RETHINKING EQUITY AND INCLUSION AS RACIAL JUSTICE MODELS IN MATHEMATICS (EDUCATION)

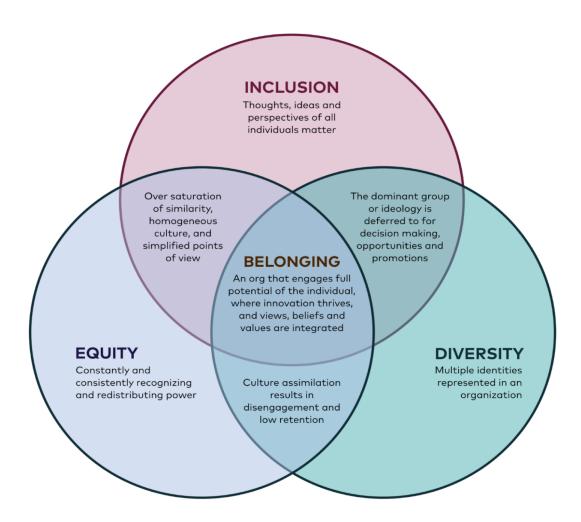
Danny Bernard Martin University of Illinois at Chicago

Workshop on Mathematics and Racial Justice Mathematical Sciences Research Institute

BACKGROUND

- teaching mathematics since 1987
 - community college, California, 1990-2004
 - professor, mathematics and education, UIC, 2004-present
- research on Black learners since 1991
- father of a brilliant 8-year-old son
- son of 81-year-old and 77-year-old parents

DIVERSITY-EQUITY-INCLUSION



https://www.krysburnette.com/blog/2019/1/22/belonging-a-conversation-about-equity-diversity-amp-inclusion

OUTLINE OF PRESENTATION

- 1. a few questions to consider
- 2. define terms-racial literacy for mathematics education
- 3. very brief outline of my research on Black learners
- 4. critical (re)framing of equity, inclusion, and mathematics education
- 5. implications of a critical (re)framing

QUESTIONS

- 1. what do race and racism have to do with mathematics education?
- 2. how can I begin to think differently about mathematics education so that I can increase my understanding of these issues?
- 3. beyond equity and inclusion, what are some justice projects that can respond to the material realities, needs, and desires of Black people inside and outside of mathematics education?

RACIAL LITERACY

Provides a **vocabulary** and a set of **tools** to help individuals interpret how race and racism interact with education, and it **promotes engagement of racial themes into curricular and pedagogical projects and approaches** (Flynn, Rolón-Dow, & Worden, 2020)

Involves (1) understanding the intersections of power and race, (2) being able to locate and **analyze racial systems**, (3) possessing the grammar and vocabularies associated with racial discourse, such as White supremacy, antiBlackness, racialization, racial identity, and intersectionality, while (4) differentiating among terms such as ethnicity, nationality, discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping. (King, Vickery, & Caffrey, 2018)

BASIC TERMS

RACE

Race is a sociohistorical concept. Racial categories and the meaning of race are given concrete expression by the specific social relations and historical context in which they are embedded···The meaning of race is defined and contested throughout society, in both collective action and personal practice. In the process, racial categories themselves are formed, transformed, destroyed, and re-formed. (Omi & Winant, 1986, pp. 60-61).

At the **micro-level**, race is a matter of individuality, of the formation of **identity**. At **the macro-level**, race is a matter of the formation of **social structures**: political, ideological, and economic. (pp. 66-67)

RACISM

Racism is a *structure* because racial dominance exists in and is reproduced by the **system** through the formulation and applications of rules, laws, and regulations and through access to and the allocation of resources. Finally, racism is a *process* because structures and ideologies do not exist outside the **everyday practices** through which they are created and confirmed. These practices both adapt to and themselves contribute to changing social, economic, and political conditions in society. (Essed, 2002, p. 185).

RACISM PRODUCES RACE

Actors in racial positions do not occupy those positions because they are of X or Y race, but because X or Y has been socially defined as race (Bonilla-Silva, 1997)

WHITE SUPREMACY

Ansley (1997) defined white supremacy as a political, economic, and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily re-enacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings. (p. 592)

ANTIBLACKNESS

- An interlocking paradigm of institutions, attitudes, practices and behaviors that work to dehumanize and oppress Black people in order to benefit non-Black people, and specifically, to benefit and maintain white supremacy.
- When social systems are racialized by white supremacy, whiteness becomes the default of humanity and Blackness is stripped of its humanity, becoming a commodity, becoming disposable. (Black Liberation Collective)

INTERSECTIONALITY

fundamentally, race, class, and gender are intersecting categories of experience that affect all aspects of human life; thus, they simultaneously structure the experiences of all people in this society. at any moment, race, class, or gender may feel more salient or meaningful in a give person's life, but they are overlapping and cumulative in their effects... yet, race, class, and gender intersect with other categories of experience, such as sexuality, ethnicity, age, ability, religion, and nationality. (Anderson and Collins, 2009).

RACIAL JUSTICE-I

The systematic **fair treatment** of people of all races, resulting in **equitable opportunities and outcomes** for all. Racial justice — or racial equity — goes beyond "anti-racism." It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of **deliberate systems and supports** to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures. (National Education Association)

RACIAL JUSTICE-II

Racial justice is the result of intentional, active and sustained anti-racist practices that identify and dismantle racist structures and policies that operate to oppress, disenfranchise, harm, and devalue Black people. This workshop will bring together mathematicians, statisticians, computer scientists, and STEM educators as well as members of the general public interested in using the tools of these disciplines to critically examine and eradicate racial disparities in society. (MSRI Workshop)

MY RESEARCH

my focus is on understanding the salience of **race** and **identity** in Black learners' mathematical experiences, including their self-constructions as learners, doers, and creators of mathematics in school and non-school contexts



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- what does it mean to be a learner and doer of mathematics in the context of being Black?
- what does it mean to be Black in the context of learning and doing mathematics?

KEY CONCEPTS

mathematics identity: encompasses a person's *self* understandings as well as how they constructed by *others* in the context of doing mathematics. mathematics identities can be expressed in narrative form as a *negotiated* self, a negotiation between our own assertions and the external ascriptions of others. math identities are always under construction.

mathematics socialization: experiences that individuals and groups have within a variety of contexts such as school, family, peer groups, and the workplace and that facilitate, legitimize, or inhibit meaningful participation in mathematics.

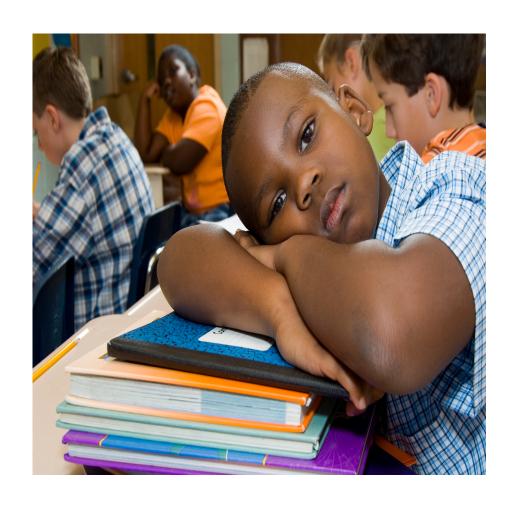
PROGRESS

over the past 20 years, conceptual and methodological space has opened up for non-deficit, phenomenological perspectives of Black (and other) learners focusing on socialization, identity, resilience, agency, and 'success.' we now see this work across k-16+ contexts.

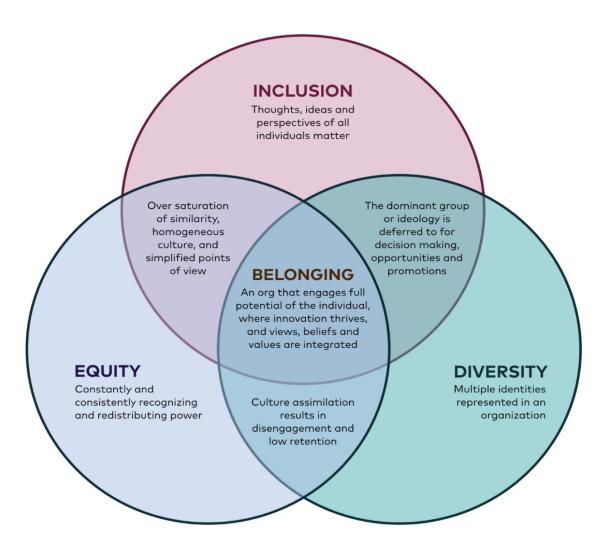
PROGRESS, BUT...

many Black learners continue to experience dehumanizing and violent forms of mathematics education

these dehumanizing and violent experiences are rooted in white supremacy and antiblackness

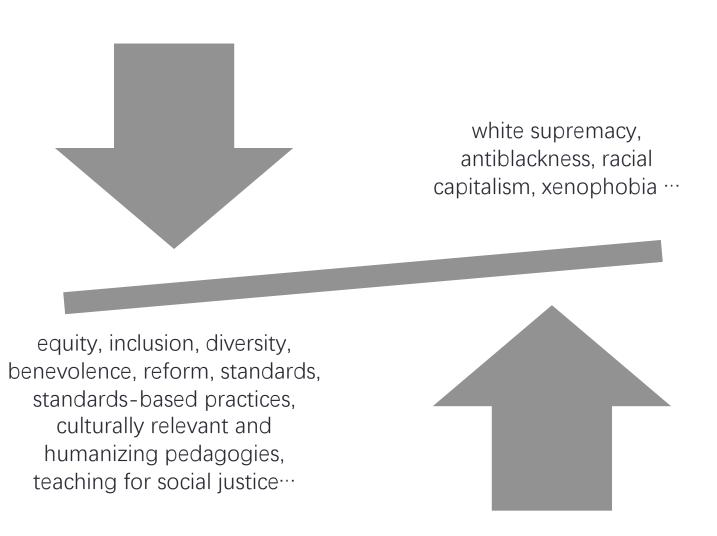


RETHINKING DIVERSITY-EQUITY-INCLUSION

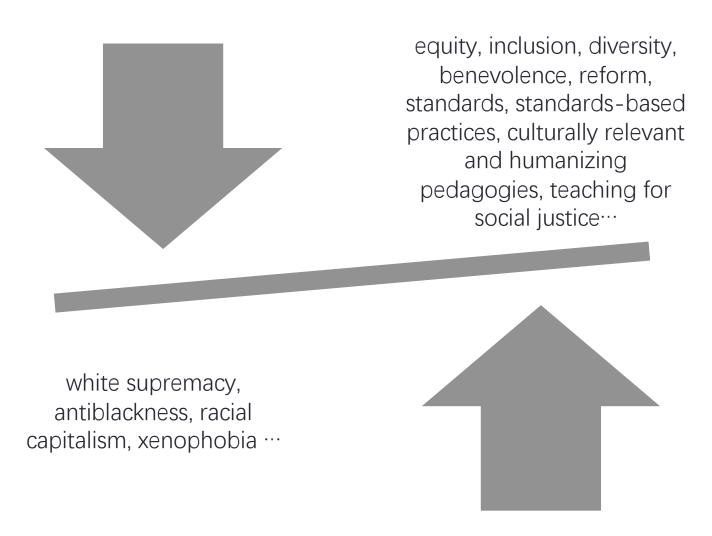


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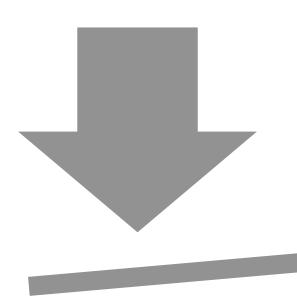
IDEAL VISION FOR EQUITY AND INCLUSION



REALITY OF EQUITY AND INCLUSION

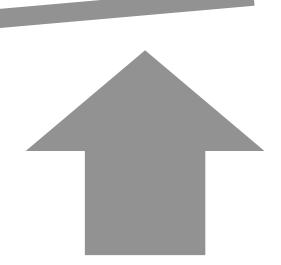


WE MUST ALSO CONSIDER...



Black learners' advancement, liberation, and flourishing in mathematics education and beyond

equity, inclusion, diversity, reform..., white supremacy, antiblackness, racial capitalism, xenophobia, white rage, benevolence, ...

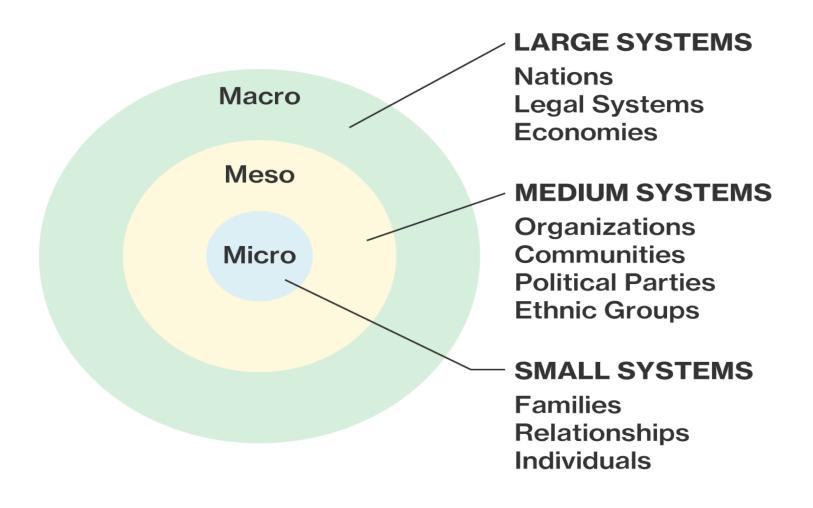


WHITE SUPREMACY-ANTIBLACKNESS

 white supremacy and antiblackness are adaptive, self-correcting systems. they function as multilevel projects of exclusion that adapt and self-correct across levels. inclusion and equity at one level does not preclude exclusion and inequity at other levels.

equity and inclusion initiatives and practices are often accommodated,
 co-opted, or simply absorbed by white supremacy and antiblackness,
 resulting in the maintenance of those systems, retrenchment, or
 incremental advancement masquerading as racial justice.

MULTILEVEL ANALYSES



QUESTIONS

- 1. what do race and racism have to do with mathematics education?
- 2. how can I begin to think differently about mathematics education so that I can increase my understanding of these issues?
- 3. beyond equity and inclusion, what are some other justice projects that can respond to the material realities, needs, and desires of Black people inside and outside of mathematics education?

EXPERIENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS

mathematics learning and participation can be conceptualized and studied as **racialized forms of experience**; that is, as experiences in which socially and personally constructed meanings for race emerge as salient in interactional experiences related to mathematics. (Martin, 2006)

EXPERIENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS

students experience racial-mathematical socialization outside of the classroom context

- parents, families, and communities send (and appropriate) messages about race and mathematics to students
- students develop, appropriate, resist, and perform various identities at the intersection of race and mathematics based on their experiences in society, at home, and in community contexts
- racialized discourses, narratives, and stereotypes about mathematics ability are reified and endorsed in society

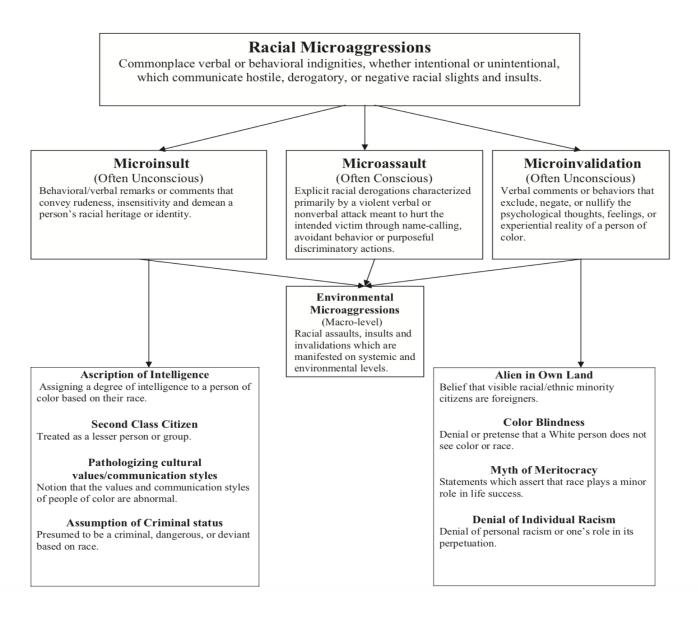
students experience racial-mathematical socialization inside the classroom context

- students perform in and around the stereotypes that emerge inside and outside the mathematics classroom
- students can spontaneously engage in extra-mathematical discourse focused on race
- students manage racial-mathematical stereotypes in different ways in relation to the development and enactment of their identities

teachers are agents of racial-mathematical socialization inside the classroom

- teachers bring their race-based ideologies about mathematics to bear on their practice
- teachers shape students' mathematical and racial identities via their practices and discourses

MICROAGGRESSIONS: SUE ET AL (2007)



Raquel: I was in high school, it was in the 9th grade, and I had a teacher, I'll never forget him. I had a C in algebra the first semester and I had a D the second and he told me, 'This is as far as you can go in math.' I never took another math class from that point on until I came to Cal State Hayward.

D: And you bought into it?

Raquel: Why wouldn't I? I am a 15-year-old Black student and my teacher, whatever race he is, White male, and you know he's telling me, 'This is it, you've gone as far as you can go.' He didn't have any patience. It wasn't like, 'Maybe you need to look into another class, maybe another teacher, maybe another method of instruction.' You know, [math] wasn't stressed. It just wasn't.

STRUCTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 1. mathematics education research, policy, and practice contexts can be characterized an instantiations of **white institutional space**.
- 2. mathematics education research, practice, and policy as **social practices** are deeply involved in the production and reproduction of **racial hierarchies**.
- 3. historically, mathematics education reforms have been aligned with and put in service to a number of **political projects** promoting white supremacy, antiblackness, racial capitalism, nationalism, xenophobia, militarism, neoliberalism, etc.

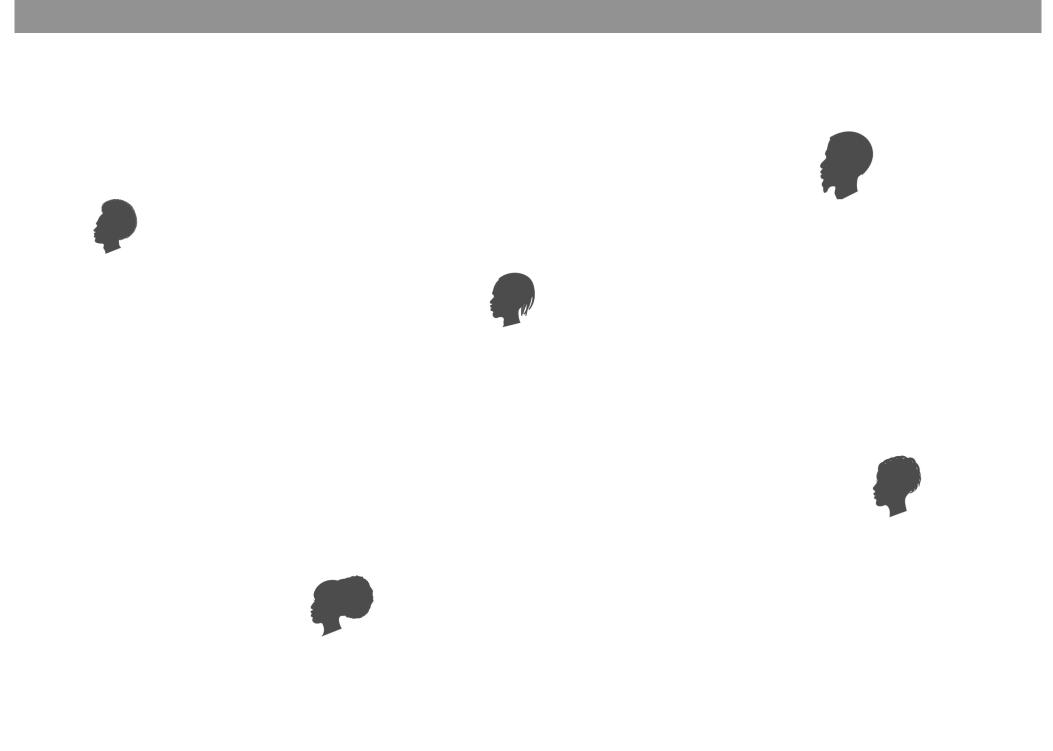
WHITE INSTITUTIONAL SPACE

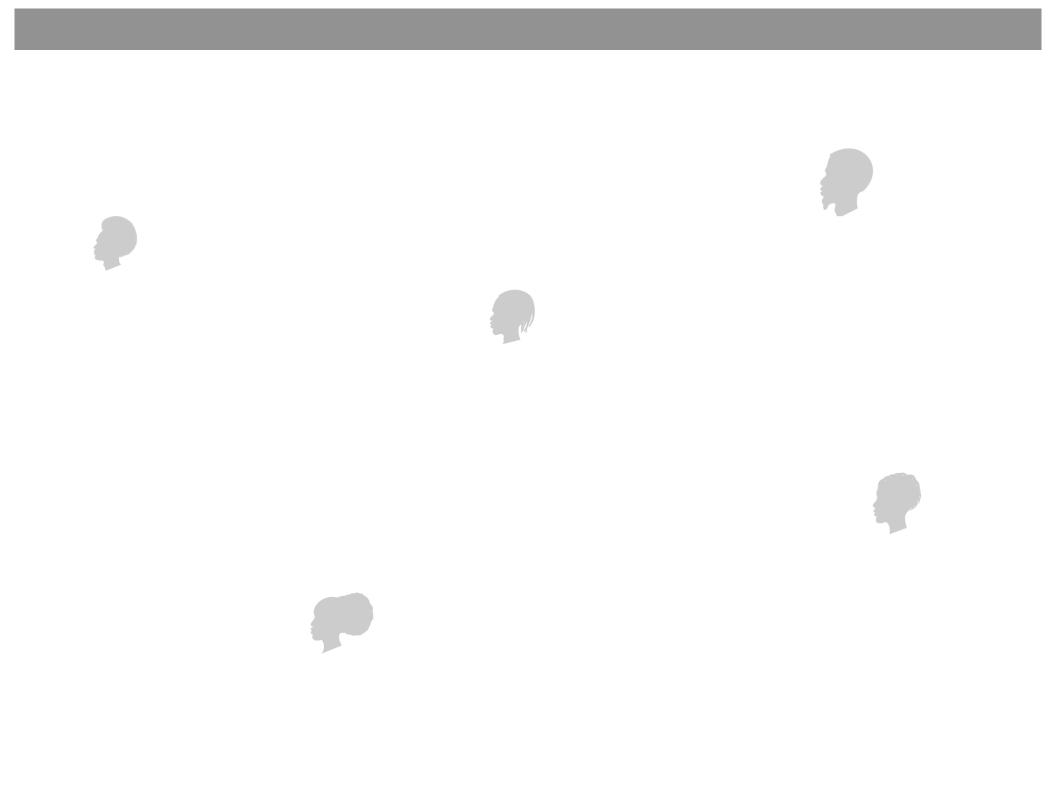
such spaces are characterized by:

- 1. the exclusion of non-whites from positions of power in various institutions, which results in the accumulation of white economic and political power,
- 2. the development of a white frame (rationality) that organizes the logic of these institutions and normalizes white racial superiority,
- 3. the historical construction of a curricular model based on the thinking of white elites, and
- 4. the assertion of knowledge and knowledge production as neutral and unconnected to power relations. (Moore, 2007)

INCLUSION INTO WHITE SPACES









MATHEMATICS EDUCATION IS A SOCIAL PRACTICE

mathematics education is a social practice. within this social practice, hierarchies of race, gender, and class among its participants are reproduced (and sometimes disrupted). identities of competence are made available to some students more readily than others.

PRODUCTION OF RACIAL HIERARCHY

Journal for Research in Mathematics Education 2014, Vol. 45, No. 3, 288-311

Race and Teacher Evaluations as Predictors of Algebra Placement

Valerie N. Faulkner, Lee V. Stiff, Patricia L. Marshall, John Nietfeld, and Cathy L. Crossland North Carolina State University

This study is a longitudinal look at the different mathematics placement profiles of Black students and White students from late elementary school through 8th grade. In particular, this study utilizes the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study—Kindergarten Class of 1998–1999 (ECLS-K) data set to analyze the impact of teacher evaluation of student performance versus student demonstrated performance on the odds of being placed into algebra in the 8th grade. Results revealed that Black students had reduced odds of being placed in algebra by the time they entered 8th grade even after controlling for performance in mathematics. In addition, teacher evaluations of student performance were shown to play a greater role, albeit adversely, for Black students than for their peers. These results are discussed in terms of both implicit theory research and critical race theory. An important implication of this study is that placement recommendations must be monitored to ensure high-achieving students are placed appropriately, regardless of racial background.

Key words: Achievement gap; Algebra; Race; Teacher evaluation

- Teacher evaluations of student performance were shown to play a greater role, albeit adversely, for Black students than for their peers.
- Black students had reduced odds of being placed in algebra even after controlling for math performance.
- The odds of placement in algebra by the eighth grade for Black students were reduced by two-thirds to two-fifths compared to their White peers.

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Black students confront an untenable impediment in that their Blackness (or, as we suggest here, the teachers' implicit responses to these students' Blackness) serves… as an invisible… obstacle to gaining access to higher level mathematics courses, irrespective of their demonstrated performance (p. 306).

MATHEMATICS EDUCATION IS A POLITICAL PROJECT

Mathematics education reforms in the United States have been aligned with a number of political projects promoting white supremacy and antiblacknesss (along with racial capitalism, nationalism, xenophobia, militarism, neoliberalism, etc.).

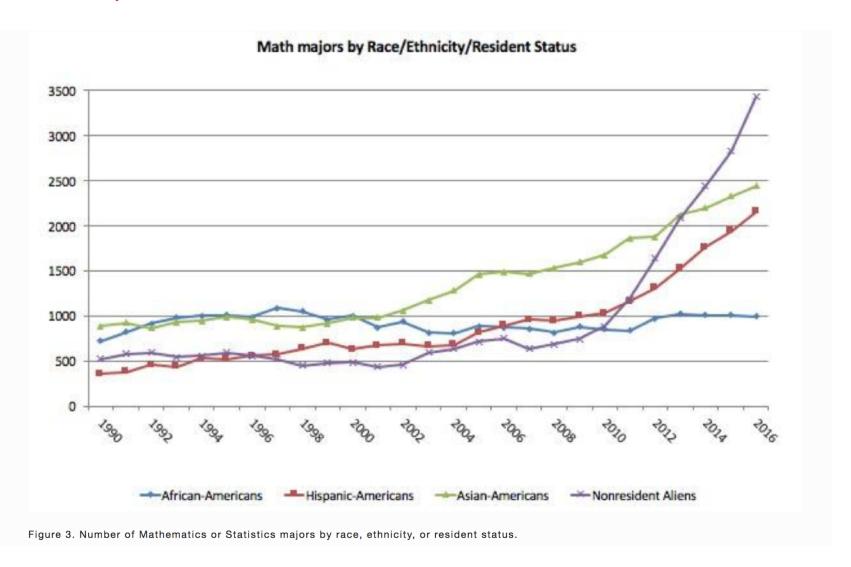
REFORM CONTEXTS	REFORM DISCOURSES (APPEALS TO INCLUSION)	RACIAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS	
New Math (circa 1957)	Best and the Brightest National Security	Jim Crow racism, legalized segregation, New right racial project, heightened nationalism, Cold War politics, Civil rights movement	
Curriculum and Evaluation Standards (NCTM, 1989)	Mathematics for All		
Everybody Counts (NRC, 1989)	Mathematics for All Economic Necessity Global Competitiveness Human Resource Development	Post-civil rights era, neo-conservativism, Reagan-Clinton-era neoliberalism, New Jim Crow, mass incarceration, neo-liberal racism (color evasiveness)	
Principles and Standards for School Mathematics (NCTM, 2000)	Mathematics for All		
Final Report of National Mathematics Advisory Panel (USDOE, 2008)	Mathematics for All Economic Competitiveness National Security-Antiterrorism	Bush-era neo-conservatism, neoliberal racism, Post-911 nationalism, New Jim Crow, Far right racial project, NCLB	
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(MYTH OF) BLACK INCLUSION IN MATHEMATICS



Source: Bressoud (2018)

(MYTH OF) BLACK INCLUSION IN MATHEMATICS

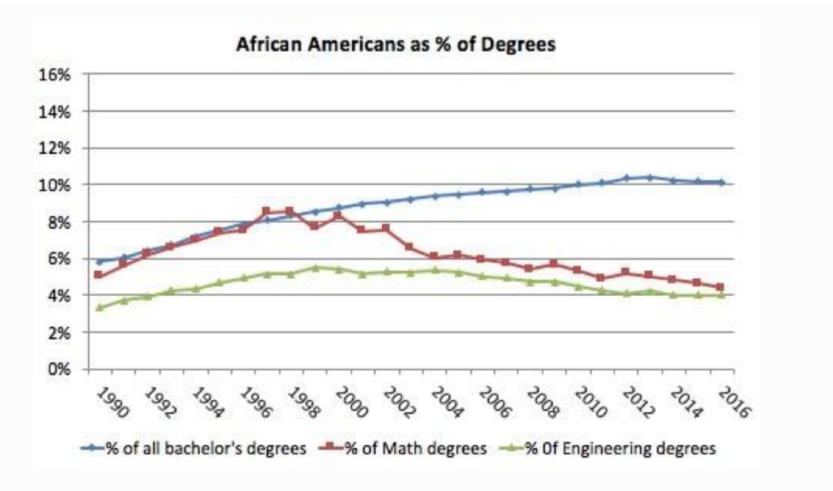
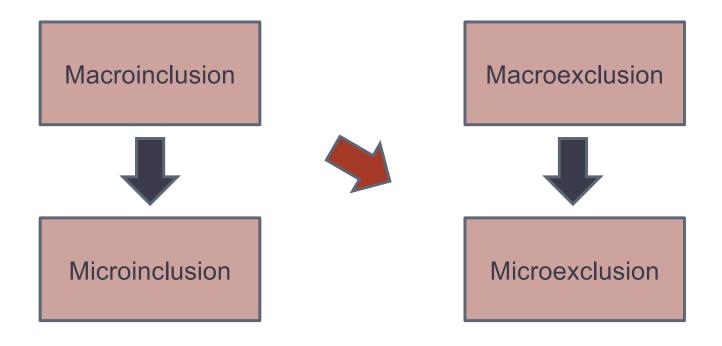


Figure 4. African Americans as percentage of all bachelor's degrees and of bachelor's degrees in Mathematics or Statistics and in Engineering. Source: NCES.

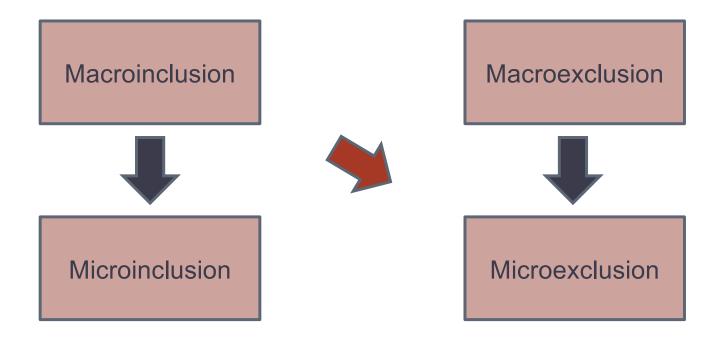
Source: Bressoud (2018)

A MODEL OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION



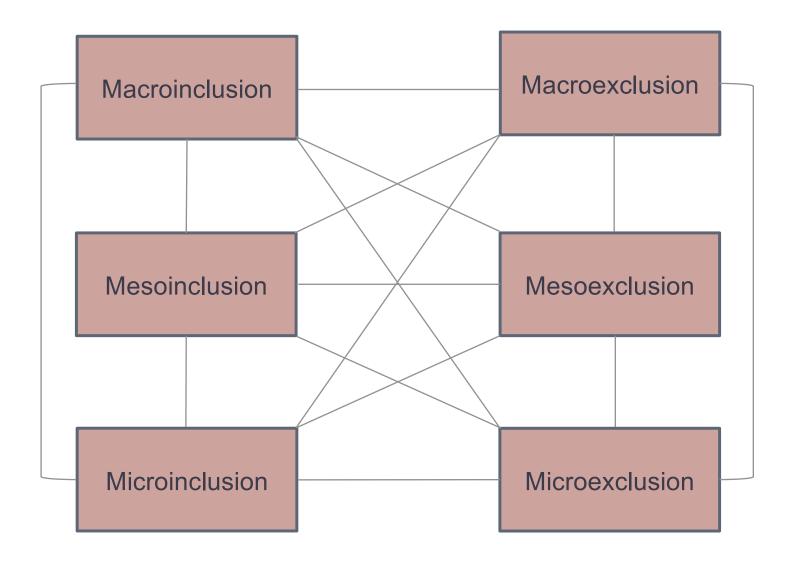
Faustino, Moura, Gomes da Silva, Muzinatti, & Skovsmose (2017)

A MODEL OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION



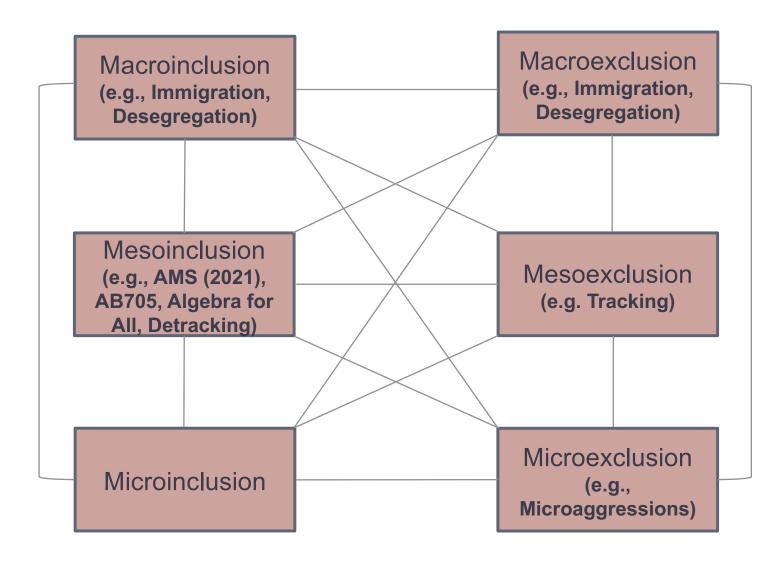
Microexclusions mean violence. Thus we do not see violence as just being of a physical nature; it can take many different forms. Certain discourses can be violent, for instance when they provide a stigmatisation of certain groups of students. Political structures can be violent by preventing certain groups of children and young people from access to adequate educations. Economic structures can be violent by keeping groups of people in poverty. Violent microexclusions can be acted out in the mathematics classroom. (Faustino, Moura, Gomes da Silva, Muzinatti, & Skovsmose, 2017)

MULTILEVEL PROJECTS AND PRACTICES OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION



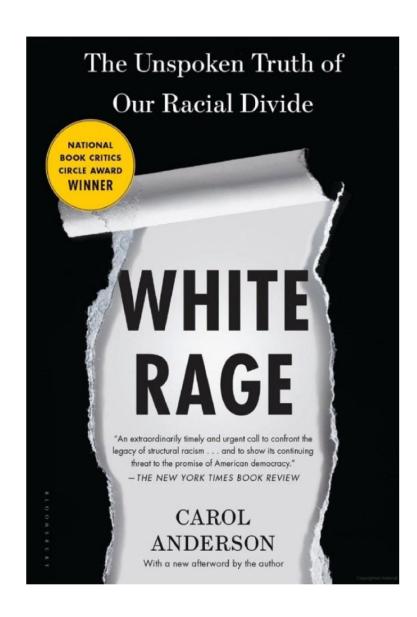
Martin (2021), Adapted from Faustino, Moura, Gomes da Silva, Muzinatti, & Skovsmose (2017)

MULTILEVEL PROJECTS AND PRACTICES OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

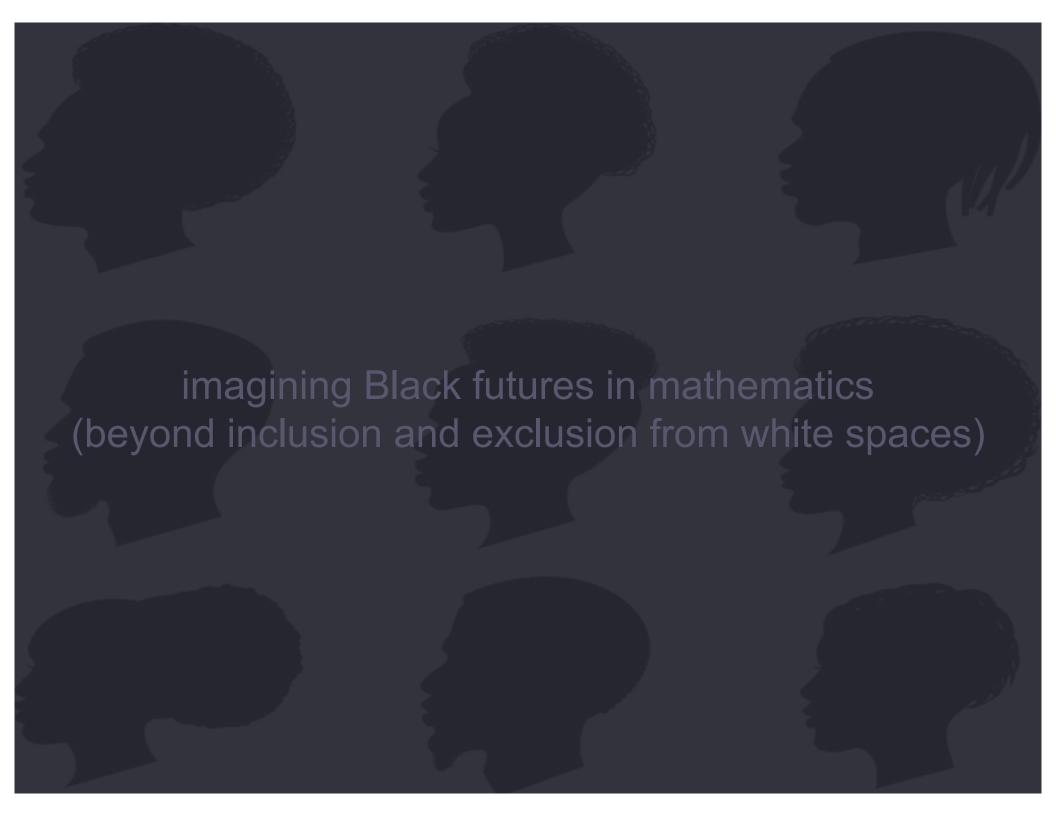


Martin (2021), Adapted from Faustino, Moura, Gomes da Silva, Muzinatti, & Skovsmose (2017)

RESISTING BLACK ADVANCEMENT



Since 1865 and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, every time African Americans have made advances towards full participation in our democracy, white reaction has fueled a deliberate and relentless rollback of their gains. The end of the Civil War and Reconstruction was greeted with the Black Codes and Jim Crow; the Supreme Court's landmark 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision was met with the shutting down of public schools throughout the South while taxpayer dollars financed segregated white private schools; the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Voting Rights Act of 1965 triggered a coded but powerful response, the so-called Southern Strategy and the War on Drugs that disenfranchised millions of African Americans while propelling presidents Nixon and Reagan into the White House, and then the election of America's first black President, led to the expression of white rage that has been as relentless as it has been brutal.



REFUSAL

We refuse:

- Justice projects which require us to prove our humanity or worth
- Justice projects which require us to frontload a lot of learning or consciousness-raising
- Justice projects which require us to appeal to the people who abuse us
- Justice projects which require us to gather an audience of white settlers who are presumed to have agency
- Justice projects that presume compromise as the main avenue for achieving solidarity (Tuck and Yang, 2018, p. 8)

BLACK LIBERATORY MATHEMATICS (BLM) EDUCATION

the framing and practice of mathematics education that allows Black learners to flourish in their humanity and brilliance, unfettered by whiteness, white supremacy, and antiblackness. (Martin, Price, & Moore, 2019).

FRAMING

a Black Liberatory Mathematics education prioritizes liberation over integration and freedom rhetoric. This form of mathematics education is skeptical of liberal notions of inclusion and equity, appeals to democracy and citizenship, neoliberal multiculturalism, and refuses all forms of violence against Black learners and others. The 'freedom' to participate, integrate, and be included into anti-Black spaces characterized by various forms of violence is not freedom.

FRAMING

[learning mathematics] is necessary *not* because American capitalism's advanced forms of technology require this background, but because Black Liberation Struggle *against* the American racist-capitalist system requires knowledge of [mathematics and] 20th century technology. (Anderson, 1970, p. 25)

PRACTICE

a Black Liberatory Mathematics education is designed and directed first and foremost by liberation-seeking Black people including parents, caregivers, community members, Black teachers, and Black students.

SELF-DETERMINATION

Only black people can convey the revolutionary idea—and it is a revolutionary idea—that black people are able to do things themselves. Only they can help create in the community an aroused and continuing black consciousness that will provide the basis for political strength. In the past, white allies have often furthered white supremacy without the whites involved realizing it, or even wanting to do so. Black people must come together and do things for themselves. (Ture and Hamilton, 1992, p. 46)

RACIAL JUSTICE?

Racial justice discourse in education in education proceeds past/around/on the back of Black suffering, rendering Black suffering invisible or beside the point and, most pointedly, inconsequential...what counts as racial justice in education in no way promises an end to Black suffering. It may alleviate or mitigate some suffering for some Black students in some educational spaces, but the vast majority of Black children and their families will still continue to experience suffering, even as educators and policy makers and the broader public celebrate successes in this or that racial justice initiative...what is required for Black people to live free is not racial justice, but a commitment to Black emancipation... the pursuit of racial justice in education may serve to impede the freedom of Black people, and only reproduce and reinscribe Black suffering. What we need to envision, ultimately, is an end to all of this: the destruction of the very conditions of Black suffering, which is, necessarily, the end of schooling as we understand it, and, in the meantime, a perpetual troubling of what gets celebrated as racial justice in education... (Dumas, 2018)

W: In the beginning of this interview, I remember I was asking you these questions. I was like, "What was it like for you as an African American in graduate school?" And after the interview you said, "Nadine, this question you're asking." You said, "Nadine, I'm always black, everything I do is black,"... You had this very interesting way of saying it, which I thought was very important. Partially because it just kind of illuminated the difference in the way you and I talk about race, but also because it was a... I just thought it was a very important statement.

B: Well, it's just so obvious. It colors everything you say, do, and think.

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(excerpt from An Oral History with David Blackwell conducted by Nadine Wilmot in 2002 and 2003).

THANK YOU!