuman standard. She highlights how teachers would readily disclose their discontent for students and cast the young men as extraordinary criminals "by conjuring punishments that assume a deserving offense" (p.155) despite being there for trivial offenses (such as fighting). For example, in an exchange with a teacher, Vaught wrote:

I [Vaught] asked if the teacher enjoyed his work, and he said, "Depends on the kids. I like my job more often than not. Every once in a while these kids make me enjoy the death penalty... 'cause every once in a while these kids will do something so fuckin' bad it warrants that." (p.155)

Her findings coincide with Skiba et al., 2002 conclusions about the highly subjective nature of interpretation of behavior. Yet, there is an apparent void of research that explores explicitly if the racial disparities in school discipline are the result of systemic racism that is enacted by racial biases embedded in educators' disposition. In conclusion, there is much to debate when it comes to what is mediating the persistence of the overrepresentation of Black students in discipline response. The literature leads future scholarship into a peculiar space. On one hand, what may be perceived as more logical explanations of the overrepresentation of Black students in discipline response (SES and Black students acting differently) has been repeatedly dismissed in research and on other hand, there are speculations of cultural and racial biases of teachers, but limited empirical research supporting such conclusions exist. Nor are there firsthand accounts or research on the presumed racial bias in teachers that may be manifested in discipline-related outcomes. This ambiguous space implicates a great need for further research in the

specific mechanism, functions, and systems that could be mediating this phenomenon. In particular, research is needed to examine teacher disposition and discipline-related outcomes and to what extent the sequential racial disparities in school discipline are the result of systemic racism's influence on said educators.

Endnotes

¹I linguistically make this distinction here because I believe Black refers to the lived experience of those of close African ancestry who are unified by the history and experience of the Mid-Atlantic slave trade. I want to honor those who were rifted and taken from their indigenous lands by honoring them in title as Africans (first) who were enslaved.

²Building from the work of Michael Foucault (1979) and his work around Regimes of Truths and the false idea of a singular Truth (purposefully capitalized), the T in truth is capitalized to signify whiteness close association with the concept of a singular truth. For Foucault argued that truth is not divorced of the social constraints of power and privilege and for that reason, our societal view of Truth is influenced by white superiority.

Chapter III

Introduction

This chapter will describe the methodology, measures, and cases used for this dissertation. Prior to expounding upon each of these components, it is important to provide background information on the design of the larger research project from which this dissertation draws from. The data collection and thematic coding analysis for this study was conducted collectively among principal investigators, graduate students, and staff at the IU Equity Project located in Bloomington, Indiana. As stated in chapter one, my role was limited to the second phase of this two-phase, multi-year research project. My primary role as a graduate student centered on site selection, data collection (conducting interviews and classroom observations), and data analysis. It is important to note the collaborative nature of the research project and the significance of all those who contributed to make this study possible. For the purpose of delineation, portions of this chapter will refer to the entire research team, *we*, while some aspects may be specific to this study and will refer to my own analysis.

The overarching research project sought to focus on educators (teacher and administrators) and the manner in which school discipline response is handled at the school- and classroom-level, in order to extend and deepen understanding of how racial disparities in school discipline operate. This study seeks to focus more precisely at the individual-level (i.e. educators' dispositions) and differences across individuals and sites. Originally designed to look at the cross section of locale and rate of discipline disproportionality (see *School Selection*), determined by schools' Black relative risk ratio, it was discovered that the fidelity of high- and low rate of disproportionality was more

nuanced than predicted. Initiatives from the two sites deemed low (see Table 1) had actually conflated how discipline was handled and tracked by creating specialized programs or school-wide procedures to reduce suspensions. For that reason, this dissertation does not consider sites' rate of disproportionality a focal variable; however this variable will serve more of a supplemental aspect of context to better illustrate the nuance nature of discipline response discussed in findings in chapter 5.

Quantitative analyses conducted in the first phase of the study highlighted the complex nature of disproportionality and differences in its articulation in urban and suburban settings. The second phase included an embedded multi-case study (Yin, 2013) of four middle schools differing on dimensions of disproportionality and school locale. This method was selected because multiple cases are regarded as yielding more robust and compelling evidence (Herriott & Firestone, 1983). Subunits of this inquiry include classroom dynamics, the disposition of educators, discipline techniques, referral process, rate of referrals, racialized subtext, and overall discipline policy. In addition to the subunits that will be analyzed for this study, domains, which are designed from emerging themes in the literature and colorblind racism, will be used as means of analysis. Specifically, the variables within the domains are selected to support the aim of this study, which is to explore if discipline-related outcomes are the result of systemic racism that is mediated by educators' dispositions. The domains will be discussed in towards the conclusion of this chapter and detailed under *procedures*.

Sample

School selection. A purposive sampling methodology (Patton, 2001) was used to create the dimensions from which schools in one large Midwestern city were selected.

Consistent with the overall project goals of understanding how disciplinary and instructional practices mutually influence each other, and to identify school and educator processes that may lead to lower disparities in school discipline across a range of contexts, schools were selected based on the extent of racial/ethnic disproportionality in out-of-school suspension and locale. Table 1 illustrates the 2x2 matrix used for school selection. Using school rates of out-of-school suspension from the state’s Department of Education (described later in measures) and the National Center for Education Statistic’s locale marker¹ (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010) four middle schools were selected, one in each cell of Table 1.

Table 1: Site Selection Matrix

		Disciplinary Disparity	
		Low	High
School Locale	Suburban	1. Low Black/White OSS Disparity (Fairbanks MS)	2. High Black/White OSS Disparity (Douglas JH)
	Urban	3. Low Black OSS Rate (Clear Stream MS)	4. High Black OSS Rate (Washington MS)

Studying middle schools as well as urban and suburban schools was intentional. Although frequent use of in school discipline has been identified as a problem at all grade levels and school types, middle schools were chosen because the use of exclusionary discipline has been found to peak at the middle school level, and disciplinary disproportionality has been consistently documented at that educational level (Mendez & Knoff, 2003; Rausch & Skiba, 2004). Specific to locale, overall usage of exclusionary discipline has consistently found to be highest in urban locales compared to suburban,

town, or rural locales (Massachusetts Advocacy Center, 1986; Noltemeyer & McLoughlin, 2010; Rausch & Skiba, 2004; Wu et al., 1982). Racial/ethnic disparities for Black students have been found in suburban locales as well, at rates as high or higher than in urban locales (Eitle & Eitle, 2004; Rausch & Skiba, 2004; Wallace et al., 2008).

Selection of the four middle schools followed a three step process. First, all middle schools in the Midwestern city with an urban or suburban locale designation were retained in the analysis. The overall out-of-school suspension likelihood for Black students, called the relative risk ratio (National Research Council, 2002), was calculated by taking the total number of Black students suspended out-of-school during the 2007-2008 school year and dividing that number by the total number of Black students in those schools, which provides the risk index, and then the process was replicated for white students during the same year. The two indices, Black and white, are then divided to produce the relative risk ratio. All schools were then given a “high” designation if their school’s relative risk ratio for Black students was higher than 2.0 (see OCR discipline guidelines), or a “low” designation if their school’s Black relative risk ratio was lower than 2.0.

In order to control for variables between each school within each locale designation that may also account for said differences, the two schools in each locale were matched as closely as possible on school socio-demographics and enrollment size. Increasing confidence that schools preliminarily selected for analysis were accurate representations of their locale designations was done through two additional fidelity checks. First, the project team collected historical, geographical, and other state agency data, including reviewing town/city records, Census Tract data, population density, and

community history. Second, the research team examined the school and surrounding communities directly by driving around the school and surrounding neighborhoods, and categorized local landmarks and surrounding businesses. The full research team reviewed all findings against 12 perspective sites and selected the final four sites for inclusion in the study.

The project contacted the principals in each school via email and followed-up with in-person conversation, in order to describe elements of participation in the study (e.g. voluntary for all involved, access to classrooms, sharing data, interviewing teachers and administrators, etc.). In addition to elements of the research project, principals were asked to recommend four teachers of differing referral rates, experiences, and personalities for the study. All interviewed and observed principals and teachers at each school had a small financial incentive, one hundred dollars, deposited in a school account for purchasing supplies for their classroom or school. Table 2 provides enrollment, socio-demographic and disciplinary indicators for each of the four participating schools.

Table 2: Data for Four Participating Schools

School	# of Students enrolled	% Black	Free or Reduced Lunch Percent	Overall Out-of-School Suspension Rate	Black Out-of-School Suspension Risk Index	Black Risk Ratio	Locale Designation	Disparity Designation
Fairbanks Middle School	1230	31.2 %	57.7%	30%	10%	1.10	Suburban	Low
Douglas Junior High School	999	12.1 %	12.9%	8.2%	16%	3.91	Suburban	High
Clear Stream Middle School	776	59.6 %	55.8%	33.2%	23%	2.03	Urban	Low
Washington Middle School	890	65.8 %	53.0%	18.3%	16%	3.40	Urban	High

Site Descriptions.

Additional socio-demographic descriptions of each school site are provided below. To protect confidentiality, pseudonyms are provided for each site.

Douglas Junior High School (suburban locale, high disparity). Douglas Junior High School is located just outside of a major metropolitan Midwestern city. Historically the school district has been predominantly White with those students comprising about 80% of the districts population over the past two decades. Students of color have primarily been Black (around 10%), with other groups composing less than 2% of the student population. Ninety-seven percent of educators (administrators and teachers) at the school during the time of data collection are White, with teachers of color making up less than two percent of the educator population. At the time of data collection, the school had been located in its current location for 11 years. The school started by serving 5th and 6th grade students in its first two years, and only served students in grades 7-8 the last 9 years. The median household income for this community was between \$73,478 - \$75,982 with more than 69% of households having married couples – both are in the top 25% of households in the country (United States Department of the Census, 2006). The school is located in an area with both industrial and residential infrastructure. The school is within 500 yards of three developed subdivisions, and both local and major chain businesses.

Town history. The town where Douglas Junior High School is located began as a small mostly farming community shortly after the turn of the 20th century with less than 50 residents. Located just 20 miles from a major city, the town realized substantial development during the 1960's and 70's. Due to decades of expansion in neighborhoods

on the outskirts of the nearby major metropolitan city, the town and many surrounding towns wanted to secure their separation from the major city. They fought diligently to establish their town's identity through zoning. With legislation in the 1980's, the town was established as its own quasi-municipality. During the early 1990's the community grew to 7,200 as the result of "white flight" and residential expansion from a neighboring suburb. By 2000 the city's population grew to 38,000. The city continued to grow and by the mid 2000's the city was receiving national recognition from publications that ranked the city as being one of the premier locations to live in the United States.

Written position on discipline. The district's school discipline policy provides broad guidelines on how discipline is administered and appears to provide substantial discretion to building-level leadership in the administration of discipline. The district's written discipline policy states that the enforcement of rules should emphasize, "developing positive behavior and attitudes rather than purely imposing punishment." The district policy also states that when determining consequence(s) for infractions, "[the] school should take into account the circumstances of each individual student's case." Suspensions are supposed to be assigned in response to "serious rule infractions, refusal to comply with a lesser disciplinary penalty, or chronic misbehavior."

The Energy of Douglas JHS. I spent a substantial amount of time at DJH. Upon visiting the school, we were ushered into the main office where courteous staff members greeted the research team. The halls of the school were covered with student work and banners. The building had a sense of warmth (Voelkl, 1995; Gay, 2000) and felt well managed. In addition to scheduled visits for observations and interviews, I had the opportunity to participate in some extracurricular activities at the school. In particular, the

school held a special event for students who performed well on tests and maintained good standing among teachers in the building. The event was held during after school hours and included games and competitions between staff and students (volleyball, dodgeball, and video games) and food. At the event students appeared to have good rapport with the teaching staff and this was echoed in the majority of the classrooms observed or visited.

Fairbanks Middle School (suburban locale; low disparity). Fairbanks is located in a township on the perimeter of a major metropolitan Midwestern city. Fairbanks is racially/ethnically diverse, mirroring the diversity of the school district: 44% White, 31% Black, 18% Hispanic/Latino, 6% Multiracial. The median household income of residents living in the school community was around 44,200 with approximately 47% of households having married couples.

Town history. The racial/ethnic diversity of the school district and the larger township are divergent due in large part to school desegregation orders. Eighty percent of residents in the township are White. Beginning in the early 1980's, the district was part of a desegregation order that bused mostly Black students from inner-city neighborhoods to the township. In June 1998 a settlement was reached, and desegregation busing was being phased out with full elimination completed by 2017.

Written position on discipline. Fairbanks' district's written discipline policy is very prescriptive and explicit. It's policy categorizes infractions into minor, major, and critical offenses and states that, "consequences can range from warnings, to student/teacher conferences for minor offenses, morning detentions and morning Friday schools for some minor and major offenses, and suspensions and expulsions for some

major and all critical offenses.” The policy also outlines the reasons for and procedures to be used when student search and seizure is used as well as use of corporal punishment.

Energy of Fairbanks MS. The overall climate of Fairbanks was similar to Douglas Junior High School. Similar to Douglas, the building was constructed in the early 1990s, yet Fairbanks underwent major construction during the 2000s. The renovations were very pronounced inside the building. After exiting the main office of the newly designed multi-level middle school, we walked into a large foyer where continuous chatter from students resonated off the high ceiling. North of the foyer was mostly glass-walled cafeteria with a large and detailed mural of racially diverse students participating in a range for school-based activities. The football-length hallways were littered with school paraphernalia and posters promoting positive behavior and healthy choices.

Clear Stream (urban locale; low disparity) and Washington (urban locale; high disparity) Middle Schools. Clear Stream Middle School and Washington Middle School are located in the same school district and approximately four miles apart. They are both located in a large urban district in a major metropolitan city and enroll students from the same zip codes. The surrounding community consists of both residential and industrial infrastructure. A number of large apartment complexes are located in the attendance boundaries of the schools. Both schools have been in their current locations for over 20 years. The median household income in the area is \$44,342 with more than 47% of these households having married couples.

The schools tend to serve a larger proportion of students of color compared to the racial/ethnic composition of the community where the schools are located. According to

2010 Census, the racial/ethnic composition of the community is 46% White, 38% Black, 7% Hispanic/Latino, 3% Asian, and 2% Multiracial. Clear Stream's student population is 93% students of color (60% Black, 25% Hispanic/Latino, 8% and Multiracial), with Washington's student of color population being 95% (67% Black, 20% Hispanic/Latino, 8% Multiracial). Similar to Fairbanks, Clear Stream and Washington Middle Schools took part in a federal mandate to desegregate the state's largest public school system. During the 1980s and much into the 1990s there was a substantial increase student population. However the difference between Fairbanks and why Clear Stream and Washington Middle school were not considered as suburban schools was due to three factors. The three factors were, 1) there was a substantial amount of diversity and international presence in the district prior to the desegregation mandate (in comparison to similar townships), 2) Redwood district is more proximal to the downtown of the major metropolitan city that Fairbanks and both Clear Stream and Washington share, and 3) the Redwood district is more diverse in comparison to the district Fairbanks is in (46% majority white versus over 80% majority white), which has maintained a majority white population despite the integration.

Energy of Clear Stream Middle School. Clear Stream was the only site that I did not visit personally and for that reason I cannot accurately describe the energy of Clear Stream.

Energy of Washington Middle School. The overall climate of Washington was substantially different from Fairbanks MS and Douglas Junior HS. Based upon multiple visits by myself and with members of the research team, the climate of Washington felt cold, sterile, and uninviting. Upon entering there was a police officer and student

workers at a desk outside of the main office. We were directed into the office and required to sign in a second time in the office. After returning and building a level of familiarity with the staff, we only needed to sign-in at the desk for future visits. The halls of Washington had little to no posters, examples of students' work, or school posters on the walls. The walls were cement blocks painted a flat white. The same warmth felt at the other schools was not present at Washington.

Participants

Twenty-seven educators across the four schools participated in interviews with project staff. Table 3 illustrates that sixteen participants were classroom teachers, four were principals, and seven were assistant principals or deans. A slight majority of participants were female (N=15) and the majority of participants were White (N=20). All assistant principals/deans had some direct responsibility for discipline in the school. Most teachers (81%) taught core subjects (i.e., Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies) and had many years of teaching experience with eleven (69%) having taught for more than 10 years. Five teachers had taught between 1 and 5 years.

Table 3. Number of Participating Educators by Gender and Race

	Principals	Assistant Principals/Deans	Teachers	Total
Gender				
Female	3	2	10	15
Male	1	5	6	12
Race				
Black	2	2	3	7
White	2	5	13	20
Total	4	7	16	27

Note: Three schools had two Assistant Principals/Deans that participated in the study.

Educator selection process. Once the principals became more acquainted with the senior research team members, they were asked to identify assistant principals/deans with some disciplinary authority and recommend four teachers to participate in the study. Among the teacher referrals, the research team asked for two teachers with relatively high rates of referral to the office for disciplinary reasons and two teachers with relatively low rates as compared to other teachers at the school. The research team was blind as to which teachers were high versus low referring throughout the interview and classroom observation process. The research team contacted each referred teacher and explained the project, its purpose, benefits and drawbacks and other pertinent information via a project brief.

Data Sources

Interview & observation team. Interviewers and observers varied in terms of race and gender. Six investigators conducted interviews and classroom observations. Among interviewers, there was one White male, one Black female, one biracial female, one biracial male and two White females. The group of observers included one White male, three White females, four Black females, and one biracial male.

Data were collected at each of the schools through three primary methods: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and school-level quantitative disciplinary and enrollment data. Each of these data sources is described below.

Semi-structured interviews. All 27 educators participated in one or two 45 to 60 minute interviews designed to collect information about disciplinary school climate and student behavior. Each teacher participated in two interviews. The semi-structured interview format is well suited for this analysis, as it allows for (a) open-ended

questions that the interviewer can follow-up on with subsequent questions based on responses provided by the interviewee, (b) deeper analysis of parts of the research questions important to the respondent, and (c) discussion of sensitive topics, allowing the interviewer to probe deeper or withdraw from a line of questioning (Fylan, 2005; Wengraf, 2001). The interview structure followed recommendations from the literature, including grounding questions in empirical evidence, keeping questions brief, and asking more difficult or sensitive questions later in the interview (Fylan, 2005). The interview protocol was developed collaboratively by the research team over the course of several team meetings.

Interviews explored several areas including background (e.g. what brought them into education, how long they had been a teacher/administrator etc.), philosophy of teaching and learning, types of behaviors exhibited by students, classroom discipline strategies, and how the educator felt about his or her role in school discipline. Follow-up interviews with teachers were designed to explore ways in which topics of race and culture may play out in teachers' thinking about classroom processes, especially classroom management. Secondary teacher interviews were conducted by the same interviewer in order to increase the likelihood of open responses. Questions during this interview probed the degree to which teachers thought that certain groups of students demanded more teacher time around areas of discipline, opinions about parents and family background, and perceptions about how culture might influence student behaviors at school. Given the difficulty that teachers have in openly talking about race and race related issues (Henze, Lucas, & Scott, 1998; King, 1991) the interviews did not directly

ask overt questions about race and bias, although these topics frequently came up during the interviews. The interview protocols will be included in the appendix (X).

Classroom observations. The sixteen interviewed teachers had their classrooms observed one or two times for 45-60 minutes each observation. Observations were ethnographic (Patton, 2001) in nature, observers recorded elements of the classrooms using a narrative observation framework (Trumbull, 2000). Those narratives consisted of detailed descriptions of the classroom context including the physical arrangement of the classroom, the likely demographics of the students and teacher, and interactions between the teacher and students, particularly any disciplinary contacts. Descriptions of the classroom climate and teacher behavior management strategies were also documented.

Quantitative disciplinary data. Three of the four schools provided an incident-level data on disciplinary infractions and consequences across the two years of the study. Specifically, each of the three schools provided the project a dataset that included the following variables for every office disciplinary referral incident: (a) an incident number, (b) a dummy student identification number; (c) the associated student's grade level, (d) the associated student's race/ethnicity, (e) the associated student's gender, (f) a description of the office disciplinary referral infraction, (g) the consequence levied, (h) the number of school days the consequence was in effect for, and (i) a dummy staff member identification number associated with the staff member who referred the student. After all interviews, observations, and initial analysis were completed, the research team received information from each of the three principals that matched the staff ID variable with the observed and interviewed teachers. That allowed for linking interview and observation data with quantitative data.

Procedures

It is important to note that this study is exploratory. Although this study is derived from a larger mix-method study, this study is qualitative in nature. This study draws from specific subunits that serve as both codes and points of inquiry. The subunits of inquiry selected from the larger study as well as their source from the larger dataset are represented by below.

Table 4. Subunits of Inquiry and Data source

	Coded Transcriptions	Supplemental Material	School Website	Other
Classroom Dynamics	X			
Disposition of Teachers	X			
Discipline Techniques	X	X		
Referral Process	X	X	X	
Rate of Referral				X
Racial Subtext	X			
Overall Discipline Policy	X	X	X	

Note: Rate of referral see section entitled *Confirming Rate of Referral for Teachers*

In addition to the subunits selected from the larger study, this study will employ codes and points of analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1984) which are derived from emerging themes in school discipline literature and literature on systemic racism. To capture how systemic racism functions in the contemporary, this study will utilize Bonilla-Silva's (2010) colorblind framework as a representation of systemic racism.

Interview and observation process. All interviews were conducted at each school and in a private location such as the teacher's classroom or a conference room. Teachers picked the most appropriate time for the interviews, and all interviews occurred

before school, after school, or during a teacher's preparation period. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for content analysis, with the exception of teachers at one school who were not comfortable being audio-recorded. In that school, interviewers took copious notes that were transcribed. Transcriptions were provided to interviewees to clarify any comments made. After completion of the interviews, research team members conducted classroom observations.

Qualitative trustworthiness and dependability. The research team followed several qualitative techniques necessary for a trustworthy qualitative research study. To ensure dependability, the research team developed an extensive audit trail (Mays & Pope, 1995; Patton, 2001) documenting each step of the research process. Member checking (Creswell & Miller, 2010) was done by providing transcriptions to interviewees to correct any misinformation. All data was discussed in large group meetings of the research team in order to ensure multiple, diverse perspectives were included as part of the data collection and analysis process. The research group consisted of members of diverse ages, gender, and races, which were useful in augmenting and challenging opinions.

Qualitative coding and theme development. Following interviews and observations, the research team developed an initial set of overarching codes consistent with the research questions of the study. Coding occurred via the qualitative research data analysis software Dedoose (Lieber & Weisner, 2011). Coding was done in pairs. Each pair was assigned an interview transcription and that pair coded the interview separately using the initial set of codes. Teams then met to review codes to ensure reliability. Codes were augmented and modified during the early stages of the coding process. After coding dyads, the research team discussed coding for each interview, if they felt new

codes needed to be added the full research team was briefed on the new and/or modified code and had to agree on its necessity. If codes were added and/or modified, teams re-examined prior transcriptions and the new/modified codes were used for all future coding. Again, themes were vetted by the research team during large group meetings. Those meetings allowed for the creation of additional lenses in the interpretation of data and served as a point of reliability amongst the research team during the coding process

Thematic coding and analysis for this dissertation. The analysis for this dissertation was conducted in a three-step process. First, subunits (represented by codes, artifacts, and ethnographic notes) were selected from the larger dataset. The codes were identified and gathered through Dedoose. Supplemental materials from schools' websites and artifacts given to members of the research were gathered through team meetings and compiled for this study. The subunits of the study were then examined for similarities. Secondly, cross-analysis was conducted on the subunits gathered using the Four Domains (discussed below) and then used to examine interviews from all 27 participants. Lastly, after the initial cross-analysis was completed, the rate of referral for teachers was cross-analyzed on the domains and subunits to examine if differences existed among high and low referring teachers. Due to the nature of the referral process, rate of referral could not be established for the school administrators. For that reason, school administrators will not be cross-analyzed against rate of referral as outlined in the third step.

Confirming Rate of Referral for Teachers. School administrators were requested to provide recommendations for two teachers who were high referring and two teachers who were low referring at each middle schools. Due to union restrictions and confidentially, the administrators could not explicitly inform the research team of who

was a high or low referring teacher. Yet each of the school administrators confirmed that the teachers selected from their respective schools represented a range of discipline styles and rates.

The actual rate of referral for the 2012-2013 academic year for 12 of the 16 teachers was substantiated through school-level data collected and analyzed by Skiba and Sheya (*n.p.*, 2015). These two members of the larger research team used relative indices to determine the rate of referral of participants in comparison to other teachers in their own building. By weighting the number of students in participants' classrooms relative to the number of students in other teachers' classroom in the same building; rates of referrals were determined. With an indicator of 1.0 and/or greater represented a high referring teacher, the category of high and low were established. Trustworthiness of these findings among the research team were discussed in two designated meetings.

One of the schools, Fairbanks, did not disclose incident specific data that identified which teacher issued each referral. For that reason, four of the 16 teachers' rate of referral could not be quantified. Yet, based upon informal conversations with Fairbanks' administrators and additional data collected, members of the research team have extrapolate the rate of referral for the four teachers at Fairbanks. Trustworthiness and dependability was established absent of incident data through triangulation of data sources and deliberation among members of the research team. The work of Skiba and Sheya (*n.p.*, 2015) will be used specifically for step three of this study's analysis.

Four Domains (brief description). The four domains were implemented to capture, if at all, data that would support the existence of connections among discipline-related outcomes, educators' dispositions, and systemic racism. Furthermore, the four

domains serve to capture the embedded nature of systemic racism that operates in the discipline process (i.e. sayings, actions, and particular characteristics). The four domains will be utilized as both general codes and codes for cross-analysis of subunits collected from the larger study. The domains collectively operate as a rubric and are comprised from emerging themes from school discipline and teacher education literature; Deficit thinking (Valencia's 1997; 2010), Cultural mismatch (Townsend, 2000; Ferguson, 2001; Vavrus and Cole, 2002), Fear of Blacks (Blalock, 1969; Welch & Payne, 2010; Vaught, 2012), and Colorblind racism (Bonilla-Sliva, 2010). Each of the four domains are comprised of indicators (n=10). The indicators are tenets of each of the domains and represent specific actions or sayings that will be used to capture observance in both interview transcriptions and classroom observations (observations are for classroom teachers only).

The Four Domains

Lisa Delpit (2005) claimed that issues of power are enacted and exchanged within the classroom. Framing these actions as a "culture of power," where educators reenact a larger social system of power, she proposes that classrooms are simply microcosm of society. In addition, Delpit asserts that classrooms operate as a reflection of a larger systemic belief of power that is present in the world outside the classroom. Similarly, other scholars (Milner, 2010; Gay, 2000) have suggested that these beliefs and similar ones, which in turn contribute to racialized biases, are mediated through the actions and attitudes of educators. Not surprisingly, scholars for some time have asserted that the subversive or implicit biases in racialized practices have helped to protect and maintain white supremacy throughout time (Du bois, 1920; Baldwin, 1963; Allen, 1976; Morrison,

1992; Frankenberg, 1993). Just as much, institutions such as schools have played a pivotal role in the sorting and assignment of social roles based upon a racial caste system (De Jesus, 2005).

In order to highlight these racial biases enacted at the individual level in the contemporary context, this study employs the work of Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's (2010) colorblind racism. His four overarching conceptual frames and colorblind utterances, common racialized jargon, will be utilized to capture practices of racialized prejudices in the disposition of educators for this study. Specifically, some of the colorblind utterances were used as primary indicators embedded within one of the four domains. Similarly, other indicators are embedded in the domains to highlight functions of systemic racism enacted at the individual level by drawing from emerging literature on disproportionality and deficit thinking (Valencia, 1997; 2010).

Each domain was selected based upon their relevance to the study and topic of racial disparities in school discipline. Every domain has an indicator(s), which will serve as a point of analysis (Guba and Lincoln, 1984) when reviewing interviews and ethnographic observation notes. Bonilla-Silva's (2010) frames were discussed in detail in chapter 2. The domains and their indicators will be discussed in detail below. For descriptive information of each of the indicators used see Table 5 of this chapter.

Domain One: Deficit Thinking. Valencia (2010) spends some time discussing a deficit view of behavior in his section on the educability of [Black] students in deficit model thinking. Valencia claims that deficit thinkers of the social and behavioral sciences like to offer "descriptions of behavior in pathological or dysfunctional ways" (p.14). Such conclusions would support the idea that Black students' overrepresentation in out-of-

school suspension is a byproduct of impoverished behavior. These claims are echoed by Milner (2010) in how he describes behaviors and beliefs of mostly white teachers at a large urban high school where he conducted his research. Specifically, he recounts a conversation with an experienced principal who claimed that teachers' dispositions are influenced by the outside world and biases present in those dispositions are reflected in the classroom. Furthermore Milner suggests that many educators in the urban context hold racialized and deficit views of their students. This domain was selected because of its close association with a larger narrative of racial inferiority of nonwhite students. There are two indicators for this domain and they are victim blaming and pseudoscience.

Domain Two: Cultural Mismatch. Multiple scholars in the school discipline realm (Townsend, 2000; Vavrus & Cole, 2002) have proposed some form of cultural mismatch or disconnect from the predominate white teaching force and ever-growing diverse student body. Additionally, evidence of a cultural mismatch supports the possibility of racialized implicit biases being enacted in the classroom setting. It is for this reason this domain was selected for the study. There is only one indicator for this domain and it is cultural mismatch.

Domain Three: Fear of Blacks. This domain was selected based upon school discipline literature primarily the work of Welch and Payne (2010*ab*). Their use of racial threat theory, which was developed by Blalock (1969), found that racial composition was the greatest predictor for the overuse of zero tolerance policy and increased suspension of all students. In addition to their research, early themes that emerged from the overall research project that this study draws from have supported Welch and Payne's findings.

For those reasons, this domain was selected for this study. There are three indicators for this domain and they are lack of proximity, abrasive, and referral rate.

Domain Four: Colorblind Racism. Vital to the analysis for this dissertation is what Bonilla-Silva refers to as the “Rhetorical Maze of Color Blindness” (p.57). The following utterances will serve as markers used in the Domain Four and analysis for capturing racialized subtext (a subunit of inquiry). All of Bonilla-Silva’s colorblind utterances were not used for this study. Below provides a more detail explanation of the colorblind utterances, which are also the four indicators for this domain.

“I am not prejudiced, but...” and *“Some of my best friends are...”* Bonilla-Silva discusses how “discursive buffers” (p.57) such as “I am not racist” or “my best friend is Black” have become staples for contemporary racial discourse. The preambles are usually followed by a racialized comment, yet people use these to affirm their color neutrality through colorblindness. These comments are often used by whites and inserted before or after a cultural racist [frame] statement. For example, “Black people have been spoiled by welfare, and my best friend is Black and she agrees.”

“I am not Black, so I don’t know.” Similar to other semantic strategies that seek to soften or distant the individual speaking from an idea that more often than not is racialized, this utterance divorces a knowledgebase on the situation, but provides opportunity for the insertion of opinion.

“Yes and No, But...” This utterance represents an attempt to acknowledge racial injustices or discriminations in context, yet they usually result in siding with racialized claims. For instance, many individuals would agree to the existence of racism or even systemic racism, yet they would include other factors that may contribute to injustices

and minimize or project a deficit view of nonwhites, while simultaneously protecting whiteness.

“Anything but Race.” Similar to the above utterance, yet this notion completely dismisses race as a factor. In regards to school discipline, many may assert other factors (i.e. behavior differences or home rearing) as the main cause of racial disparities and completely ignore the role of race in discipline response.

Lastly, it is important to note that Bonilla-Silva proposes that colorblind racism is perpetrated by whites exclusively, which I do not believe. The protection and maintenance of whiteness is more ambiguous and nuanced than those who or who are not racist. For that reason, each domain is used on all participants of all races in this study.

Summary

This chapter provided a description of this study’s research design, methods, and elements. Though this study draws from a larger mix-method dataset, the current study is primarily qualitative in nature. Additionally this study utilizes multiple data points for analysis and operates on a three step process. These data points include: classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, analysis of the disposition of educators, their discipline techniques, sites’ referral process, rate of referrals by teacher, racialized subtext from interviews, and overall discipline policy. The three steps included (a) pulling subunits from the larger study to examine for similarities, (b) cross-analyzing the subunits with the four domains and using the four domains to examine interviews, and (c) cross-analyzing the subunits and domains against the rate of referral for teachers.

Endnote

¹The National Center for Education Statistics assigns each school in the country one of twelve locale codes based on their location relative to a populous area – city (large), city (midsize), city (small), suburb (large), suburb (midsize), suburb (small), town (fringe), town (distant), town

(remote), rural (fringe), rural (distant), and rural (remote). Locale code definitions can be found in the Common Core of Data glossary at <http://nces.ed.gov/ccd/commonfiles/glossary.asp>. The present analysis collapsed those locales into four variables: The three city locale designates were collapsed into one variable (i.e., Urban), the three suburb locales were collapsed into the variable titled Suburban, the three town locales into the variable titled Town, and the three rural locales into the variable titled Rural.

Table 5 The Four Domains

Domain	Indicator	Description	Method for data collection
Deficit Thinking	Victim Blaming	is a person-centered explanation of a social failure among individuals as linked to said individual's group membership	Interview
	Pseudoscience	Negative biases towards individuals based upon unsubstantiated, under-researched, or antidotal evidence; Unscientific rationalization	Interview
Cultural Mismatch	Cultural Mismatch	Misinterpretation of social cues	Interview and observations
Fear of Blacks	Lack of proximity	Relational space and time spent with students	observation
	Abrasive	Combative tone, aggressive diction, More scorn, or more judgmental of Black students	observation
	Referral Rate	Excessive overall referrals in relation to other teacher's in the buildings rate of suspension	Collected from the schools*
Colorblind Racism	"I am not prejudiced, but"	is a discursive buffers before or after someone states something that is or could be interpreted as racist	Interview
	"I am not Black, so I don't know"	is a semantic move used before, during, or after a statement that indicates strong views on racial issues	interview
	"Yes and No, But..."	Is a semantic move, which appears to incorporate multiple views of racial issues, yet inevitably results in protecting white superiority.	Interview
	"Anything but Race."	Is a dismal of issues being mediated by someone's race	interview
*Referral rate was established through another study conducted by members of the larger research team. One site did not provide the referral rate information and rate of referral could not be determined.			

Chapter IV

Introduction

The research focus for this study centers on the question, “Are the racial disparities in school discipline the result of or a function of systemic racism mediated by educators’ dispositions?” The following chapter provides results of the data analysis from this study in attempt to answer that question. It is important to note that this study is exploratory in nature and cannot conclusively answer the guiding question as it is stated in its entirety. However, findings from the study support the need for further exploration into the connection among discipline-related outcomes, educators’ dispositions, and systemic racism. Specifically, results of this analysis suggest the existence of shared characteristics among those categorized as a high (n=9) or low (n=7) referring teacher and that those categorized as high referring teachers possess and engage in racialized beliefs at greater rates than lower referring teachers.

My initial assumption, which predicted that higher referring teachers would substantially be represented within the four domains, was confirmed. According to findings from the four domains, there were prominent themes of deficit racialized biases among high referring teachers verses those who were categorized as lower referring. Based upon the logic established in the literature review; these findings support a relationship between negative racialized beliefs in the dispositions of higher referring teachers and discipline-related outcomes (i.e. racial disparities in school discipline).

To establish structure and clarity for this chapter, findings have been organized based upon themes established through the analysis. The first section of this chapter will center on the four domains. As stated, higher referring teachers were more represented in

the four domains and will be discussed accordingly; nevertheless, the broad scope of this exploratory study has provided results beyond the four domains and characteristics of high referring teachers. Specifically, the characteristics found within the dispositions of lower referring teachers were discovered and will be discussed after the conclusion of the four domains. This chapter will conclude with discussing the complexity of participants' perspectives and characteristics that did not fit congruently into a high and low structure.

The Four Domains

The four domains were implemented to capture, if plausible, data that would support the existence of some linkage among discipline-related outcomes, educators' dispositions, and systemic racism. Based upon this study's analysis, there is evidence to suggest some causal link among discipline-related outcomes, *high referring* teachers' dispositions, and systemic racism. The extent of the connection among them could not be fully explored, yet warrants further investigation.

The logic behind my initial hypothesis, which indicated that higher referring teachers are more likely to enact racially biased beliefs in the classroom, was evident in the four domains. Although this logic was confirmed, both high and low referring teachers were present in the four domains. Yet, low referring teachers were significantly less represented by the indicators in comparison to higher referring teachers. It is important to note that low referring teachers' limited representation in the four domains does not definitively suggest that all low referring teachers are excluded from participating in systemic racism. However, I am led to believe that these findings converge to highlight the ambiguous nature of how systemic racism is enacted—especially at the discipline response level. Furthermore, I believe the findings of the four domains

coincide together to demonstrate how the disposition of those who refer at greater rates appear to be engaging in actions that contribute to systemic racism and sequentially discipline disproportionality.

There was evidence of each of the four domains in the subunits selected and interviews coded. The largest finding from the four domains was that the domains actually overlapped in representation. Exactly, many excerpts and data points could be represented in multiple domains and it became difficult to assign data to specific domains. This findings help to illustrate the difficult task of finding a metric(s) to highlight the embedded nature of system racism in language, school, and praxis. The following chapter will better discuss, in detail, the implications of this particular on research finding moving forward. The second and equally central finding to this study was the substantial amount of racially deficit views from high referring teachers, which lends support to the idea of embedded racism in the actions and beliefs of those who are most plausibly responsible for racial disparities in school discipline. As a result of this finding and in combination with other findings from the domains, the characteristics within the dispositions of high referring teachers began to emerge. Apart from the greater presence of racially deficit beliefs in higher referring teachers, they also were more likely to be *authoritarian*, *act upon* their racialized beliefs, display *favoritism* towards particular students, and *overly assert their power* over students.

To better organize this portion of the chapter, data will be assigned to domains based upon their best representation or closeness to a particular domain. Accordingly, this is an exploratory study, so data excerpts will be limitedly represented. In addition to the domains, there were two additional characteristics discovered in the dispositions of

higher referring teachers. This included (a) power through dominance and (b) bias. These findings will be discussed briefly after the conclusion of the four domains and characteristics of low referring teachers that follow.

Domain One: Deficit Model Thinking. Valencia (2010) claims that teacher education programs foster and promote deficit thinkers. Milner's (2010) research suggested that teachers actively have a deficit perspective towards Black students and Black culture. The findings from this domain also support these claims. Surprisingly, the amount of data captured by the indicators within this domain were closely equal to the colorblind utterances in domain four. This suggests that much of the racialized views of nonwhite students from high referring teachers are deficit in orientation. The same teachers also held many deficit views of single-parent homes, which acted as a proxy for Black homes.

Deficit perspectives of home life were often laced with racialized undertones. For example, when Brenda (a mid-to-late 50 year old white woman and home economics teacher at Douglas JH) was describing her initial teaching experience, she stated,

When the Governor gave the parents vouchers to live anywhere they wanted to in the state, and they would pay the rent. Many families move to Middletown, and I taught there, and we had a lot of project kids. Tough kids, they were tough, and you understand why they are.

She continues to explain how her experience in this school district, which was in a completely different state, prepared her for how she handles particular students at Douglas JH. This was interesting to the research team because Douglas JH is located in one of the three wealthiest districts in the entire state. She mentioned single parent homes as a main cause or pathology of behavior issues for these particular students. Apart from the large sweeping generalizations, Brenda asserts a pseudoscience deficit home-

mentality that explains the behavior of “project kids.” At this same school, Frank (a white male literature teacher) made comments that revealed multiple deficit perspectives of single parent homes when asked about what type of student has misbehaved the most. He stated at first, “Sometimes it’s out of guilt, the single parent ... and so they let the child get away with more.” Then he continued to support this claim of the single parent home being the main cause or identifier for students who misbehave the most by mentioning single-parent homes three additional times within a five minute period.

While being asked about a particular student they have had issued with, Tiffany, a Black female reading specialist also at Douglas, stated that it was Black boys in general who gave her the most behavioral issues. She continued by stating that her major problem with African American boys was, “You know they can get lazy and not want to do much.” Brenda also made a similar sweeping deficit claim when asked the same set of questions. While she was recounting an ongoing issue with a Black female student she was puzzled by the student’s inability to respond appropriately to male figures of authority and follow directions, despite having two parents in the household. She openly asked the question, “Why doesn’t she want to be told [corrected by a male], now she lives with a man and a woman, her parents, both of her parents are at home, I don’t know?” She makes this claim with a belief that having two parents at home translates to a correction in misbehavior, because she inserts “now” as to indicate the student wasn’t living with two parents prior. This also indirectly implies something deficit about single-parent homes. Brenda also supports her claim with the belief that by default the girl should have no conflict with male figures of authority since there is a male present in the home, “now.”

The theme of having a deficit perspective of a single-parent home was not localized to just Douglas nor teachers categorized as high referring. Mrs. Johnson of Clear Stream MS, who was also a low referring teacher, echoed many other participants' sentiments when asked about students with whom they have frequent behavior issues with. This was captured in the interview when she stated:

Mrs. Johnson - Yeah, I hate to even say it, I hate to even say it though, no fathers, boys, African American boys no fathers, single mothers sadly but I guess that's across the board though

Interviewer - But there's a lot of kids that have that situation, who aren't frequent flyers, right?

Mrs. Johnson - Unfortunately I don't see them.

Though she was speaking from her limited perspective, she asserts her claim that it is solely Black boys who come from single parent households, regardless if other students of other races are in similar circumstances.

The close association of "home life," "single-parent homes," or child rearing was present in many of the racialized deficit perspectives. In the case of Fairbanks MS, we saw how the primary problem became an issue that participants rooted in home. Every participant from Fairbanks mentioned that the primary misbehavior of their students was talking in class. When Ryan, of Fairbanks, was asked about talking in his classroom, he stated,

It's just kind of how [African American girls] were raised, so they're used to talking, they're used to talking to other people and like, you know, maybe their parents are constantly yelling at them, so they're used to yelling too.

In this claim, he localizes yelling to Black homes, which is racially deficit and anecdotal, yet he also simultaneously inserts "maybe" to soften his racialized claim. He uses the

adverb of maybe in a manner to deflect personal accountability of the claim he is making and this is also an example of the colorblind utterance “I am not Black, so I don’t know.”

Similar racialized deficit perspectives were made by participants across the study with the use of racialized subtext. For example, Kandy at Fairbanks used urban as proxy for Black students in her claim that, “[Teachers] got to be a guidance counselor, a mother, a father especially in urban schools.” Or for example, an assistant principal at Douglas JH stated,

let’s be honest you don’t want your child sitting next to somebody who’s going to completely distract them, keep them off of what they’re doing or singing all kinds of profane words in the middle of class. And sometimes that’s a cultural thing.

Related themes of racialized deficit perspectives were shared across all of the sites. There were some examples of racialized deficit perspectives present in those who were categorized as low referring; however, the majority of findings for this domain were present in those categorized as high referring.

Domain two: Cultural Mismatch. Domains two and three are derived from emerging themes in the school discipline literature. The literature suggests that the causal reason for racial disparities is most likely situated in the disposition of the adults in the classroom. Research specific to this domain (e.g. Ferguson, 2001; Vavrus & Cole, 2002) suggest that the misinterpretation of social cues were easily identifiable through cursory indicators. Yet surprisingly, the indicators in both of these domains were the least represented and most difficult to capture from the data. This finding could signify the complex and difficult nature of capturing these two domains and the need for further refinement of metrics to capture the themes associated with them. However, I am lead to believe that the lack of representation could be a signifier that these indicators and the

supporting research may be underestimating the influence of larger social constructs when speculating on the underlining ideologies of the cultural mismatch between teachers and students.

Precisely, school discipline literature frames the cultural mismatch between the predominately white teaching force and racially diverse student body as a misinterpretation of interactional patterns of Black students or unconscious stereotyping (Townsend, 2000; Ferguson, 2001). However, findings from this study suggest that teachers may be engaging and adopting larger social constructs apart from the misinterpretation of social cues of Black students. One of Bonilla-Silva's (2010) frames, *Abstract Liberalism*, suggest that whites rationalize racial inequities as a result of a meritocratic society. He further suggests that this ideal of rugged individualism or the concept of "pulling yourself up by your own bootstraps" is mixed with the notion of equal opportunity and as a result of this combined logic; it provides whites with the legitimacy to oppose policies to offset racial inequality. Although I disagree with his notion of abstract liberalism being exclusive to just whites, findings from this domain appear to suggest that (a) teachers' cultural mismatch between their Black students was more complicated than what was described in the literature and (b) centered more on the adoption of some form of abstract liberalism. To clarify, Black and white teachers appear to be adopting white normative perspectives (as detailed in Bonilla-Silva's frame) and then projecting social norms associated with this ideology on Black students in a disproportionate manner.

For example, many of the participants shared personal stories about coming from similar socioeconomic families as their students, regardless of the school's locale and/or

the racial difference between the teacher and their students. Then what followed was difficult to capture because the excerpts that support this finding were stated at different points throughout the interview. Yet collectively it appeared that teachers position their past and similarities to the current situations of their students, while suggesting that through social attainment of white social norms, the teachers have elevated themselves from where their students are currently. Apart from their position being highly paternalistic and deficit, there was this underlying belief that teachers expressed that could be summarized as “I have arrived” or “I made it and they [students] haven’t yet.” Although this notion was framed as being general to all students and was couched from a well-intended position, this notion of arrival or assimilation into success became racialized because (a) teachers operated in and with an education system framed from a white dominant perspective (Spring, 2010; Feagin, 2000; De ’Jesus, 2005) and (b) the racially deficit language teachers used had for those who were most different from the white social norms – Blacks students.

As teachers described the misbehavior of their Black students, there appeared to be some shared belief among teachers, mainly high referring, about proper attitudes, behavior, and social norms that many Black students did not demonstrate. Because of the deficit racial subtext (discussed previously) used by high referring teachers, much of the lack of compliance or ability to “act right” centered on expectations based upon middle-class white social norms, which are synonymous with protecting whiteness and the idea of meritocracy (Applebaum, 2010). As a result, this proper behavior influenced and framed (a) expectations of interactions between parents and teachers and (b) behavior expectations of students that were racialized by both white and Black teachers.

Both low and high referring teachers talked about the difficulties of interacting with parents; yet, high referring teachers' interactions with parents were described as confrontational and many held the view that parents were enablers, rather than viewing parents as possible assets. For example, William, a Black male special education teacher at Washington MS, had a negative view of the parents he interacted with. When asked about parental involvement, he first stated,

The type of parents not involved a lot, are of a low socioeconomic status, of course. They're usually working or they're asleep. Some parents just don't take the time to get involved. They're tired of the same kind of behavior and so parents of course who are working a lot don't really put a lot of effort into being involved

He also made the claim about these same parents, "They need to teach them respect, how to stay focused, how to respond to redirection ... it is significant. You can tell when kids have home training." He informs the interviewer that most of his students are Black and while the recorder is off, he shares that he is frustrated with Black parents. His voice inflexion suggests disgust and he shared that he was "burned out" from teaching because of the lack of care from Black parents. His perspective was not atypical from other high referring teachers and similar to William, many viewed their imposed parent-student misbehavior as a socio-cultural deficiency.

High referring teachers appeared to culturally "other" Black parents by interjecting views of parental involvement based upon an ideal of parental involvement from a middle class white perspective. Many operate from the belief that parental involvement in the middle school is initiated and maintained from the parent and that discipline problems are a cultural deficiency. Such a view marginalizes parents who may be intimidated by school interactions. The parents' apprehensiveness may be rooted in

negative experiences parents have had with schools previously - especially for Black parents (Jeynes, 2005). Still, high referring teachers viewed the actions of students, mostly Black, as culturally deficient without acknowledging their own cultural norms that they use to measure the students and their parents against. William's assumption highlights a common tension shared among higher referring teachers towards parents, which appeared to be rooted in a cultural mismatch of expectations tied to a larger social construct of white middle-class norms.

Teachers also demonstrated cultural mismatches in the behavior expectations of students, which became racialized in the perspective of teachers. Simply put, teachers projected cultural norms that were positioned from a white paradigm and blamed Black students for nonconforming. For example, Tiffany spoke in some length about a program/group she started to support Black girls at Douglas JH. The special group, designed for Black girls, intended "help them learn how to act" and "not be so loud in the hallways." The principal of Douglas JH also bragged about the achievements of this program, but much of the group's goal was centered on making a group of Black girls confirm to white racialized behaviors. At multiple schools, high referring teachers made the claim that Black students were "loud," yet at Douglas JH, this behavior was positioned as counter to the cultural norms of the wealthy, predominantly white school. Upon multiple visits to this school, researchers, including myself, observed middle school students of all races being loud in the hallways.

Domain three: Fear of Blacks. As stated previously, domain three was difficult to establish from the data. This is most likely the result of the explicit nature of racial bias in this domain. However, there were examples outside of the quantitative referral rates

(an indicator in this domain) to suggest a fear of Black students in some of the high referring teachers. Of the data captured by the indicators of this domain, several high referring teachers were combative when addressing Black students. Additionally, several of the high referring teachers did not keep close proximity when addressing Black students' behavior.

Examples of this were observed in three of the four schools (Douglas JH, Fairbanks MS, and Washington MS). In the case of Dionne, a white female first year teacher at Washington MS, she was extremely combative and argumentative with students. For example, while observing, I witnessed an exchange between Dionne and a student where she yelled, "Keep your mouth shut!" A student replied, "Shut up!" in response. With a raised voiced, the teacher replied by saying, "Who you telling to shut up!?" The student yelled even louder in response, "You!" Dionne provided directed instruction and discipline response from the front of the class with little proximal interaction with the students. Based upon the climate, conditions of the classroom, and teacher-student relationship there was little evidence of concrete expectations (Ladson-Billings, 1995) for student behavior. Furthermore, there was a pervasiveness of agitation about the classroom that was unescapable.

A similar event was observed in the classroom of Ryan¹, a short white male English teacher at Fairbanks MS. A lesson on sentence syntax begins with Ryan writing a sentence on the board and points to the word "washer". "What is this?" he asks, as he projects his voice across the room. Students' hands shoot into the air. "A noun!" yells a slender tall Black student with a dark complexion that is seated in a row desk along the

window. “Get out!” replies the teacher while pointing to the door with a locked elbow and stern look on his face.

The boy’s face drops as he silently gets up to leave the room. The boy returned back to the room shortly after leaving and Ryan asked, “She wasn’t in there?” The student replied “Library” and Ryan replied, “Well, you know what will happen.” The boy slumps down into his seat. Apart from not following classroom protocol, the young Black student was engaged with the lesson and actually answered the question correctly. What was interesting was how the educator handled students who were engaging in similar behavior. Other female students answered in a similar manner during the same lesson, but Ryan didn’t send them out nor did he redirect them in the same condemning manner. Ryan attempted to redirect the girls by staring at them, but after several failed attempts to get them to stop blurting out answers, he specifically redirected them softly with no punishment. After again failing to curb the blurting out of answers from female students, in an assertive tone, Ryan stated “Am I going to have to send people out for talking?” He repeated this question multiple times. The 90 minute long class was drawing to a close and the teacher was preparing the students to transition to the library. As students rose from their seats to form a line by the door to leave for the library, Ryan stopped the same Black male that he previously sent out and leaned towards him, asserting dominance through posture, and threatened a trip to the office if he misbehaved.

As stated, the nature of this domain and the indicators within it seek to capture more explicit examples of racial bias and it was difficult to see the presents of explicit racism in the subunits selected or the interviews coded. Though there were examples outside of the referral rates that demonstrated hostility or a fear towards Black students,

the findings for this domain were limited. Still, this conclusion supports the need for domain four which seeks to capture how racism is operationalized through utterance and social cues designed to hide explicit racial bias.

Domain four: Colorblind Utterances. Apart from the four utterances selected for this domain, there were quite a few examples of high referring teachers using large sweeping cultural statements. These sweeping remarks actually represent one of Bonilla-Silva's (2010) frames, which was discussed in chapter 2. For example a dean at Clear Stream stated,

Black, White no because this is an all-Black school mainly, you know it's 65% Black, probably 25% Hispanic and probably about 10%, if you're lucky, White. And mainly they're in the gifted class. Yah, there's a gifted class on each grade level, there's a gifted group. That's what mainly makes up the White population. So you're not having any trouble with that, okay. So you know, disproportionality, you know doesn't exist here for the most part.

In addition, he gave a very limited view of his Latino students by suggesting that they were new arrivals to the county in the following statement,

But you know Hispanic students aren't as boisterous' in that type of thing, you know, they don't respond the same type of way, you know, they're still kind of new and you know, trying to get the feel for what's going on. As stated under domain one, there were a substantial amount of colorblind

utterances captured in this domain (n=57). To better streamline this section, I have chosen the data that best represents each of the utterances and will discuss how the utterances work to maintain and protect whiteness.

“I am not prejudice, but.” Of the participants that used this semantic move, they did so in a manner that was more complex than described by Bonilla-Silva (2010).

Participants did not buffer their responses with, “I am not prejudice” nor anything similar. Yet the use of this utterance was utilized as a means of juxtaposing Black

students to others students and/or using other markers to signify attributes that Black students either possess or did not. For example, Ally at Clear Stream stated, “We have so few white students. I mean I honestly ...most of my white students are in my high ability class...high ability students have a different philosophy all together.” Beyond aspects of this being a sweeping generalization, Ally’s comment juxtaposes the “philosophy” of white students to Black student as one that is more superior while simultaneously exonerating herself of prejudicial beliefs.

The largest finding for the “I am not prejudice, but” utterance was its close association with domain three, fear of Blacks, because the three participants who were most represented in domain three, Ryan of Fairbanks MS, Brittany of Douglas JH, and Dionne of Washington MS, were also the participants who used this utterance the most. The best example for this utterance came from Dionne. Below is an exchange between Dionne and I and it begins with her answering the question about what type of students have given her the most behavioral problems.

Interviewer: Okay. And would you say ... because you've already spoken about this, it is mostly black boys?

Dionne: Yeah. Latino boys seem to not crave attention as much. They almost want to stay more under the radar.

At this moment, Dionne answers the question by juxtaposing Latino students to Black students. She implies that Black students “crave attention” while also implying some racial undertones of Latino students’ documentation status when mentioning that Latino students want to “stay under the radar.” The interview continues:

Interviewer: Okay.

Dionne: I've definitely noticed that. Especially with the Latino students I have formed a relationship with, I'll set up the classroom, inside the classroom they want to just do what they're supposed to do and not ... they don't demand as much of me inside the classroom.

Interviewer: So like from Manny [Latino male student in her class]?

Dionne: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. Now, does the SES that plays into the students that need more of your attention?

Dionne: Oh. I don't know. Maybe it's a draw, but I typically see them as being all the same socioeconomic status. I mean of course there are students that obviously have more, but in Redwood district it seems that students are pretty close in class. Like, they all have the same shoes. And the students that don't, of course, get picked on, so that's a difference. But for the most part, I assume that they're . . . I try not to dwell on socioeconomic status. I'm not as good at that.

In the above exchange, Dionne once again juxtaposes Latino students to Black students and does so in manner to deflect prejudicial beliefs she holds on either of the two groups of students by inferring racial difference between the two groups exist absent of her perspective. This semantic move creates a distal relationship between her held beliefs and her racialized observations. Simply put, her colorblind utterance could be retitled: “I am not prejudice, but I notice that Latino students . . .”

She also moves to exonerate her beliefs through a socio-colorblind utterance at the conclusion of this exchange when she stated, “But for the most part, I assume that they're . . . I try not to dwell on socioeconomic status. I'm not as good at that.” She softens her comment about shoes, which oddly was mentioned at both of the urban schools, as a marker for uniformity in socioeconomic class by suggesting she does not think about such things. However, the Redwood district includes neighborhoods of varying socioeconomic classes and Dionne makes mention of the attire of her students during both interviews. Overall, this utterance was not used explicitly, yet it was used indirectly to create distant between the racially prejudicial claim and the participants' racialized beliefs.

“I am not Black, so I don't know.” This utterance was closely associated with the the aforementioned one. Each of the two utterances were used in a similar manner,

which was to separate the person from the racialized claim/belief. For example, while Brittany was asked about the type of students who cause the most behavioral issues in the classroom she stated,

Okay. Wow, that's a tough one. Of course I have an answer, I'm just trying to think about how to say it. I guess I was talking to somebody about this the other day, kids who are angry, the kids who maybe come from something at home that's not going well or kids who identify a quality and a need, there's a quality in somebody else who's maybe not been so good to them in the past, so angry, kids who are angry definitely.

She openly processes her response in a way that generalizes her assessment of the type of student, yet in a cordial manner. Yet she concludes that the students who have the most behavioral issues are ones that are simply angry. She supports her claim of the angry student with the pseudoscience-pathology of home environment or some psychological disorder. She concludes her response with the saying, "So, yes, it's the kids who are angry, the kids who are mean, the kids who aren't used to the culture of the classroom." She again confirms her believe with pseudoscience and some culture deficiency, which was also present in Domain two, but her comments that follow demonstrate how these claims become racialized.

During the same interview, Brittany begins to reference an ongoing issue she was having with one Black female student. When Brittany describes the Black female student, she stated that she had,

A student I've known since January, and she and I have been through it. And I respect her and I like her. We have a lot in common. We're both strong-willed intelligent women. And, we butt heads. She's angry. I can tell that she has some, um, bouts with her mom, and she's told me so. And I have a feeling that perhaps her mom and I have some things in common as well, and there might be some other racial stuff which I can't speak to because I don't know. Um, but I have really struggled. You know, it's one of those count to ten, take 4000 deep breaths, and do your best not to yell at her because sometimes you just want to because she's that disrespectful.

But, um I just make sure that she can tell that I'm frustrated, but I take a deep breath and I just ask her to please be respectful.

She begins with complimenting the student, but abruptly shifts by saying the student is angry. Then Brittany begins to diagnose the student's issue of being angry by talking about her relationship with her mother (home environment), but then uses this utterance in attempts to soften how much she knows about "racial stuff." Specifically, her use of the "I am not Black, so I don't know" utterance can be seen by her statement, "...and there might be some other racial stuff which I can't speak to because I don't know." Immediately following this claim, she uses the preposition "but" by stating, "Um, but I have really struggled," to signify her claim is apart from any "racial stuff" and that race is not important. This is also an example of a "Yes and no, but" colorblind utterance. Brittany concludes with how she exercises restraint when addressing disrespect from this student and by doing so, positions the student as the cause of the issue.

This utterance was also present in many of the same subunits captured by the "I am not prejudiced, but" utterance. Because of their close linguistic relationship, the best solution may be the merging of the first two utterances into a singular indicator for future studies.

"Yes and No, But..." Though the majority of the principals possessed a higher cultural awareness (Yang & Montgomery, 2011) than the teachers in their respective buildings; principals still used colorblind utterances despite their awareness. The principal of Washington MS acknowledged the cultural mismatch between his mostly white teachers and predominately Black student body and the problems that may occur because of this difference. He stated, "I need to educate my white female teachers," that they should never under any condition yell at students or lose their, "...temper in front of

the kids.” He later suggests that the white teachers may be, “culturally ignorant” to the social dynamics of a white adult yelling at a Black student. However he conceptualizes the issue of yelling at the students as one that replicates failed Black parenting. He provided a racialized and deficit perspectives of Black parents by stating,

When you go to the store or something and you see African American parents as they yell at their kids a lot, and I don’t know if that’s a cultural indicator or anything like that, but I think the kids become immune to that...So when one of my white female teachers yells at the kids, it has no impact on them at all and they pretty much know that that person is just letting off steam so it exasperates the teacher and the kids think it’s a source of entertainment almost to push the teacher’s button.

Additionally, his unsubstantiated claim of Black parenting also protects whiteness indirectly. Specifically, when the principal referred to how his teachers should act in the classroom, he states “[white teachers] need to go in there and be professional and teach them that there are better ways to behave and demonstrate those ways and practice those ways.” He suggests that the white teachers must demonstrate a better way of behaving by not replicating the actions of Black parents. He solidifies this claim by stating, “Young African American males need to hear [that] people shouldn’t have to yell at you to get your attention.”

This exchange highlights what Bonilla-Silva refers to as a “Yes and No, But” colorblind utterance. During this exchange, the principal recognizes the importance of volume and the positionality of the person when redirecting behavior in the classroom. He does this by claiming he needs to educate his white female teachers and suggests that they may lack the cultural awareness of potential issues when a white female of authority yells at a Black student. However his observation of classroom management technique has little to do with professionalism or good practices, yet it centers more on what he has

framed as better behavior modeling and redirecting versus Black parenting. In this same instance, he juxtaposes white behavior as a better one by suggesting proper behavior and redirection is opposite of Black parenting.

“Anything but Race,” This utterance was used frequently by high referring teachers, but also by some low referring teachers and principals as well. This could be the result of the general colorblind era that Bonilla-Silva (2010) discusses in detail, yet more data is needed. Some participants used blanket colorblind generalization when asked questions specific to race. For example, Mary at Clear Stream stated, “I couldn’t even tell you how many blacks and whites I have in the class. Absolutely no idea. I mean I could not tell you I have a certain percentage. They’re all just kids as far as that goes.” This was interesting because the observer noted that her class was predominately comprised of Black students. Nevertheless, the utterance was primarily used as a method to nuance the explanation of racial differences and suggest SES or the home environment as the main rationale for social phenomena.

For example, when Washington’s principal was asked to describe the students who he has to see the most for discipline issues, he stated, “Pretty much I’d say. I think that’s probably more socio economic, young, often times mothers that, well 11 of the 12 that I’m dealing with have single mothers in the house and they are all boys.” Or when Barbara of Douglas JH was describing her daughter’s experience during desegregation and she stated,

They were bussing from [major city school], and that’s how you hit a medium. When you’re dealing with million dollar houses on the lake, you have the other extreme. That’s what Farmington MS does. I don’t know if you’ve ever been over there. That’s a lesson in economics. They have million dollar houses on the lake, and you’ve got trailer courts and apartments on 2nd and Wright, very extreme neighborhoods, I went oh,

that' how it works. So I was at Cedar Oaks when you have these two extreme populations. I learned a lot. I learned so much, just dealing. What I said to [research member] is what I learned there is its not so much race, it's more of economics, of where these kids are coming from, and how they're raised

As highlighted by the principal's and Barbara's remark, much of the notion that race does not matter was viewed from the perspective that poverty and race were not interconnected. In the case of Barbara, the homes on the lake that she referenced were the homes to wealthy white elites that Blacks could not historically afford and the apartments on 2nd and Wright were subsidized projects that have historically been occupied by Blacks. This suggests that participants who believed that it was poverty, or home environment and not race, were not knowledgeable of the historical and contemporary correlation between access and entry to neighborhood types (see Dougherty, 2007), poverty and race.

Characteristics of High Referring Teachers

Due to the overwhelming representation of high referring teachers in the domains, it was simple to extrapolate many of the characteristics in the depositions of high referring teachers. To recap, high referring teachers held substantially greater racially deficit views of Black students and their families. The more explicit examples of racialized beliefs and actions, which were captured by domains two and three, were held by those who were the most authoritarian (n=3) at of all participants. Themes across all high referring teachers' dispositions suggest that many of them enacted racialized beliefs about Black students, many times unknowingly, through coded colorblind language. In addition to these themes, there were two additional themes that came apparent in high referring teachers.

Power/Dominance. Multiple high referring teachers not only appeared to be threatened by students, but felt that misbehavior was a threat to them personally. They personalized misbehavior in the classroom as disrespect that they felt compelled to eliminate. This personalization of misbehavior then became an issue of power and authority; high referring teachers felt that it was important to establish their authority through dominance. The best example of this finding came from the classroom of Brittany at Douglas JH. The observer noted how she kept good proximity with the students and walked around the room, but she was distant with Black students and more authoritarian in how she addressed them specifically. During the interview, she couched her firm approach as technique, yet it became apparent that her approach was more about gaining or demanding power. Brittany stated,

I'm a professional. I have a high level of expectation for their behavior, their art work. That I demand respect... they know that I'm inflexible when it comes to the way things are. It is this way. It is this way because it's in writing and because I've said so.

She then continues with explaining the strict bathroom policy that students can only leave if they are “leaking.” She then justifies her discipline protocols by stating, “So a lot of that is protecting my integrity as the authority figure and as the teacher and the professional in the classroom. So if that's threatened, something has to be done there.” Such a display of dominance was also captured from Ryan who asserted his dominance through posture at the young Black student he sent out for blurting out the correct answer.

Bias. Bias in high referring teachers’ classroom was best represented as favoritism towards individual students or towards particular groups of students. During three separate observations at three schools, high referring teachers demonstrated favoritism towards particular students. For example, it was observed in Dionne’s class

that a student was standing at the light switch ready to turn off the lights for the movie and other students started yelling at the student. The teacher defended the student by verbally shunning the other students. One of the students replied with, “Why are you always defending him?” and the teacher replied, “Well he is my favorite.” Ryan also showed favoritism towards the female students in his class by not having the same redirection for blurting out answers. It was discovered after the interviewing process that Ryan was the coach for the school’s girls’ track and field team. His position as the coach could provide insight into his favoritism, but no follow-up questions occurred. Brittany also spent more time giving edits and suggestions to students who were more artistically inclined. It was observed that she stayed after school or during class (this is not clear—stayed where) with a group of artistically inclined students, laughed with them and that her relationship with them was described as being very lighthearted and informal. She lingered around these particular students and gave instructions for the entire class from that side of the room more so than anywhere else.

Characteristics of Low Referring Teachers

Given the broad exploration of this study, data not specific to its aim was discovered. Specifically, there were four overarching characteristics shared in the disposition of low referring teachers (n=7) across all four schools. These characteristics included:

1. Remaining consistent with behavior expectations.
2. Consistent expectations, but allowance for individual flexibility in regards to meeting high behavior expectations.
3. The establishment of preventative measures to deter misbehavior.

4. Universal high academic expectations beyond behavioral norms.

The following sections will discuss these in more detail and provide evidence discovered from the thematic coding and analysis.

Remaining consistent with behavior expectations. Findings of Johnston and Lubomudrov (1987) and Johnson Reiman (2007) suggested that teachers of higher morality would be less reliant on the rigid structure of school rules; however, findings from this study suggest that low referring teachers actually relied on their schools' discipline structure to ensure consistent behavior expectations among their students. Low referring teachers appeared to leverage their schools' rules as a means to support consistent expectations among students. During the interview process, each of the low referring teachers made mention of redirecting misbehavior with the use of established behavior norms supported by their schools' discipline structure/policies. Additionally, low referring teachers used the discipline policy to maintain consistent expectations among each of their students.

In the case of Gayle, who is a Black female math teacher at Fairbanks, she stated that the classroom protocols are universal among students. She spoke at length about the procedures of the school and referenced back to the school's policy in how she handles discipline in the classroom. Fairbanks' principal implemented a school-wide progressive discipline policy. The policy can be described as mandated procedures and strategies implemented to avoid and reduce the amount of students receiving official discipline responses (referrals, write-ups, suspensions, etc.) by outlining levels of infractions and appropriate discipline response. Gayle utilized the policy to support her expectations for her students. When asked about the process as it relates to expectations, she stated, "I

would say pretty [even] across the board. You have to try to be consistent ‘cause when you’re not consistent, the kids can tell.” This same sentiment was shared by another low referring teacher, Mrs. Johnson at Clear Stream, who stated, “It’s [behavior expectations] consistent with everybody and that way the kids see.” During observations in Gayle’s classroom, she maintained consistent in addressing different behaviors and was prompt with redirecting. She softened her redirections by using surnames (i.e. sweetie, baby-girl, pumpkin, and baby) when addressing individual students, but remained firm. Her classroom management style could be best be described as a *warm demander* (Wilson & Corbett, 2001). Similar to Gayle, other low referring teachers maintained high behavior expectations with a firm approach while still demonstrating authentic care for their students. This was confirmed in Gayle’s class when it was observed that students were responsive to the surnames and did not display any signs or verbal apprehensiveness to being called as such. Surnames were said in a genuine, authentic, and caring manner and were not condescending in nature.

Consistent but flexible: Despite relying on the discipline policies of their respective buildings and maintaining universal expectations, low referring teachers utilized a set of procedures or strategies to avoid office referrals. In addition, low referring teachers took into consideration other factors when addressing individual students. This is not to suggest that low referring teachers did not follow through with threats of punishment for misbehavior. On the contrary, even though the process to get to the point of discipline response varied by student, there was a definite and equitable discipline response to all misbehavior.

Low referring teachers intentionally made a conscious effort to maintain a balance between acknowledging the students' background, history, home environment and/or an Individual Education Plan (IEP), if applicable, while maintaining uniform consequences and expectations for all students' behavior in the classroom. More simply stated, there was consistency within student response, but not between students. As described by the low referring teachers and observed in the classrooms, this did not translate into favoritism for some students. It could be best described as a sensitivity or awareness of a student's uniqueness, yet still maintaining firm standards for how the student should act. Shannon, who is a geography teacher at Washington Middle School, stated, "You have to be a little sensitive because of the [student's] history. Still, hey, this is unacceptable, you cannot do this... then you may have to be more sensitive by possibly taking them in the hallway and [addressing behavior]."

There was more of a mindful effort by these teachers to see the student and not the misbehavior solely. Behavior redirection and low referring teachers' general discipline response were handled primarily on a case by case basis—especially with students who require differed attention. While flexibility existed among students, the consistency in expectation was universal. Gayle, the math teacher from Fairbanks, described it thusly:

We've had plans set up in place for certain students (IEPs or special behavior plans), but that was an individual plan we set for those students. But if you're talking, even them, if you're talking, I have to address it, because if you don't the students are saying, hey, you're not consistent and they need the consistency. And if you look at my sub plans, I'm constantly talking about keep them consistent.

Histories of offensive(s) and/or other factors were weighed into discipline responses for students. It is important to note that this flexibility was also shared by many of the principals.

Preventive measures. In addition to a differed approach to redirecting individual misbehavior (while also maintaining universal expectations), low referring teachers also implemented preventive strategies to safeguard against behavioral issues escalating. Most prominent of all, perhaps, was the firm and more authoritarian approach to discipline during the beginning of the school year. Every low referring teacher, and even some moderately high referring teachers, stressed the importance of a well-established and aggressive approach to discipline response during the first months of school. Leah, an experienced low referring teacher who at the time was training to be an assistant principal, stated during an informal conversation that, “You [a teacher] can always ease-up on how hard you discipline throughout the year, but it is nearly impossible to tightening the reins later in the year.” Leah’s claim was echoed by others. Participants mentioned, “That first month to me is key.” and “You’ll see that in my class, the first nine weeks of the year, the academics are secondary. It’s more about developing the relationship with the kids, letting them understand who I am, and what I expect from them.”

Apart from this general strategy of a rigid to a more relaxed approach to the overall classroom discipline response, low referring teachers implemented a range of tactics to prevent misbehaviors. Each of the low referring teachers were diligent in recognizing cues and sign(s) of issues that can become volatile in their students. This ability was only achieved through established relationships with their students. This

included knowing background information about the student to sharpen alertness to students' dispositions and to allow for a better ability to catch mood shifts. Gayle described it as,

You can tell by their face when they come in...[its] their body language. And it's a constant, go in the hallway. You give them a moment in the hallway and you go and say, alright, something happened, what happened? Do you want to talk with me about what happened? If not, I can send you to the counselor. It's a constant trying to intervene prior, 'cause when you intervene prior, you have a better chance of first finding out, making, showing that you care really, and then you can try to deescalate the situation prior to it, you know, exploding.

Both teacher-student interactions as well as classroom management revealed that these teachers attempted to prevent explosive behaviors, conflicts, and misbehavior. Particular to procedures, the low referring teachers attempted to establish communication with parents before a problem arose. Several teachers mentioned the need to have conversations with parents prior to any call home for misbehavior. Leah, who has had experience with parents from the perspective of teacher and administrator, and Gayle as well, stressed some communication techniques when speaking with parents. The two teachers followed an established protocol that entailed the following: (a) when contacting a parent, always start with a positive; (b) when dealing with a combative parent; enter the conversation by acting really dumbfounded by the behavior of their student; and (c) use writing or conferencing to dialogue about issues with the student prior to making a call home.

In addition to an established line of communication with their students' home, the teachers also employed and discussed the use of proximity and physical cues. It was observed in a low referring teacher's class that a student was sent to the hall early in the 90 minute period course. After the student was sent to the hallway, the teacher continued

with the lesson. After providing direct instruction for the entire class, the teacher stepped outside the classroom to redirect the student. The teacher reinforced the expectations in the classroom while reminding the student of a former conversation that the two of them had previously. The teacher bent forward, but stayed to one side of the student, not to physically suggest dominance in posture. The teacher kept a normal tone throughout the conversation and smiled when referencing the previous conversation. The student nodded at the conclusion of the conversation and did not disturb class for the remainder of the period. Mrs. Johnson talked about her facial expressions and how she used them as a marker that students knew her expectations even after something occurred prior to the beginning of class. When recounting a story about a fight that occurred moments before her class started she stated,

Maybe because my face came in like 'let's go!'...I didn't want that conversation to be had because that student was in my classroom prior. So it was like, they just came in, they just got going and I was like, okay thank you.

High expectations. It is important to note that low referring teachers maintained high expectations of their students both in terms of behavior and academic performance. This was not a novel idea of high expectations, but an authentic sense that their students should perform at high level and mediocrity was unacceptable. This was fostered and reinforced verbally to the students and demonstrated in the classroom environment. These expectations were very specific to individual classrooms and the relationships that low referring teachers had established with their students.

School Administrators

Based upon the data collected and scope of this study, there were not enough findings specific to school administrators.

Complexity in Representation

Though the bulk of findings are presented as binary, there were conflicting or diverse perspectives among educators' dispositions, actions, and beliefs. It was discovered that high and low referring teachers both held racialized and deficit beliefs about Black students. Additionally, there were some higher referring teachers who presented themselves in a manner that was more culturally aware and similar to low referring teachers, yet still were either high referring (as determined by indicator) or held racialized deficit beliefs. For example, when Frank, a moderately high referring teacher at Douglas, was addressing how he handles discipline in his classroom, he stated,

I have no problem individually moving a kid back [sending a student to the office] and those kinds of things, so the kids do understand, even though they don't like it always that I tell them, I'm not going to treat you all the same. I said, I can't. You wouldn't want to be treated the same. You know, junior high kids, it's not fair. No fair means equal. Okay, you need to be worried about whether it's just or not. And I said, you don't want to be treated fairly, because if you're treated fairly, I'm going to have to treat all of you the same and I'll go, do you want me to treat you like him, and they'll all go, no, I don't want to be treated like him. Well then there you go.

His perspective aligns with low referring teachers and their effort to maintain high expectations, but allow for flexibility among students based upon students' history, IEP, etc. However he held deficit perspectives of single-family homes and his classroom was described by an observer as chaotic; in turn, he was an overall higher referrer compared to other teachers in his building.

This nuanced representation was not localized to just teachers. The principal at Clear Stream, who praised a program that regulated students she described as "heavy hitters"-- all Black boys who were confined to a room for a minimum of five weeks—

shared how some of her staff may be influenced by large social racial ideologies of Black students. Specifically, the principal stated,

Or just that whole mindset. Which is not good, but I think that could be part of the situation, just those preconceived ideas about African American males and even though we're all adults, still people take a lot of what they see in the media as the truth or reality, when you can't judge a kid by how they're dressed or how they wear their hair or I've had kids that have had dreads and sag and they're in honors classes. So you can't really do that, but I think a lot of people tend to do that.

In this excerpt, the principal isolates those with deficit perspectives of Black boys by saying, "still people take a lot of what they see," and "I think a lot of people tend to do that." She also makes claims on what these individuals are doing and doing incorrectly. However she never includes her own complicitness in a program that disproportionately affects the same Black males that she is accusing others of judging inaccurately. These examples highlight the fluid and complex nature of discipline response. Although there were clear and distinguishable characteristics between the dispositions of high and low referring teachers, there was also data that implicated both high and low referring. As well, those who could be portrayed as exemplar in one regard, could also be revered in another.

Endnote

¹It is important to note that Ryan's last name was a traditional Mexican last name; however, he chose to pronounce it in a manner that was culturally ambiguous. When asked about his last name, he did admit to having Mexican heritage through extended family. Yet he positioned his response as not being of Mexican descent. It is unclear if this has any effect on his perspective or positionality.

Chapter V

Summary of the Study

The overriding purpose of this exploratory study was to explore the existences of possible connections among systemic racism, educator disposition, and discipline-related outcomes. To accomplish this feat, subunits of a larger inquiry were selected and then analyzed across and amongst themselves to examine for themes. These subunits included: classroom dynamics, the disposition of educators, discipline techniques, referral process, rate of referrals, racialized subtext, and overall discipline policy. Determining to what extent systemic racism is operationalized through educators in this study, Bonilla-Silva's (2010) *Colorblind Racism* was adopted as a metric to examine for the existence of racialized beliefs in the dispositions of educators. Related to that effort, it became necessary to include aspects of emerging school discipline literature – specifically *deficit thinking*, *cultural mismatch*, and *fear of Blacks* – as points of inquiry for this study. As a result, the four above italicized areas became the four domains which were used in a rubric fashion for the analysis portion of this study. After the procedures were established, the study was conducted.

There were a total of 27 participants for this study. Of this total, 16 were classroom teachers and 11 were school administrators. An embedded multi-case study (Yin, 2013) of four middle schools differing on dimensions of disproportionality and school locale was used for this study. All 27 educators participated in one or two 45 to 60 minute interviews designed to collect information specific to the study. Those interviews and additional supplemental materials were analyzed using thematic coding. This analysis resulted in significant findings specific to the guiding question: *-Are the racial*

disparities in school discipline the result of or a function of systemic racism mediated by educators' dispositions?

Findings for teachers. Findings from the analysis suggested the existence of shared characteristics among the dispositions of those categorized as high and low referring. Specific to those findings, trends within low referring teachers suggested that low referring teachers maintain high and consistent expectations of student behavior, but allowed for flexibility in how their discipline response was mediated out among their students. Despite a deferred approach within discipline response, low referring teachers were consistent and did not show favoritism. On the contrary, high referring teachers were inconsistent with their responses and demonstrated biases in actions and beliefs. Accordingly, it was found that high referring teachers held racially deficit beliefs about Black students and their families. Additionally, high referring teachers were more represented by the four domains in comparison to lower referring teachers.

The results from the four domains provided support to the idea of embedded racism in the actions and beliefs of those who are most plausibly responsible for racial disparities in school discipline—higher referring teachers. Of the four domains, the first and fourth domain, *Deficit Model Thinking* and *Colorblind Utterances*, were the most represented in the data. This suggests that much of the racialized views of nonwhite students from high referring teachers were deficit in orientation. Many of the same teachers also held deficit views of single-parent homes, which acted as a proxy for Black families. In addition to the domains, there were two additional characteristics *power through dominance* and *bias* discovered in the dispositions of high referring teachers. The

findings of the four domains culminate to support some connection among systemic racism, disposition of higher referring teachers, and discipline related outcomes.

Although the findings for teachers were organized in a delineating manner, this does not preclude those who were categorized as low referring as not contributing to discipline disproportionality. More specifically, the indicators within the four domains did not exclusively capture those who were categorized as high referring. Low referring teachers held deficit and sometimes racialized views of Black students and their families. However the extent of their bias was limited and had little impact on their actual referral rate and philosophies of discipline. Furthermore, school administrators had minor representation in the four domains and shared similar characteristics to low referring teachers.

Implications

It is important to remember that this is an exploratory study; however, the findings of this study have considerable implications on racial disparity research and teacher education. Starting with the latter, upon reviewing literature specific to teacher disposition; it was discovered that the majority of both teacher education and education psychology literature on teacher disposition was limited and under researched. Many scholars operated with the assumption that teacher disposition or the essence of the teacher, smilingly by default, spoke volumes to their classroom management, performance, and pedagogy in the classroom. Based upon the close characteristic types among high and low referring teachers found in this study, there is evidence to support this logic.

Although this reasoning is unassuming, there are underlying questions that are aloof from the discourse as well as the gravity of their implications on teacher education. Simply stated, if disposition is critical to the fundamentals of teaching then teacher preparation programs must address the question, “Should disposition determine if someone should be allowed into the teacher profession?” As a teacher/ educator, I wrestle with this logic, the larger question of qualifications for entree into the teaching professions, but also the troubling questions that follow this logic. For example, if the disposition of a teacher has a substantial impact in areas fundamentally important to success teaching, then additional questions arise:

“What are the correct characteristics of a good teacher candidate?”

“Who decides and defines these characteristics?”

“How do you ensure or measure for the targeted characteristics?”

“To what extent is disposition or the overall character of a candidate weighted into the decision of candidacy?”

All of these questions became more pertinent to my career and future scholarship after the results of this analysis. Precisely, the findings of shared characteristics among both high and low referring teachers support the influence of disposition when it comes to classroom management and sequentially, to racial disparities in school discipline. This is not to conflate quality of disposition with the quality of teaching performance. Due to the high subjectivity, confounding metrics of teacher performance, and scope of this study, quality of performance cannot be fully discussed. However I believe that this finding specifically has implications on the actual quality of experience for children in the

classroom and the need for more in-depth conversations about the role of teacher disposition in the classroom.

Approaching this work from the perspective of a parent with Black children as well as someone who is a Black teacher /educator, it is difficult to escape the reality of what these findings mean for Black students. There are uncomfortable certainties about the implications of some teachers holding racially deficit views of youth in classroom who look like my own children. Despite being exploratory, the findings do support the logic established in the literature and as result, there is a great need for future scholarship specific to the impact of teacher disposition on the experience of Black students in the classroom.

Beyond teachers' candidacy evaluation of "good" characteristic, the findings from this study have implication into the actual classroom management training of future teachers. The majority of participants mentioned having very limited, if any, training or preparation specific to classroom management. As supported by the literature, these results suggest that the disposition of teachers have significant impact on their classroom management and philosophy of discipline. As supported by findings in this study, when classroom management style and philosophy are informed by racially deficit views, then discipline-related outcomes can result in disproportionately negative consequences for Black students. This reasoning implicates classroom management training in teacher preparation programs and the need for training that critically addresses how disposition informs technique and philosophy.

Along with classroom management technique and discipline philosophy, it became apparent that results from the analysis have implications on discipline

disproportionality research. Much of the scholarship on racial disparities have been analyzed from a distal perspective with minimum consideration for theoretical frameworks. Findings from the study support the need for future theoretical work on discipline disproportionality. Precisely, the significant use of colorblind utterances in combination with the racially deficit views from high referring teachers provides an area of inquiry that potentially can be a data-rich avenue for larger theoretical scholarship. This potential avenue of exploration could provide more tangible evidence to support the operation of systemic racism in classrooms.

Although the study is exploratory, these findings collectively support a relationship among discipline-related outcomes of students, the disposition of educators, and systemic racism. The extent of that relationship and its constructs need to be further explored; however, the findings alone from this study indicate the need for further investigation into how school discipline operates as a function of systemic racism.

Future Scholarship & Recommendations

Similar to other scholarly work, this study resulted in more questions and new areas of exploration than actual conclusive answers. As stated previously, the findings from this study warrant future scholarship to further explore and more precisely define the connection among discipline-related outcomes, teacher disposition, and systemic racism. This study's exploratory designed was purposefully conduct to inform future work. The following sections discuss future scholarship and improvements to future renditions of this study.

Lessons learned from the four domains. The largest finding from the four domains was that the domains actually overlapped in representation. This finding was

extraordinarily important. Firstly, this finding demonstrates the overwhelming job of crafting a tool that captures the complexities of language, bias, and belief in praxis. It became challenging when excerpts could be represented in two or more domains. To be clear, the overlapping was expected, but not to this extent. For instances, in just two to three sentences, a participant would express racially deficit views towards Black students' families (domain one), while simultaneously and equally framing their perspective of those families from a white middle-class social norms (domain two) and using colorblind language (domain four). The decision to place one excerpt/data in a domain was problematic. On the one hand, the domains were designed to provide delineation among the results to better test the domains against the supporting literature; yet, the process of forcing the data into the domains appeared to restrict the depiction of how fluid this process occurs in praxis.

Nevertheless, this finding were informative and lead to a second revelation. Moving forward, consideration for the fluid nature has to be better addressed in how the domains will be used. A decision must be made on how the data can best represented as a fluid function while be presented in a simple translatable form. Beyond the alterations to the four domains, the possibility of another domain or nexus of the four domains may be worth entertaining. Having the opportunity to step back and look at the domains collectively, there was an additional emerging theme that I am hesitant to call a finding. The domains overlapping representation appear to suggest that participants, both Black and white, are normalizing racism through racialized practices of normalizing whiteness. I will discuss this in more detail later in this chapter (see Normalizing Racism through whiteness).

Recommendations for Future Scholarship. The following recommendations are offered for related research in the areas of discipline disproportionality.

1. Moving forward with the four domains, there is a tremendous need for literature specific to language and semantic styles for deciphering responses. Due to the complex intersection of language, power, systemic racism, and praxis, any work moving forward must account for how language is used in manners particular to uncomfortable conversations. Adaptations of language coding and mapping need to be included in future metrics.
2. Although discipline response includes teachers and school administrators, a metric that accounts for the difference between the two and how this process is operationalized at each level needs to be created. This metric or coding system needs to be flexible to the dynamics of race and power and the lived tension that school administrators operate through.
3. Due to the strong findings of racially deficit views from high referring teachers, there is the need for research specific to developing a rubric that maps the level of engagement in racialized ideology. This mapping should operate to better represent the spectrum of engagement.

Recommendations for Teacher Education. The following recommendations are offered for related research to teacher education and teacher preparation programs.

1. Although deciding what should be considered “good” or “appropriate” characteristics of future teachers may be problematic; it may best serve the common welfare of all students that teacher preparation programs consider including or given more prudence to the disposition of pre-service teachers.

2. Similarly, a commission should be appointed through state Departments of Education to investigate if there is a need for an ethics board to safeguard against unethical practices in the classroom.
3. Echoing sentiments shared by a 2005 Presidential panel at AERA, a new body of literature specific to researching the implications and effects of educators' disposition in schools would strengthen the present literature, but also provide evidence to hold teachers accountable to the moral character.

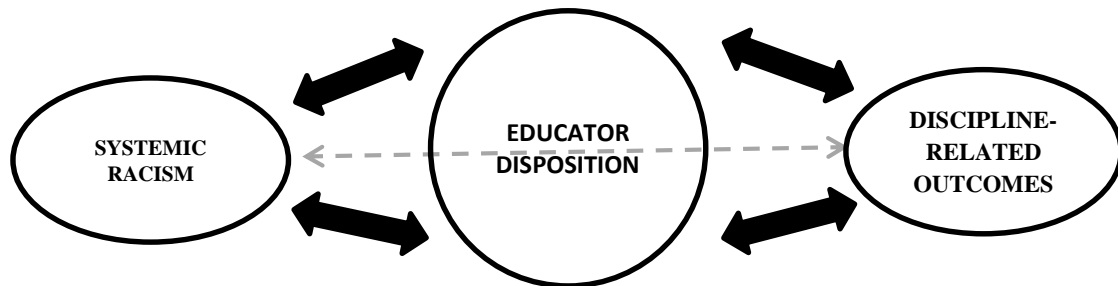
Discussion

This study's aim was to provide a framework for exploring if and how discipline disproportionality is a function of systemic racism mediated by educators' dispositions. This framework is not to be mistaken with traditional methodological or theoretical framework, yet the framework is more like a diagram that connects theoretical and empirical links found in the literature with findings from this study. Moreover, the framework is a foundation or skeleton for future scholarship examining if and how racial disparities are the result of systemic racism that operates to protect whiteness. The underpinnings of this framework were tested in the analysis of this study.

The study tested and found evidence to support the causal linkage among systemic racism, educators' dispositions, and discipline-related outcomes. The three categories are illustrated in **Figure 1.1**. To clarify, only the dispositions of high referring teachers was evident in the findings. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the present study serves as an in-progress body of work to move in the direction of a more solidified metric for testing this framework. The following sections will discuss the three

categories' connections, how this study fits with previous research, and findings from the study that merits future exploration.

Figure 1.1



Systemic Racism Embedded in Educator’s Dispositions and Enacted through Discipline.

The work of Wentzel (2002) and Gregory, Nygreen, and Moran (2006) help demonstrate how educators’ dispositions, acted through decisions, can inform how disciplined is addressed and handled in the classroom. Paralleling this research is a body of literature that draws connections among teachers’ perceptions of Black students (Townsend, 2000; Vavrus & Cole, 2002), their relationships with Black students (Gregory and Weinstein, 2008), and how Black students are disciplined (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Similarly, teacher education scholars attest to teachers bringing their history and culture into the classroom and claiming that their personalities and teaching styles are shaped by social and cultural conditioning (Delpit, 1995; White, Zion, Kozleski & Fulton, 2005; Landson-Billing, 2009).

This collection of literature establishes that neither the classroom nor the individuals within it are divorced from the effects of larger social systems. Just as scholars suggest that teachers, “bring themselves—their life experiences, histories, and

cultures—into the classroom...” (White et al., 2005) then they too bring in the same racial prejudice of systemic racism. Vaught (2012) claimed that teachers practice valuing and protecting whiteness through organizations, policies, and practices. When focusing on the practice of discipline response in this study, it became ever more apparent that high referring teachers were operating in a similar fashion.

To be clear, attempting to make a correlation between systemic racism and discipline-related outcomes or attempting to make whiteness visible is quite difficult. Yet, this study brings new evidence into how systemic racism is operationalized through the racially deficit views of high referring teachers. Regardless of its exploratory design, this study’s findings support the existence of a causal link among variables that follow a logic that supports the idea that racial disparities are a function and result of systemic racism. In particular, it was found that classroom teachers engage in and hold racially deficit views of Blacks, which are the result of systemic racism (Valencia, 2010; Feagin, 2000), and these same teachers disproportionately refer Black students. As such, logic suggests that racial disparities in school discipline are connected to systemic racism.

Although this study could only substantiate high referring teachers in the above framework, it is import to acknowledge the existence of both high and low referring teachers in the four domains, which I believe illustrates the nexus of disposition, decision-making, and a spectrum of influence from a larger social system of racialized beliefs. Specifically, these findings represent a variance in engagement in systemic racism. This is not to suggest that those categorized as low referring are not affected or influenced to the same degree, yet the findings support the idea that higher referring teachers allow systemic racism to inform their decisions, specifically discipline response.

In spite of the presence of both high and low referring teachers in the four domains, findings reveal that higher referring teachers are the primary culprits. But to solely place the blame on a singular category or type of teacher would be short-sighted and would over simplify the nature of discipline response and the ways in which systemic racism is operationalized in school systems. Moreover, these conclusions demonstrate the ambiguity and difficulty of determining the causality(s) of discipline disproportionality.

Lopez (2005) and Harris (1993) claim that whiteness refers to a marker of international “hegemony and imperialism” and it is entrenched into the narrative of our society by protecting the privileges that maintain white superiority in a postcolonial world. As such, whiteness becomes a non-context specific vehicle of systemic racism meaning that practice of valuing whiteness is also not individual specific. With that and in combination with findings from this study, it supports the notion that high referring teachers actively maintain and protect whiteness. As such, the racial disparities documented for over 40 years are the result of, and a function, of systemic racism.

Feagin (2010) claims that in order for systemic racism to persist, it requires the replication of organizational structures and ideological processes that perpetuate social reproductions. He further claims systemic racism is possible by the functions of institutional systems. Based upon the findings from this study, school discipline is not an exception to his claims. This study has found that subordination or the compliance that discipline response seeks to maintain is not divorced from whiteness. This is not to suggest that general practices of behavior redirection, decisions that are made that seek to ensure the safety or wellbeing of all, are purely designed to secure white supremacy. Yet, the practiced beliefs of high referring teachers coupled with their perspectives about

Blacks demonstrate how school discipline, at times, over punishes Blacks for being Black.

Understandably this may be quite a leap for some; however, this conclusion is not too removed from previously cited work. For example, Skiba et al. (2002) found that white students were referred to the office significantly more frequently for “objective” offenses versus Blacks. Or we can look at the work of Hinojosa (2008), who reported that the rates of Black student suspension as compared to white rates decreased from 3.50 to 3.43 times when controlling for student behavior.

Delpit (1995) contends that issues of power, which she claims are reflective of larger issues of power, privilege, and access in society, are enacted in the classroom. Delpit concludes that classrooms are only mirrors of the outside world and are simply a reflection of its systems of power. Throughout history, Harris (1993) has pointed to the unbroken intersection of race, privilege, and material possession in American history. Since power and property are interchangeable than whiteness is a synonym of both of them.

In conclusion, the findings from this study leave little room for debate when it comes to mediating the persistence of the overrepresentation of Black students in discipline response. In conjunction with the literature reviewed and the findings from this study, it can lead future scholarship into a peculiar direction. School discipline research needs to consider the role of systemic racism and how it informs the decision-making (i.e. discipline response) of adults involved in the discipline process. The limited body of literature implicates a great need for further research in the specific mechanism, functions, and beliefs that contribute to racial disparities byway of those responsible for

racial disparities. Lastly, this charge for future research should not be a witch-hunt for those who refer students the most; instead, the research needed should approach this work by viewing both the engagement of and participation in racialized actions as the result of a system that indicts all teachers.

Normalization of racism through whiteness. Although this is not a fully-realized finding specific to this study, the tremendous amount of data overlapping in the four domains suggest that participants are normalizing racism through racialized practices of racially deficit thinking towards Black students from a white supremacy paradigm. This notion is purely a hypothesis, yet it still appears that participants, higher referring teachers in particular, are being informed by systemic racism in the form of racialized deficit views, enacting those beliefs on Black students by over referring, and confirming or reinforcing systemic racism based upon the racial disparities in school discipline. Simply stated, a higher referring teacher is engaging in systemic racism by over referring Black students and then receives confirmation of their racial beliefs [systemic racism] by seeing more Black students disciplined.

This seemingly reciprocal relationship operates to not only reinforce the existence of the racial disparities in school discipline, but in the process, it also validates the protection of whiteness by guarding it from behaviors outside of its perimeters through discipline practices. Because of this, they may be normalizing racism. This notion is not too distal from the work of Welch and Payne's (2010) who used racial threat theory, which suggests that those of the majority group begin to discriminate against the minority group after a particular threshold has been reached. Their results found that after a particular percentage of Black students were enrolled, the suspension rates raised

significantly for all students and that the single significant predicting focal variable for determining over-suspension and use of zero tolerance policy was the school's racial composition. Because both whites and Blacks can engage in the protection of whiteness (Fanon, 1953) – especially at the professional level- then the majority becomes those who engage in systemic racism by normalizing whiteness as their barometer of what is socially and behaviorally acceptable.

As previously discussed in chapter 2, laws and statues protected whites and their property and racism became a tool of deciphering intelligence (Guthrie, 2003) through categorization while maintaining white-skinned superiority and imperialism. Furthermore, Feagin (2010) claims that in order for systemic racism to persist, it requires reproducing of organizational structures and ideological processes that perpetuate social reproductions. Because of social progress and the existence of, or appearance of, social upward mobility for Blacks, the white-skinned superiority has been socially embedded into our everyday life, which has made whiteness and protecting it normal. According to the literature, systemic racism operates to protect and maintain whiteness; this occurs by the social reproduction of the protection of whiteness and the behavioral and social normalization of racism in the discipline practices.

As stated in a previous section of this chapter, this discovery may be grounds for a new domain or possibly a nexus or intersecting unit that binds all the domains. The difficulty of capturing the fluid nature of this process as well as representing the multiple intersections within any given data point may center on the notion of normalizing racism through normalizing whiteness.

Personal testament. I knowingly approached this endeavor with the full understanding that my ability to answer the guiding question was impossible. Accordingly, the ability to represent the nexus of colorblind racism in the practice of discipline response is extremely difficult. Nevertheless this study has sought to explore whether racial disparities were a function of or a result of systemic racism. At this point, the results cannot fully confirm this as a general truth; nevertheless, I believe it to be so. Justifiably, the conclusions made in this discussion may be unsettling and oversimplify how systemic racism works. Yet this causal relationship is worth further investigation.

This study has been immensely informative to my scholarship and future research on racial disparities in school discipline. The exploratory nature has provided a foundation from which I can build and explore the causalities of racial disparities. My journey to this study was the result of a culmination of the critical scholarship I studied in the Urban Education Studies program at IUPUI and the experiences afforded to me through my work at the IU Equity Project, which, I am truly grateful for. My voyage has just begun.

Limitations

As stated previously, this study is exploratory in nature and for that reason results serve as foundation for future scholarship specifically designed to explore the connections between racial disparities in school discipline and systemic racism. Conclusions founded in this study should be understood with that premise in mind. Confirming the categorization of high and low referring for each participant was based upon a combination of referral rates of the 2012-2013 academic year and data collected during the same school year. There is the chance, although minor, that the rates or the

categories participants were assigned do not accurately represent the career span of each of the participants. To reduce the likelihood of this occurring, the research team spent hundreds of hours to best ensure the categories accurately reflected each participant.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

Nathaniel Andrew Williams

Bachelor of Art Education
Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN May 2009

Master of Education Psychology
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN December, 2012

Doctoral in Urban Education Studies
Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN October, 2015

Teaching Experience

Knox College (September 2015 – present)

- Assistant Professor, diversity and learning for Illinois state certification for pre-service teachers.
 - Designed a wide-ranging syllabus that covered aspects of cognitive development and theory and teaching practices in the social context. The education psychology course examined the intersections of cognitive development and social attitudes, policy/law, child rearing, race, gender identity, psychopathology, and society.

Indiana University School of Education; Indianapolis, IN (August 2013 – May, 2015)

- Associate Instructor, diversity and learning component for the pre-service teaching program.
 - Designed a comprehensive syllabus that covered aspects of learning and development with intersections of race, class, gender, and power.
 - Responsible for coordinating placement of students' field experience
 - Observed and consulted students on their classroom engagement, participation with students, and instruction.

Clark-Pleasant Community Schools/ Blue Ribbon Education (January 2014 – October 2014)

- Substitute teacher, Fulfilled both short- and long-term substitute assignments across multiple grade levels and subject areas.
 - Effectively taught students of varied academic/age levels (grades K-12) and diverse cultural backgrounds.

Arsenal Technical High School; Indianapolis Public School (May 2009 – August 2010)

- Jobs for America's Graduates instructor, Taught employability skills, and college and career readiness.
 - Created and implemented a comprehensive multi-discipline college level curriculum that pushed the limits of students' understanding of business,

career readiness, career competition and problem solving, while using contemporary teaching methods

- Responsible for counseling, teaching, mentoring and tutoring high at-risk students to ensure academic and professional success
- Established relationships with community organizations for work-based learning that lead to career advancement opportunities
- Created a curriculum based on the 3 E's (education, economics, & enterprise) from which I was selected to present my curriculum to teachers within the JAG program at a national conference.

Upward Bound; Indiana University, Purdue University-Indianapolis (September 2009 – May 2010)

- Upward Bound Creative Writing instructor, Responsible for teaching creative writing to high school students and improving overall writing techniques.
 - Designed a highly interactive interdisciplinary curriculum that included elements of business, visual art, math and creative writing.

Broad Ripple High School; Indianapolis Public School *Student Teaching* (March 2009 – May 2009)

- Instructed four two hour art magnet classes, which included highly advance art students from a diverse background.
 - Developed and implemented various age appropriate lessons that addressed and discussed social issues utilizing visual literacy and visual culture
 - Prompted student motivation, participation, creativity and problem solving skills through implementation of a positive environment that fosters learning for all students
 - Created visual aids, PowerPoint's, handouts, examples and course material

Minnie Hartman Elementary; Indianapolis Public School #78 *Student Teaching* (Jan. 2009 – March 2009)

- Developed strong rapport with students, staff and faculty and designed multiple units for grades Kindergarten to 6th.
 - Designed interdisciplinary lessons that incorporated visual culture and real life application for all levels
 - Created visual aids, PowerPoint's, handouts, examples and course material
 - Assumed the role of instructor and handle all classroom management

Herron Saturday School; Graffiti *Instructor* (Jan. 2008 - April 2010)

- Assumed all responsibilities of an instructor, which included designing a student-center constructivist curriculum and daily lesson plans for approximately 15 students from the age of 12 to adult.
 - Took the initiative to ensure that the class would be created
 - Established rapport with students and their parents, assisted students with making wise aesthetic choices, facilitated discussions and critiques

- Created visual aids, PowerPoint's, handouts, and all course material
- Planned and coordinated off-site murals for my students

Herron Summer Art Camp *Instructor*
(Summer 2008)

- Taught an array of students from diverse backgrounds, ranging in age 5-13. Lead lesson plans in several different medias
 - Developed innovated methods of teaching students in small and large groups of up to 25 students
 - Organized time, space and resources for the daily experience

Research Experience

Center for Urban and Multicultural Education (August 2012 – August 2015)

- Works as a lead evaluator for three projects that comprise of 17 school site with responsibilities ranging from observations, coding, analysis and reporting.

National Counsel for Educating Black Children (October 2011 – present)

- Works as a member of an evaluation team that conducts cultural competency audits of schools to assess schools' ability to provide culturally relevant and responsive teaching (CRRT)
- Works as a lead evaluator for a multi-site after school program.

Indiana University Equity Project (August 2010 – present)

- Works on a multi-year William T. Grant that aims at exploring discipline disproportionality in urban and suburban schools; with responsibilities that range from data collection, literature reviews for publications, and interviewing of school personnel and students.

Diversity Scholars Research Program (complete undergraduate career)

- Worked directly with mentor to conduct research around art education, meet monthly with the program to fulfill rigorous requirements.

McNair Summer Research Program, Indiana University, Purdue University-Indianapolis (summer 2007)

- Worked with Dr. Cindy Borgmann to examine the correlation between specific demographic groups and the effects of their participation in visual art course.

McNair/SROP Summer Research Opportunity Program, Michigan State University (summer 2006)

- Worked with Dr. Jessica Barnes in partnership with Bridges to the Future After School Program in the Flint, Michigan school district. Using qualitative data, we researched the relationship between students' class choice and art courses they took during the Bridges to the Future After- School Program. We analyzed data to see if there were any effects of taking art courses alter students' participation and/or preparation for the general classroom?

McNair Summer Research Program, Indiana University, Purdue University-Indianapolis (summer 2005)

- Worked with Dr. Cindy Borgmann and conducted a small interest survey with the Herron Honors Summer Program.

Presentations

* Indicates peer-reviewed conference presentation

- * Williams, N. A., Skiba, R., & Hughes, R. (April, 2015). Looking through the keyhole of a very large door: What's missing from the discourse on school discipline. American Educational Research Association. Chicago, Illinois.
- * Scheurich, J., Williams, N., & Daniels, D. (November, 2014). Public universities profiting from racial injustice: The Ball State University Case. University Council for Educational Administration. Washington, D.C.
- *Williams, N., & Annamma, S. (November, 2014). We know racial disproportionality in discipline is a problem; what's the policy got to do wit' it? International Conference on Urban Education (ICUE).Montego Bay, Jamaica.
- *Scheurich, J., Williams, N., Priester, M., Portillo, W., Robbins, K., Shaver, E., & Gatzka, A. (October, 2014) White educators talk about their white racism: Educators of color critique their talk. Journal of Curriculum Theory Bergamo Conference. Dayton, Ohio.
- *Williams, N. (June, 2014). Understanding the School-to-Prison Pipeline. National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA). Indianapolis, Indiana.
- *Williams, N. (June, 2014). M.O.C. (Money Over Children); Manufacturing Katrina. National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (N'COBRA)Indianapolis, Indiana.
- *Rogers, J., Hotchkins, B., & Williams, N. (May, 2014). Art as Activism: CRIThery Workshop. Critical Race Studies in Education Association (CRSEA). Nashville, Tennessee.
- *Phelps, J., Williams, N., & Scheurich, J. (November, 2013). Urban Education Doctoral Students Critique Urban Educational Leadership Research. University Council for Educational Administration. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- *Williams, N. (October, 2013). It ain't all that different; Disproportionality is still present. Journal of Curriculum Theory Bergamo Conference. Dayton, Ohio.
- *Carr, K., Williams, N. (April, 2013). Ingredients for High and Low Quality After-School Programming. Indiana University, Purdue University – Indianapolis Research Day. Indianapolis, Indiana.

- *Williams, N. (2010, July). The 3 E's, Economics, Education & Entertainment. Jobs for America's Graduates National Training Seminar. Orlando, Florida.
- *Huges, R., Lands, C., Turner, R., Williams, N., Dorsey, D., & Ford, J. (2009, May). Anatomy of a Revolution: Students, Faculty and Staff transform Their Invisibility to Visibility. National Conference on Race and Ethnicity- San Diego, California.
- *Williams, N. (2011, November). Buying access to education; what we consume and its effects on the prosperity and academic achievement of the global community. Men and Women of Color Leadership Conference Indiana University – Bloomington, Indiana.
- *Borgmann, C. C. & Williams, N. (2006, April). Visual Art and Its Importance to the K-12 School Curriculum. National Conferences on Undergraduate Research. University of North Carolina-Asheville.
- Williams, N. (November, 2014). The Truths about education reform in Indiana. Indiana Civil Rights Commission. Kokomo, Indiana.
- Williams, N., & Scheurich, J. (September, 2014). Black Children on the auction block, again: The mistruths of charter schools. Moral Mondays Education Division. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Williams, N. (September, 2014). [Personal testimony] Drive-thru version of school discipline disproportionality. Senate Sub-Committee Hearing on Discipline Disproportionality. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Williams, N., Phelps-Moultrie, J., & Craig, C. (July, 2014). [Panel] An examination of disparities in school disciplinary practices in suburban schools. Indiana Black Education Education Conference. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Helfenbein, R., Houser, J., Branon, S., Carr, K., Huddleston, G., Jackson, R., & Williams, N. (June, 2013). Translational Research in Urban Education Contexts. Indiana Urban Schools Association Conference (IUSA). Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Williams, N. (May, 2013). Don't spit in my face and tell me it's raining; The truth about the N.E.O. Plan. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Education Community Town Hall. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Williams, N. (May, 2013). Charter Schools in Marion County. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Education Community Town Hall. Indianapolis, Indiana.

- Williams, N. (April, 2013). Charter Schools in Marion County. National Council on Educating Black Children and NAACP. Indianapolis Community Town Hall Meeting. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Williams, N. (March, 2013). School choice. Center for Urban and Multicultural Education Colloquium. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Williams, N. & Daniels, D. (November, 2012). The truth about waivers. Indiana Black Expo Education Conference. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Williams, N. (2010, March). Defining Yourself as a Black Male in a Hip Hop Era. Student African American Brotherhood National Conference. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Borgmann, C. C., Barnes, J., & Williams, N. (2009, May). Visual Art and Its Importance to the K-12 School Curriculum. Diversity Scholars Research Program Annual Research Symposium. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Borgmann, C. C., Barnes, J., & Williams, N. (2008, May). Visual Art and Its Importance to the K-12 School Curriculum. Diversity Scholars Research Program Annual Research Symposium. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Borgmann, C. C., Barnes, J., & Williams, N. (2007, May). Visual Art and Its Importance to the K-12 School Curriculum. Diversity Scholars Research Program Annual Research Symposium. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- *Borgmann, C.C., Barnes, J., & Williams, N. (2007, April). Visual Art and Its Importance to the K-12 School Curriculum. National Conferences on Undergraduate Research. Dominican University San Rafael, California.
- Borgmann, C.C., Barnes, J., & Williams, N. (2006, August). Visual Art and Its Importance to the K-12 School Curriculum. McNair/SROP Summer Research Symposium Michigan State University- East Lansing, Michigan.
- Borgmann, C.C., Barnes, J., & Williams, N. (2006, July). Visual Art and Its Importance to the K-12 School Curriculum. Michigan State University- East Lansing, Michigan.
- Borgmann, C. C. & Williams, N. (2006, May). Visual Art and Its Importance to the K-12 School Curriculum. Diversity Scholars Research Program Annual Research Symposium. Indianapolis, Indiana.
- Borgmann, C. C. & Williams, N. (2005, November). Visual Art and Its Importance to the K-12 School Curriculum. Indiana University Undergraduate Research Conference. Indianapolis, Indiana.

Borgmann, C. C. & Williams, N. (2005, May). Visual Art and Its Importance to the K-12 School Curriculum. Diversity Scholars Research Program Annual Research Symposium. Indianapolis, Indiana.

Publications

Refereed articles

Williams, N. A., Skiba, R., & Hughes, R. (2015). Looking through the keyhole of a very large door: What's missing from the discourse on school discipline (in process)

Williams, N. A., Skiba, R., & Chung, C. G (2015). DWB; Disciplined while Black (in process)

Scheurich, J. J., Williams, N. A., & Daniels, D. (2015). Public universities profiteering by failing students of color: The Ball State University charter authorizer case (in process)

Book Chapters

(2013). Scheurich, J. J., Bonds, V. L., Phelps, J. A., Currie, B. J., Crayton, T. A., Elfreich, A. M., Bhatena, C. D., Kyser, T. S., & Williams, N.A. (In Press). A New Definitional Framework For Educational Equity With Explicated Exemplars. In M. Khalifa, C. Grant, & N. Witherspoon Arnold (Eds.), *Handbook For Urban Educational Leadership*. Lanham, Md: Rowman & Littlefield.

(2014). Scheurich, J. J., Phelps, J. A., Williams, N. A., Cannon, M., Sosa, T., & Shaver, E. (in preparation). Racism in pk-12 schools. In K. Lomotey (Ed.), *Contemporary issues for people of color: Living, working and learning in the U.S.: Education: Pk-12 and higher education* (Vol. 1). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO Books Department.

Non-referee articles

Scheurich, J., & Williams, N. (2014, May 4). Indiana schools fail to advance black students. NUVO. Retrieved from <http://www.nuvo.net/GuestVoices/archives/2014/05/04/indiana-schools-fail-to-advance-black-students>

Williams, N.A. (2012). Cultural Competency for Indiana. Indiana Department of Education

Developed a concept paper for Indiana's State Superintendent of Instruction, which highlighted the importance of having culturally competent teachers and what measures should be implemented to ensure that educators, schools, and districts are culturally responsive to the needs of all students