

Research Articles

Journey of Racial Discrimination in Education— Genealogical Analysis

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Racial discrimination in the United States dates to the earliest periods of colonial history. Thompson (1993) wrote “Slavery was an institution based upon widely held assumptions regarding the relationship between whites and blacks” (p. 333) and at the turn of the 18th century, the African slave trade displaced indentured servitude for farm labor in southern colonies (Snyder, 2007). The institution of slavery included slave codes regulating every aspect of the lives of slaves, including their right to education.

Slavery officially came to an end in 1865, removing those macro-legal barriers to educational access. However, educational inequalities persisted and were reflected in multiple ways in spite of the legislation established for Black access to education (Mwachofi, 2008). Racial discrimination is a source of educational inequalities and is veiled in the micro-context of classroom, curriculum, policy, etc. (e.g. Nurenberg, 2011; Parker, 2012; Ridley & Kwon, 2010). Such discrimination is often covert in education. It has been examined in the context of support of White privilege (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013; Dennis, 2001), denying the presence of injustice (Nurenberg, 2011), impacting immigrant student success (Orozco & López, 2015), persisting stereotypes in bilingual classrooms (Kleyn, 2008), court support of the racial hierarchy (Byrd-Chichester, 2000), failure to recognize White racial identity (Lund, 2010), and the dominance of Eurocentric pedagogy in adult education (Brookfield, 2003; Guy, 1999).

In this paper, we examine through genealogical analysis how racial discrimination in education shifted focus in different periods of time. Unveiling the presence of this persistent, yet covert form of discrimination is important to address barriers to full equity in education for minoritized ethnic and racial groups, particularly Black learners. These barriers have been described in a number of different ways including disproportionate outcomes/minority presence in remedial education (Davis et al., 2016; Parker, 2012), inequities in funding (Kujovich, 1993), postsecondary institutional access (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013), and standardized placement testing that ignores differences in the experiences of students of color (Clark, 2004).

ANALYTICAL METHOD

Genealogical analysis is used to examine nuanced racial discrimination in education and its focus in different periods of time. Rather than a total historical account seeking “overarching principles which govern the development of an epoch” (Kendall & Wickham, 2000, p. 24) and “a system of homogenous relations: a network of causality that makes it possible to derive each of them” (Foucault, 1972, p. 9), Foucault’s (1998) genealogy is situated in deconstruction theory. It attempts to record narratives and events that extend beyond the dialectic description of binary worlds (e.g., black/white, right/wrong, men/women, and world/system) defined in the dominant narrative. It concentrates on the things which are meticulous and accidental rather than transcendental, the things which are missing and absent from dominant history. It is not to abandon or refuse the things that are in the sight of history; rather, it requires us to peer through the surface and expose things hidden from our vision. This approach illuminates the experiences absent from the dominant narrative, revealing the tacit power of the dominant to obscure those beyond its limited binary definition. Genealogy reminds us to pay attention to existing unnoticed truth which is ignored, unrealized, unacknowledged, and absent in our historical knowledge asset (Foucault, 1998).

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Foucault’s genealogical analysis emphasizes the role of power in the structure of discourse (McPhail, n.d.). In other words, it focuses on “how power is exercised in a particular context” (Kearins & Hooper, 2002, p. 752). By analyzing the discursive formation of a certain event/history (Foucault, 1980), hidden meaning behind the discourse is revealed. Discourse is understood according to Foucault (1972) as “a written or spoken object” (p. 216) whose production “is at once controlled, selected, organised [*sic*] and redistributed according to a certain number of procedures, whose role is to avert its powers and its dangers” (p. 216). Through this approach we attempt “to discover the chain of causes which lead to particular historical events” (McPhail, n.d., p. 21).

Foucault’s genealogy focuses on local illegitimate knowledge of struggles not broadly acknowledged or institutionalized into official archives. It looks at particular situations indicating how various power strategies are used to produce self-disciplining subjects; how certain statements are more favored than others; and how legislative mechanisms are used to normalize and legitimize unfair statements. Kearins and Hooper (2002) suggest “Central to genealogical research is an interest in how power is exercised and sustained through the use of disciplinary discourses and through associated administrative normalisation [*sic*]” (p. 736). For example, how do powerful groups use discourse, policy, norms, etc. to bring a minority people into obedient subservience (Foucault, 1976/1978)?

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reveal these ‘hidden agendas’, through genealogical analysis, we collected documents, which reveal the hidden meanings easily ignored by the public, seeking local knowledge (e.g., stories from the struggles) instead of the

knowledge communicated through official policies. We looked for documents representing the stories and

voices of the struggles. Genealogists do not reject official knowledge but appreciate that official documents also provide the missing context of events and reveal the decision making process (Kearins & Hooper, 2002).

Using the genealogical method, three distinct time periods of racial discrimination in education are examined in this paper. The Antebellum period, the post-Civil War period, and the postwar period from 1945 to the present. The first period was selected because it was a period when full legal restrictions were imposed preventing Black access to education. This examination identifies structural tools such as laws and regulations used to prevent participation in education on racial grounds. The second period is the post-Civil war era, in which a radical change from the discourse in the first period appears. In our examination a discourse of racial control exercised through educational opportunities designed to normalize freed slaves into dominant culture is revealed. Finally, the present period reveals covert and hidden racial discrimination within the larger mainstream discourse. Examining this period reveals how the micro-learning environment and hidden norms operate in the mainstream discourse to marginalize students based on race, limiting full access to education.

We selected three independent historical eras with three distinct racial discourses to paint a picture of how racial discrimination in education changed its appearance in different periods of time. By examining these three time periods, we revealed differences in the conduct of education for Black students. We also identified ways powerful groups used policies, norms, and discourses to normalize racially disadvantaged students into the mainstream agenda through the institution of education. We focused on documents/stories about minoritized people, and crucial events that led to important changes. We collected documents such as transcriptions of oral history interviews from the Avery Institute and articles describing experiences and understandings of the periods, which may not be included in the dominant narrative. These documents and articles reveal power relationship governing the education of black students. Our search for articles in the antebellum period focused on slave codes and structural prohibition of educating slaves. In the post-civil war period, we sought journal articles and documents describing efforts to educate liberated slaves through the stated positions of White educators, alongside the relatively few Black educators of the period. In the current period, we found articles, stories and reports which considered questions of diversity in education, issues related to minority serving institutions, and policies enacted through the legislative process.

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The Antebellum Period—Denying the Slaves' Access to the Locus of Power (Education) through Structural Barriers (1781 to 1860)

The Antebellum period followed the colonial period and ended with the beginning of the US Civil War in 1861. In this period, the locus of power shifted from learning to knowledge, introducing an era when education moved toward the practical and away from a classical education. This shift away from the classical and toward the practical and scientific revealed a change in the locus of power (Nicoll & Fejes, 2011), making knowledge economically empowering. This shift resulted in a growth of educational opportunity for White middle class students focused on practical and military education (Green, 2005; Slotten, 1991). This change in the function of education clarified the discourse and revealed the exercise of power by the dominant group to deny slaves access to education. This move revealed a conflict between the pedagogy of White slave owners in the south and the covert and subversive

pedagogy of slaves in their family and religious life. The antebellum period is known for the legalized existence of slavery, and a growing separation of educational ideas between north and south (Green, 2005). The existence of slave codes in Florida (Thompson, 1993) and New Orleans (Ingersoll, 1995) made it a crime to teach slaves to read and write. Black students resorted to secretive methods to obtain adult basic education through the formation of clandestine schools that were often hidden, nomadic, and nocturnal (Freedman, 1999). Furthermore, educational efforts for free Black students in the North were hampered by the Nat Turner rebellion in Virginia when the African church became the central institution for Black education (Moss, 2006). The Black struggle to gain access to education reveals the locus of power in knowledge (Nicoll & Fejes, 2011), the growing economic value of education in this period (Green, 2005), and the prohibition of slaves' participation in economic activity (Thompson, 1993). Thompson (1993) observed: "A clear line of distinction between the two races was needed in order to maintain Black subordination and race control" (p. 324). Education became that line.

During this period of time, discordant configurations in education were evident. In the South, growing isolationism through systematic promotion of southern education for White southerners fueled the growth of educational institutions for members of the dominant culture. In the North, schools were established in Boston for Black children. However, questions and issues remained related to the equality of education between Black and White schools (Moss, 2006; White, 1973).

Growth in educational opportunities were available for the dominant White middle class, including popular lectures and presentations of scientific concepts and ideas, along with the development of regionalized education institutions (e.g., military academies) promoting practical and scientific studies. This shifted the emphasis in education from classical studies to a more practical understanding of education. During this period access to learning, and which educational opportunities were available to whom revealed the locus of power embedded in education (Green, 2005).

This power revealed how the disparity of educational opportunities available was connected with racial ethnicity. Education for slaves in the Antebellum South was available only through covert means (Freedman, 1999), while education for the White middle class experienced rapid growth (Green, 2005). For instance, academies for White southerners in the South grew, focusing on a 'practical' form of education. This change was not restricted to the South alone, but illustrated a growing trend promoted by national leaders (Slotten, 1991). Green (2005) observed "the practical curriculum and interest in progress benefited non-elite young men,...Enrollment in military institutes, then, expanded the opportunity for advanced education to middle-class Southerners in the late antebellum period" (p. 364).

While members of the dominant southern culture enjoyed growing access to higher education, Black students struggled to obtain adult basic education. The conduct of an owner toward his or her slaves was dictated by 'slave codes' enacted on a state by state basis. Many of these codes contained strict penalties that included whipping or mutilating slaves learning to read or write or possessing reading material (Thompson, 1993). Given the general opposition to educating slaves, any hopes of education for Blacks resided in the Antebellum African church, which became the prominent source for Black education. During the 1820s, the availability of primary education to Blacks began to improve but higher education remained out of reach (Moss, 2006).

This power also negatively impacted the education of dominant Whites. Flynt (1968) wrote "pressure was applied to keep southern students in the region, textbooks were censored, and professors were dismissed because of their political views" (p. 211). Not only were students pressured to remain in the South, but professors' regional loyalties were questioned. Flynt (1968) described such practices through the story of Milford Butler, a professor of ancient languages at East Tennessee University, who was born in Ohio. His life was threatened after his mail had been opened to reveal he was a northern sympathizer. At another southern institution of higher education, a professor expressing reservations about the institution of slavery

was forced to resign his position. Additionally, at Southern University, a committee was appointed by the trustees to examine the curriculum and ensure it met the needs of “loyal southern men”, while pressuring faculty to adopt ‘southern textbooks’ to replace those labeled “undesirable” (Flynt, 1968).

The resistance to educating Black students was also evident in the north. For example, there was a cooperative effort between a Black and a White minister who desired to establish a Black institution of higher learning in New Haven, Connecticut (Moss, 2006). The proposed educational institution was planned and announced in the fall of 1831. Unfortunately, this coincided with news of the Nat Turner rebellion in Virginia on August 22, 1831 (Moss, 2006). While the proposal for such an institution would have been controversial before, following the uprising northern Whites considered it subversive. As Moss (2006) noted, “Historically, most Connecticut whites believed in the concept of universal education, except insofar as it applied to African Americans” (p.18). The proposal for the school was voted down in a city meeting by a margin of 700 to 4 (Moss, 2006). This was not the end of the unrest, as the citizens of the town took out their anger on “a black-owned hotel, a black-owned home, and an abolitionist’s summer residence” (Moss, 2006, p. 18). This reaction was not isolated to Connecticut, as White reaction in other free states undermined education following this uprising (Thompson, 1993).

During the Antebellum period, the White middle class gained power with the growth of accessible, practical education and knowledge. All the while, Black slaves were denied access to basic adult education, much less higher education. This was illustrated in the way the growing educational opportunities for Whites noted above (Green, 2005; Sloten, 1991) starkly contrasted with the punitive measures that repressed the education of slaves (Thompson, 1993). Denying Black slaves access to this knowledge demonstrated both the power of the White dominant class, and the importance of practical knowledge to engage in economic participation. The limited education slaves obtained was affected through covert means (Freedman, 1999). Following the Civil War, the former slaves found access to practical education for economic participation with important limits, and designed to produce docile, subservient workers.

The Post-Civil War Era—Training Blacks to be Efficient and Subordinate Workers (1865-1914)

In the post-civil war era, the ruling White class transposed denial of education into paternalistic domination of African Americans. Through higher education, they believed Blacks could be taught to obey, and the social order of racial subordination could be protected (Dennis, 2001). Charles Dabney, who became president of the University of Tennessee in 1887, argued that the Black race was “at least 2,000 years behind the Anglo-Saxon in its development” (as cited in Dennis, 2001, p. 116). Such a viewpoint understood former slaves as primitive and in need of supervision by White superiors. The dominant White class then “allowed” the education of former slaves. However, educational content was limited to roles deemed suitable for former slaves by dominant Whites (Dennis, 2001). Dennis (2001) noted “Paradoxically, while university progressives advocated education for social improvement, they also propagated a pedagogical scheme that fit conveniently into a scheme for racial submission” (p. 115).

Southern educational leaders Samuel Mitchell and Charles Dabney regarded that education of Blacks should align with the values of the White ruling class laborers to be efficient workers and good citizens. Dennis (2001) argued,

The proper curriculum would equip blacks with the rudimentary skills needed by the new economic order. It would also inculcate them in the middle-class virtues needed for social stability. Thus educated, blacks would quietly assume their subservient but productive place in southern society. (p. 115)

William Broun, president of Auburn University (1882-1883 and 1884-1899), argued that Blacks were an ‘inferior race’ (Cox, 2008), asserting the abolition of slavery created a gap in educational leadership which could only be filled by White paternalism (Cox, 2008). This view relegated African Americans to a subservient role in society embracing predetermined values supporting the social stability of the dominant group (Dennis, 2001). This repressive effort defined a suitable education for acceptable roles for Blacks defined by the dominant White culture, while appearing to assist them with educational goals.

In the debate over the content of education available for former slaves, the focus was on curriculum. Dennis (2001) argued “theorists of industrial education held that practical training in the skills needed by southern agriculture and industry was best suited to the educational needs of blacks” (p. 117). This approach was modeled in the Hampton Institute founded by Samuel Chapman Armstrong (a northern White man) in 1868 (Dennis, 2001). Booker T. Washington, a Black graduate of the Hampton Institute became a proponent of this approach. A classical liberal arts education, on the other hand, was seen as a disservice because it led to Black individuals considered unfit for any kind of useful work. In the New South and among many in the North, a general consensus developed that defined educating the former slaves based on the dominant White view of differences between the races. The dominant White view argued that Black former slaves needed White paternal oversight (Cox, 2008) to learn a skill suitable for their subordinate role in society that supported White middle-class values (Dennis, 2001). Instead of structural exclusionism, this resulted in paternalistic condescension.

The availability of limited education for former slaves was considered progressive (Dennis, 2001), and was not a universal understanding in the post-Civil War South. Educating African Americans in the post-Civil War South was difficult and the debate continued to determine its nature. This debate included challenges to the content of curriculum available to Black students, but also extended to the way these efforts were funded, including tax policy and the use of tax proceeds. Early educational efforts following the emancipation of Blacks in the South included the work of Northern missionaries through the American Missionary Association (AMA) (Richardson, 1965). While this brought White resistance, a change in state legislation reflected the emergence of a new strategy for the White dominant group. Former slaves faced a subtler tactic to deprive them of any education whatsoever. Howard (1977) described Kentucky as one southern state that educated slaves prior to the Civil War. Subsequent to the war, the oversight of the Federal Government through the Freedman’s Bureau worked to ensure the provision of education to all former slaves. However, the state desired to rid itself of Federal oversight, and passed legislation whose stated purpose was to fund African American education, albeit entirely by a tax charged solely to former slaves (Howard, 1977).

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The irony of the situation resulted in the insistence that education for Blacks be funded by Blacks even if they were the poorest residents in the state (Howard, 1977). Amid other problems, this tax was never actually used to educate anyone. Instead the funds were diverted to provide relief for paupers, allowing county courts and trustees to oversee their use (Howard, 1977). Howard (1977) indicated that the preservation of local control of the resources responded to “the demands of local prejudice which insisted that whites in each county control black education even when sustained by taxes levied entirely on black citizens. In most counties, public opinion was determined to have no black schools” (p. 308).

This meant that education for Blacks in the state was heavily reliant on the presence of the Freedman’s Bureau along with benevolent societies who sent teachers to provide education to Black students, many of the teachers faced serious threats of assassination and social isolation (Howard, 1977) for teaching Black students. For example, the AMA focused on the task of providing basic education to freed slaves ranging in age from children to the elderly (Richardson, 1965). Not only did these educators teach, but they provided

assistance with the needs of daily living. Even though many of these northern benevolent societies like the AMA operated schools at great personal risk, there were critiques of their motivations.

Taylor (2005) described one criticism of the AMA effort. Taylor stated, “this educational scheme was vocational/technical in nature and not intended by Whites that Blacks attain economic or class equality” (p. 126). Other critiques included the failure to recognize the distinctive nature of Black culture and African American self-determination (Taylor, 2005). These were crucial because effective education of African Americans had to address changing the social realities of the Black experience and the struggle against the collective loss of cultural and historical identity characteristic of the oppression of slavery (Apple, 2013). These considerations sparked debates within Black communities about educational purpose.

African American responses were characterized by two distinctive leading voices. Booker T. Washington, a leading advocate of education for Blacks which gave them more efficient agricultural skills, pursued a pragmatic approach adopting a slower pace for change that was considered less threatening to White power holders (Peterson, 1999). From a different perspective, W. E. B. DuBois, influenced by Marxist theory, realized the contributions of the structural system and politics of stratification on racial inequality. He criticized not only the formal structures of education, but the dominant interpretive frameworks formed in the discourses of imperialism and whiteness (Apple, 2013). Fearing that public schooling for Black people would result in danger, the dominant White group chose to “provide segregated (limited) public schooling, but to do so in a way that was meant to ensure that the content and ideological orientations rendered black people subservient” (Apple, 2013, p. 36). Du Bois criticized capitalism that depended on an underclass to work in menial and subservient roles, and marginalized African Americans (Guy & Brookfield, 2009). Dubois (1999) observed that “It is a peculiar sensation . . . this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eye of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity” (p. 11). He emphasized the need for African Americans to be able to function on their own, rising above typical menial labor offered (Peterson, 1999) and advocated “transforming the educational and social conditions by changing the consciousness of dominant groups” (Apple, 2013, p. 38).

The Current Period—Racism and Inequality Being Subtle, Hidden and Unspoken (1945-Present)

In this current period, diversity is a part of daily life, basic education is available to everyone, and there are examples of highly successful individuals from every ethnic and racial background, including the first U.S. African American President. However, racism and inequity are embedded deeply in a micro-educational context and are subtle, hidden and unspoken. Many White people do not see racism, while many people of color struggle to understand how their White colleagues could miss it. According to Baumgartner and Johnson-Bailey (2008) “The demographics on college campuses are increasingly diverse. . . . In short we are dealing with a rapidly growing diverse society” (p. 46). Living in a reality of a rapidly changing demographic cogently emphasizes the need to address the disparity.

Guy (1999) observed that the dominance of an Anglo-Western-European cultural values persists. This macro-culture of dominance has seeped into the seams of society and infused expectations of normalcy. When cultural norms of individuality and competitiveness dominate the classroom environment, they effectively dismiss people of color in educational environments (Baumgartner & Johnson-Bailey, 2008). The resulting impact is to marginalize groups outside of the dominant one, since their cultural experiences do not mesh with the assumed norm.

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One educational avenue for Black students was reflected in the Avery Institute, located in Charleston, South Carolina (Drago & Hunt, 1991). In an archived oral history interview, Kelly (1984) described her personal educational journey to become a Black educator, which was heavily reliant on Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HCBUs) but began at the Avery Institute, a secondary educational institution focused on educating Black students. Her description of the teaching environment following her secondary school graduation was spartan, situated in one or two room schools. She also described her difficulty working with a White YWCA organization she referred to only as central. She detailed a reluctance to permit her attendance at Highlander Folk School and subsequent refusal to approve the development of an integrated program.

In another interview, Mouzon (1980) described a degree of tension between the people of the community and Avery, “but there was an unkind feeling manifest sometimes by the people of the community. It wasn’t widespread, however it was in a subtle sort of way” (p. 8). Additionally, Moultrie (1982) reflected on these sentiments when describing the reaction of the White community to the Avery Institute, “I think they were afraid. I think they were afraid of what they thought was going to happen. We got no support at that time” (p. 11). While Mouzon was not willing to openly state this was racism, she suggested the events took place in a different era, noting that they occurred a long time ago. In all of these recordings, the participants described the role of the Avery Institute as an institution providing secondary education that served to prepare the majority of Black teachers for South Carolina schools (Mouzon, 1980). These participants described the subtle tension that existed between the dominant White community and the institution in this era.

This subtlety represents a metamorphosis in approach though less obvious. Ridley and Kwon (2010) argued that the more overt forms of racism have been banned, while a more subtle and covert form stubbornly persists. These unspoken and covert racial undertones are revealed in measured outcomes of implemented policies that impact the access and success of minority students (Parker, 2012), raising the question of undeclared motives.

For instance, Parker (2012) found that Black students in Arkansas and Kentucky were enrolled in postsecondary developmental education disproportionately, reporting 85.1% and 73.8% respectively for Black students and 42.8% and 41.1% for their White counterparts. Davis, Stephan, Lindsay, and Park (2016) queried the Indiana Student Information System to identify early college success for students defined by three measures (a) enrolling in only nonremedial courses in the first semester; (b) earning all attempted credits in the first semester; and (c) continuing on to a second year of college. Among other findings, they concluded:

fifty-three percent of students first entering a two- or four-year college who were classified as White/other demonstrated early success on the composite of all three indicators, compared with 26 percent of those who were classified as Black and 40 percent of those who were classified as Hispanic. (p. 3)

These findings are consistent with Parker (2012) when comparing White and Black participation in developmental education as a predictor of educational success.

Peterson (1999) argued “African American students are more often placed in remedial courses that do not adequately prepare them to compete with whites either in academic settings or in the workplace” (p. 86). These remedial courses are designed to address deficiencies identified through standardized testing.

Curriculum, instruction and assessments however have been historically skewed toward the dominant culture (Clark, 2004; Dennis, 2001), and the content and expectations are contextualized toward a

Eurocentric orientation, rather than addressing context that students understand (Clark, 2004). Furthermore, standardized admission testing (e.g. Accuplacer) is often used as a restrictive tool, “That is, what was designed as an evaluation instrument is now used as an admission criterion” (Clark, 2004, p. 51). She argued that these tests are a gate keeping system restricting access to different types of education. Such testing often leads to a second restriction for many adult students, developmental education. Based on these tests, a significant number of Black students are required to enter developmental education before gaining access to college level courses. The practice and policy limits the availability of college education to disproportionate numbers of Black students.

Parker (2012) argued “National data point to the high proportion of students, many of whom are Black or Latino, who begin their postsecondary careers in developmental education courses” (p. 2). Forty-six states have rules related to developmental education, of these 14 (half of which are in the south) have moved to prohibit or eliminate state funding at public colleges (Parker, 2012) for developmental courses. Minority Serving Institutions, which educate over 43% of students of color in postsecondary education are disproportionately impacted by proposals to limit developmental education. Such a funding change erects barriers to all students, but impacts minority students disproportionately. Parker (2012) observed, “critics of developmental education often argue that states spend excessive amounts of money on teaching underprepared students with mixed results” (p. 8). When developmental education is eliminated from many four-year institutional offerings, including those who serve primarily minority students, these students have only one other option for public higher education, which is community college. However, the students who are not able to pass placement examinations to enter, for example, the City University of New York (CUNY), are unable to enroll (Parker, 2012). Removing developmental education effectively erects barriers to students who benefit from opportunities presented in Minority Serving Institutions. Additionally, Mumper (2003) observed that beginning in the 1980s, it was increasingly difficult for low-income and disadvantaged students to access to public higher education due to a series of forces such as rising tuition, changes in the federal student aid programs, and the decline of affirmative action. The consequences of such disparities in education result in fewer resources to address student needs forcing a decline in educational quality for minority students. The reality of large numbers of Black students in developmental education have a similar impact to the post-Civil War restrictions limiting access to specific types of curriculum. While the use of standardized testing and developmental education is not racialized, they are defined by dominant White culture.

Rather than suggesting these are overt acts of racism, it would be more appropriate to say that these relate to assumptions of White privilege that result in the default White frame of reference being unexamined. Lund (2010) observed that “It is the invisibility and silence of racism that renders us unable to see it, unable to name it, unable to take action against it” (p. 16). The invisibility of racism is possible because those “who have white privilege have tremendous power; they never have to think about race or challenge racism” (Lund, 2010, p. 16). Such a ‘color blind’ perspective, denies uncomfortable cultural differences and

Such a ‘color blind’ perspective, denies uncomfortable cultural differences and perspectives, perpetuating silence and forcing it below the surface of perception.

perspectives, perpetuating silence and forcing it below the surface of perception. Nurenberg (2011) observed that in an affluent white high school, teaching a social justice perspective was met with resistance, accompanied by the comment that such a perspective was

‘irrelevant’ to their lives. Nurenberg further observed that those from this dominant group tended to believe, “that only people of color or those who live in poverty are harmed by systems of oppression” (Nurenberg, 2011, p. 57). This is illustrative of the dominant White narrative that for many Whites is not clearly visible. Brookfield (2003) reminded us to recognize that one’s “lifeworld, positionality, and sense of cultural identity comprise a set of preconscious filters and assumptions that frame how one’s life is felt and lived” (p. 499). Intentionally tracing the racial framing of the dominant discourse of white privilege reveals how

White people distance themselves from racial privilege, using certain strategies to deny its presence (Brookfield, 2003). These preconscious filters and assumptions are present in all people, but for those in the dominant White culture they align with the dominant White narrative. Because of this, many assumptions remain unexamined. While progressive Whites reject overt racial discrimination, the persistence of White privilege and the dominant White discourse limits access disproportionately for Black students, albeit through approaches that are subtle and covert.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

Three periods of historical time show that the following tools/tactics were used to perpetuate this built-in discourse of white privilege and its hidden agenda: using pressure, threat, isolation and segmentation to impact the education of the minoritized group; controlling the contents and ideological orientations in the curriculum; using policies, norms, and discourses to normalize the mainstream agenda; using standardized tests and evaluation; changing the way programs were funded, and increasing tuition to limit the chances of the minority group from accessing to higher education; abandoning classical education in favor of more practical, and vocational/technical education for the non-dominant groups to create a pedagogical scheme of racial submission. Though racial issues related to access in education have improved in the present time, racial discrimination has not disappeared, but has penetrated into the micro-educational context.

Examining the historical shift of racialism, which is “the positive recognition of how his or her lifeworld, positionality, and sense of cultural identity comprise a set of preconscious filters and assumptions” (Brookfield, 2003, p. 499) in different educational eras is meaningful because it informs our understanding of structural barriers and the promotion of the full engagement of students in education. Changing laws and policies on the macro level guaranteed that people of color have the right to access to education; however, racialism is hidden in a micro-educational context. Racism cannot be eliminated solely through judicial and legislative processes; it requires new strategies that acknowledge these realities (e.g. Critical Race Theory) (Bell, 1992; Peterson, 1999).

It is important for adult educators to understand the importance of caring and that “building a more positive, inclusive society requires passion, love, and a variety of actions” (Amstutz, 1999, p. 29). It is important to examine racial issues that appear in the micro-context of curriculum, instructional methods, funding, assessments, and in the macro-context of the dominant Eurocentric culture (Peterson, 1999). Racial discrimination is much more subtle, varied, and complicated than in prior historical eras. Jackson (2011) argued “when racial progress is achieved through convergence with white interests, we must disaggregate ‘interest’ to reach a more nuanced understanding of how racism simultaneously serves and undermines the multiple interests of whites” (p.439) and how “racial progress panders to particular white interests while at the same time undercutting others in a somewhat contradictory fashion” (p. 439). This common thread extends across all three periods and persists to promote the dominance of Anglo-Western European cultural values, norms and racial inequities.

When we examine discrimination in education, we should peer through the surface to look for the hidden and ignored (Foucault, 1998). It is necessary to examine the official documents and well-accepted data in outcomes and funding, since they provide the context of events and the overall direction of decision making processes (Kearins & Hooper, 2002). However, Jackson (2011) also suggests looking for the stories and voices of the struggles, examining the issues uncovered in the unofficial data, such as family support, social connections, transportation, and within “unspoken cultural norms favoring whites” (Jackson, 2011, p. 440). In our examination, we explored the narratives and stories that are below the service, serving as a counter-narrative to the dominant narrative. In our study we revealed the way the descriptions of racial

discrimination have changed over time, but also the way its practice has persisted through subtle assumptions that maintained White privilege while problematizing education for Black students in different eras. Rather, this genealogical analysis illuminates the oppressive nature of an unexamined Eurocentric view that maintains White supremacy. This paper shows how legislative mechanisms can be used to normalize perceptions and legitimate assumptions. In this paper, we also identified the way tacit power reinforced such assumptions through the use of the associated administrative techniques/tools such as taxation and funding tactics, standardized placement testing, normalization, physical spaces, policies, and the body of legitimated knowledge (e.g., Foucault, 1976/1978). In each of the three eras, tactics changed from the structural exclusion of the Antebellum period to paternal condescension in the post-Civil War era, and finally to the covert tactics of limiting funding for education impacting disproportionate numbers of Black students. These tactics are emblematic of the power in the discourse of the dominant White culture and reveal the shifting face of racial discrimination.

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