Alternate Realities:

Racially Disparate Discipline in Classrooms and Schools and its Effects on Black and Brown Students

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Abstract

This study examines the Civil Rights Data Collection of 2014, consisting of 49,605,534 students from 95,635 public schools covering grades from Kindergarten to 12th grade. The primary focus of this study was to examine the relative distribution of different types of discipline between ethnic groups and genders. In every category, the levels reported for either African-American or Native American students were much higher than any other group. Native American levels were highest for referral to law enforcement and for expulsion with or without school services. For almost every gender comparison within each ethnic group, male students were more likely to receive punishment than female students. For Native American students, girls were more likely than boys to receive in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion either with or without educational services, and to be referred to law enforcement or experience school-related arrest.

Keywords: Black and Brown students, Civil Rights Data Collection of 2014, cultural mismatch, dehumanization, institutional discrimination

Introduction

In early 2014, the Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights released data illustrating how racism and structural inequalities impact schools today. Some of the most startling findings from these data include the following: although African American students account for only 18 percent of U.S. pre-K enrollment, they account for 48 percent of preschoolers [our emphasis] with multiple suspensions; African American students are expelled three times more than their white counterparts; African American and Latina/o students account for 40 percent of enrollment at schools offering gifted programs, but only 26 percent of students in said programs; African American, Latina/o students and Native American students attend schools with higher percentages of first-

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16

year teachers (3 to 4 percent) than their white counterparts (1 percent); and African American students are more than three times as likely to attend schools where less than 60 percent of teachers meet all state requirements for certification and licensure. The above findings have great implications for our K-12 schools, for higher education, and for society in general.

According to Asher (2007) pre-service teachers, most of whom are white, often come into their teacher education programs with little to no exposure to multicultural education or diversity. Perhaps more concerning, some students go through their entire teacher education programs without specific training in multicultural education or culturally responsive pedagogy, thus graduating unprepared for successful teaching of students unlike themselves. If pre-service teachers are provided the opportunities to "explicitly, and critically interrogate the historical and present-day intersections of race, culture, gender, and foster a self-reflexive engagement with difference" (Asher, 2007, pp. 65-66), teachers can uncover more significant and self-reflexive ways to know the self and others in relation to race, power, and privilege.

Previous research has suggested that not only are disciplinary techniques negatively associated with educational outcomes, but also they are inequitably levied toward students of color (Casella, 2003; Lewis, Butler, Bonner, & Joubert, 2010; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Monroe, 2005; Perry & Morris, 2014; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). In this study, we will identify and discuss the impetus and consequences of racially disparate disciplinary techniques, identify current trends, and offer recommendations for educators and districts to discontinue practices that both reflect and reinforce institutional racism in our social and educational milieu. Our primary research focus is to examine to what extent different levels of punitive disciplinary responses accrue to students of different ethnic backgrounds, both overall and by gender.

Additionally, revealing the disparate treatment of students of color in terms of discipline and tracking based on our analysis of recent civil rights data, this paper will address the urgent need for multicultural education and to expose pre-service teachers to culturally responsive pedagogical practices, particularly in light of the pervasive notion that we live in a post-racial society, despite glaring evidence to the contrary: the June 2015 massacre in Charleston, South Carolina; the exposure of police brutality through the killings of unarmed Black citizens; the violent treatment of Black adolescents attending a summer pool party; the violent removal of a Black female adolescent from her seat at the hand of a school resource officer; and the apparent cover-up of the murder of Sandra Bland. We will also address the difficulties in delivering said curriculum as well as strategies to combat and overcome white student resistance to this critical content.

Literature Review

This study is informed by the concepts of critical multiculturalism (Castro, 2010) and critical race/critical whiteness studies (Spencer, 2008). Critical multiculturalism seeks through social justice to transform society "by confronting and disrupting institutions and the structures of power that maintain disparities across race, class, and gender" (Castro, 2010, p. 199). Critical whiteness studies, informed by critical race theory, deals with how to engage "white uncomfortableness" (DiAngelo, 2012; Spencer, 2008) when

discussing race. According to Spencer, "A critical race perspective suggests that themes having to do with inequity and injustice are uncomfortable for [w]hites, given assumptions about 'earned status'" (p. 257). Privilege serves to protect whites from having to think about racism and serves to create a distorted self-image including notions of efficacy, competency, and "earned" outcomes (Spencer, 2008). Blanchett (2006) defines white privilege as individual, structural, political, economic, or social phenomena that serve to privilege whites while oppressing people of color.

Factors that influence white pre-service teachers to hold these lower expectations include the following:

1. Failure to recognize racism and inequality based on race;
2. Adherence to deficit views and low expectations for students based on race;
3. Adherence to a colorblind mindset;
4. Failure to possess a cultural sense of themselves (whiteness as the norm) (Castro, 2010).

White privilege serves to maintain these structures. White privilege and racism contribute to and maintain the following: (a) insufficiently funded schools attended primarily by African American and poor children, (b) culturally inappropriate and unresponsive curricula, and (c) inadequately prepared educators to effectively teach African American learners and other students of color (Blanchett, 2006). "Master Scripting" (Blanchett, 2006) has much to do with these problems of schools, as is defined by the hegemonic monopoly on determining the official curriculum and the subsequent pedagogical practices used to deliver it: "Master Scripting is employed at both the institutional and individual levels to mute the stories and voices of African Americans and thereby prevent their counter-voices and counter-storytelling from challenging [w]hite authority and power" (p. 26). It is thus crucial that pre-service teachers are actively engaged in critical multiculturalism and in interrogating power, privilege, and white supremacy so that they can be better prepared to teach in a diverse democracy.

Institutional Discrimination in Education:
Disparate Educational Practices Based on Race

In the 60 years post Brown, we are situated in a re-segregated educational system that simultaneously purports to be post-racial. Many students of color experience structural inequalities within schools (Lee, 2003), which can cause many to feel they have to choose between their home cultures and the cultures of the school (Suad Nasir & Saxe, 2003). In essence, most white students do not attend the same schools as students of color (Gay & Howard, 2000). Sharma, Joyner, and Osment (2014) found that such segregation/racial isolation results in the decreased performance of minority students on standardized English and mathematics examinations, which may serve to reinforce the stereotypical ideology that blacks are less intelligent than whites (Penner & Saperstein, 2013; Steele and Aronson, 1995), and subsequently, that Black students are unable to perform as well as whites because of cultural deficits (Spencer, 2012) or inherent intellectual ineptitude (Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Culotta, & DiTomasso, 2014).

Sharma, Joyner, and Osment (2014) also found that teachers can exacerbate these issues. For example, disparities in educational opportunities for Black students involve teacher quality: the percentage of novice teachers increases as the percentage of Black

students increases, and segregated schools actually reduce the level to which Black students meet their academic promise (Wildhagen, 2012). In schools where disciplinary climates are harsh, Black students are less likely to reach their full potential, regardless of whether or not they were subject to discipline themselves. These students, whom Perry and Morris (2014) deem as "collateral consequences" of harsh disciplinary environments, showed reduced academic outcomes and were stunted in their educational attainment in general.

Factors Contributing to Disparate Educational Practices based on Race

There are many factors that contribute to differential treatment based upon race. Some of these factors include: benign racism, dehumanization, and language differences. These phenomena serve to confirm and reinforce stereotypes that some teachers hold of Black and Brown students, which in turn can create stereotype threat for these students—causing additional stress and anxiety (Steele, 2010).

Benign racism. Benign racism, where continued struggles of people of color are made invisible to whites through the mask of colorblindness, pervades our school cultures. Moreover, the history and legacies of slavery, Jim Crow, and radical resistance movements are commonly removed altogether from school curriculum, which leads to the perpetuation of stereotypes of people of color; but this too serves a purpose. The continued stereotypes of people of color exonerate whites from complicity in white supremacy. Whites require stereotypes of people of color to relieve them from complicity in a system from which they unfairly benefit; for if all people are created equal, then whites are allowed believe they have earned their places in society (Lensmire & Snaza, 2010).

The dehumanization of blackness. "Blackness" in general carries with it a negative connotation in American society (Sharp-Grier, 2015). African Americans have been labeled as violent, unintelligent, quick to anger, and dangerous (Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Culotta, & DiTomasso, 2014; Penner, & Saperstein, 2013). Black children have been labeled as culturally deprived, and ascribed a lower status within classroom settings, including being disproportionately referred for special education services (Spencer, 2012).

In a recent study, Goff, Jackson, Di Leone, Culotta, & DiTomasso (2014) found that Black youth were more likely to be perceived as older and thus more culpable than their same-aged white counterparts, both in schools and within their communities. Black children are thus 18 times more likely to be sentenced as adults within the criminal justice system. The researchers argue that it is the dehumanization of Black children that contributes to this attribution of "adult severity" (p. 527). Essentially, all children are not thought to be deserving of the privilege of innocence. Black children are more likely to be seen as being more similar to adults than are their white peers and thus less worthy of societal protections. In short, Goff et al. found that Black children were less likely to be granted the "full essence of childhood and its definitional protections" (p. 539), which demonstrates the devastating effects racism still plays in the U.S. for Black children.

Language differences. Cultural mismatches stemming from language variation between students and teachers contribute to misunderstandings that harm students. For example, differences in intonation when asking questions, responding to questions, and in

everyday interactions may be viewed as a lack of interest and enthusiasm, disrespect, or even lack of ability and can account for the larger percentages of students of color receiving behavioral referrals and referrals for special education services from white teachers (and standard English speakers) than their white counterparts (Charity Hudley & Mallinson, 2012). Schools with higher populations of non-dominant or minority students refer more students for special education services; this mislabeling affects African American children twice as much as white children (Smitherman, 2006).

The un-bridged gulf between home and school literacies also plays a large part in these connections. Part of the problem may be the fact that despite the increasing diversity of our student population, the vast majority of the K-12 teaching force is white (84%) (Feistritzer, 2011). Hegemonic teacher training programs, or programs that do not provide culturally responsive instruction, exacerbate this problem (Milner, 2013). According to Lan Rong (1996), white teachers may perceive Black students negatively based upon their presentation styles, their use of African American Language (AAL), and students' styles of walking and dress (particularly for Black male students), which can create, "fear, apprehension, and overreaction by many teachers and school administrators" (p. 282). Lan Rong further argues that the use of AAL symbolizes deviance, both socially and culturally, in the minds of white teachers and contributes to their negative perceptions of Black students.

Stereotype threat. Students of color are susceptible to stereotype threat when they find themselves in situations where they feel at risk of confirming stereotypes about the racial or ethnic group to which they identity. The fear of confirming these negative stereotypes can result in stress and thus negative academic outcomes (Morris & Monroe, 2009). Both teachers and students are influenced by stereotypes. Teachers may ask students less challenging questions if they view said student's culture from a deficit perspective.

Likewise, pressures of representing their culture as a whole may derail students determined to defy the stereotypes held for their cultural group. As Morris and Monroe (2009) argue, "stereotype threat most affects young people who closely identify with their ethnicity or gender, are critically aware of societal stigmas, are accepting of stereotypes, and see intelligence as a relatively fixed enterprise" (p. 30). Most young people are not equipped to cope with or understand such injustices at an institutional level. Moreover, any questioning of the status quo may be viewed as deviance and can exacerbate the already dangerous stereotypes of Blackness.

Evidence of Disparate Educational Practices Based on Race

The aforementioned phenomena impacting disparate educational practices based on race most adversely affecting Black and Brown students include a higher level of students of color in special education, and a disproportionate number of students of color referred for discipline infractions, as will be discussed below.

The Disproportionality of Students of Color in Special Education

Artles (2011) argues that special education policies do nothing to dismantle the hierarchical structure of schools, which makes special education "complicit in the

perpetuation of educational inequities for certain subgroups of students, most notably poor students and racial minority learners" (p. 433). White middle-class children are the "unmarked norm" against which the developmental progress of other children is measured (O'Connor & Fernandez, 2006). Blanchett (2006) argues that, ironically created near after Brown v. Board, special education as a field has done much to re-segregate students of color, and thus further limits their academic, educational, psychological, and future employment potential. For example, throughout the history of the field, Black students have been disproportionately placed in the most severe categories of special education diagnoses; they are less likely to exit these programs once placed; and they are less likely to be mainstreamed. Schools create mean differences that serve to increase minority special education referrals and more of these students being labeled as disabled because behaviors are perceived differently, which can also increase the likelihood of minority children being referred for special education services (O'Connor & Fernandez, 2006).

However, if African American Language (AAL) was the norm within schools, then the speakers of AAL would be perceived as academically competent, literate, and successful. Thus, as O'Connor & Fernandez argue, "the underachievement of minority students is not a function of deficient parenting practices but is rooted in the 'arbitrary' standards of schools that are represented as if they were rational and culturally neutral" (p. 9).

Further, O'Connor and Fernandez (2006) argue that the underachievement of minority students is exacerbated by their disproportionality in underfunded schools with unqualified or uncertified teachers lacking experience. However, when those same students do attend predominantly white schools, "they are resegregated into basic and remedial courses, where their achievement suffers under low standards and poor instruction. . . . These inequities prevent minority students from performing competently on standard indexes of achievement" (p. 9). In sum, racism and white privilege serve to maintain the disproportionate numbers of students of color in special education through various means: insufficiently funded schools, culturally unresponsive curriculum, and underprepared teachers (Blanchett, 2006).

The Disproportionality of Students of Color Referred for Discipline Infractions

As previously stated, the construction of Blackness as deviant has severe implications for education, and school discipline is perhaps the area where this is most glaring. Students of color are referred for more arbitrary and subjective concerns and for less serious offences that may not result in a referral for a white student. The perception of a threat (by Black students) is an issue (for white teachers). What is perceived as a threat when committed by a Black student is commonly not considered a threat when committed by a white student. White male infractions are often labeled as "boys being boys;" however, Black male infractions are deemed as pathological behaviors and, often, criminal offenses, because, "Blackness is relegated to deviance and [w]hiteness is normalized" (O'Connor & Fernandez, 2006, p. 9).

Despite the fact that education has long been lauded as a meritocracy: an egalitarian setting wherein students are given the tools to aspire to heights limited only by their personal ideals and efforts, Zion and Blanchett (2011) identify a second, latent,

function of education: social control. As they suggest, "Historically, public schools have served the dual role of controlling and sorting children deemed problematic or undesirable by society" (p. 2). The function of education as a mechanism of social control is manifest in the utilization of disciplinary techniques to manage and control students identified as disruptive (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). In an effort to ensure safety and control, particularly post-Columbine (Lickel, Schmader, & Hamilton, 2003), disciplinary policies fashioned after the "zero tolerance" model have become standard (Lewis, Butler, Bonner, Fred, & Joubert, 2010; Skiba & Peterson, 1999).

In keeping with zero tolerance policies, school districts have employed a model of discipline that holds students responsible, at times criminally so, for infractions running the gamut from low level to violent (Perry & Morris, 2014). Moreover, sanctions of preventative detention levied against Black males have been lodged at higher levels than are utilized against all other population groups (Lewis, Butler, Bonner, Fred, & Joubert, 2010; McCarthy & Hoge, 1987; Monroe, 2005; Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). The skewed ratio of Black male preventative sanctioning to all others holds constant, despite similar rates and levels of school infractions demonstrated by other groups (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; McCarthy & Hogue, 1987).

In general, students who deviate from ascribed cultural norms are vulnerable to sanctioning, which has resulted in the misinterpretation of behavior by teachers and administrators and the subsequent sanctioning of students of color for subjective interpretations of infractions, e.g., loitering, excessive noise, and threat, as opposed to their white counterparts, who are punished for objective, measureable misconduct, e.g., smoking and vandalism (Monroe, 2005; Perry & Morris, 2014; Skiba, et al., 2002; Zion & Blanchett, 2011). Presumed disobedience, argumentation, and disrespect are frequently cited as reasons for disciplinary referral for students of color (Monroe, 2005); however, these supposed infractions are often subjective misinterpretations of critical cultural, linguistic, and behavioral patterns exhibited by young men in the African American community (Zion & Blanchett, 2011).

Casella (2003) illuminated a very clear nexus between the disparate disciplinary treatment of minority (African American and Latino) students in the form of preventative detention—suspension, expulsion, and secondary placement—and subsequent incarceration. In other words, students of color are frequently the most adversely affected by preventative disciplinary policies and techniques (Livingston & Nahimana, 2006; Skiba & Peterson, 1999; Zion & Blanchett, 2011).

Methods

Data Source

The data analyzed in this study is from the Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC, 2012). The Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has collected data on key education and civil rights since 1968, in accordance with its charge to enforce federal civil rights laws. The current charge to the OCR to collect these data derives from the 1980 Department of Education Organization Act, as well as 34 C.F.R. Section 100 6(b) of the Department of Education (www.ed.gov/ocr). The data for this study came from the 2011-2012 wave of data collection, which is the most recent wave of data collection

available for public use. The files accessed were those concerning in-school and out-of-school suspensions, corporal punishment, expulsions, referrals to law enforcement, and school related arrests. While state-level data were also available, we focused this study on national level data.

Sample Description

The 2009-2010 wave of data consists of 49,605,534 students from 95,635 public schools covering grades from Kindergarten to 12th grade. In the full sample, 13.8% of these students were recorded as having disabilities, including those served only under section 504 and students with disabilities served under IDEA. The analytic sample for this study examined only those students designated without disabilities, a sample size of 42,780,631 students.

Of the analytic sample, 50.9% were female and 49.1% were male. Table 1 shows the distribution of ethnicities across the analytic sample described above. The count is given in the first column, while the percent relative to the full analytic sample is provided in the second column.

Table 1
Distribution of Ethnic Groups across the Analytic Sample of Students without Disabilities

Ethnic Group	Count	Percent
Total Sample	42,780,631	100.00
American Indian or Alaska native	478,559	1.12
Asian	2,171,846	5.08
Hispanic/Latino any race	10,281,194	24.03
Black or African American	6,621,724	15.48
White	21,916,423	51.23
Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander	196,822	0.46
Two or more races	1,120,259	2.62

It is interesting to note that the level of White/Caucasian students was only about half of the analytic sample. Fifteen percent were African American, and almost a full quarter of these students were identified as Hispanic/Latino. Students identified as Hispanic/Latino included those of European, African, Central and South American origin. Other studies that organize groups by racial category would identify these students differently.

Table 2 shows the overall distribution of students reported for each discipline type. As in Table 1, the count is given in the first column, while the percent relative to the full analytic sample is provided in the second column.

Table 2
Distribution of Different Discipline Types across the Analytic Sample of Students without Disabilities

Discipline Type	Count	Percent
Total Sample	42,780,631	100.00
Corporal punishment	166,807	0.39
One or more in-school suspensions	2,719,369	6.36
One or more out-of-school suspensions	2,451,475	5.73
Expulsions with or w/out educational services	337,967	0.79
Referral to law enforcement	190,947	0.45
School-related arrest	13,049	0.03

Of these various discipline types, the most commonly reported was one or more in-school suspensions, while the least commonly reported was school-related arrest. However, the counts in each group were sufficient enough to examine each category for differences by ethnic group.

Data Analyses

The primary focus of this study was to examine the relative distribution of different types of discipline between different ethnic groups. We analyzed whether students of different ethnic backgrounds differed significantly in their experience of discipline by type using a crosstab or cross-tabulation analysis with a chi-square test statistic. Cross-tabulation uses categorical predictors and outcomes, comparing the observed frequency of each cell to the expected frequency one would expect under the assumption of no relationship. Hence, this process provides the best analytic approach to this question. We used an alpha level of .001 to test for significance, because the large sample size can lead chi-square to liberal estimates of probability. The more conservative significance level helps adjust for this problem. In addition, we provided each estimate of the percent of students receiving the relevant punishment with an odds-ratio comparison of that group to White students (as the baseline majority group). As Fleiss (1994) explained, an odds-ratio calculation is preferable to a standardized mean different as an effect-size index in group designs when the outcome data are truly dichotomous (e.g., being arrested or not, being suspended or not). The equation used to calculate these odd-ratios was as follows:

$$OR = [(PR_{eth})(1-PR_{eth})] / [(PR_{white})(1-PR_{white})]$$

where

PR_{eth} indicates the proportion of students in the specific ethnic group who received this punishment

PR_{white} indicates the proportion of White students who received this punishment

Each odds-ratio can be interpreted as the difference for that group in likelihood of receiving that type of punishment compared to White students. As such, it provides an effect-size estimate of the difference between students in each ethnic group and White students.

We then conducted sub-group analyses for each type of discipline separately by gender of the student. These chi-square analyses followed the same structure as those with the full analytic sample, with the same adjustment to the alpha level. These analyses

allowed us to examine whether gender may interact with the severity of discipline experienced by students of different ethnic groups. In these analyses, because the focus was on differences between male and female students within each ethnic group, the odds-ratio provided compares the likelihood of receiving the given punishment between male students and female students. The equation used to calculate these odd-ratios was as follows:

$$OR = [(PR_{male})(1-PR_{male})] / [(PR_{female})(1-PR_{female})]$$

where

PR_{male} indicates the proportion of male students in the specific ethnic group who received this punishment

PR_{female} indicates the proportion of female students in the specific ethnic group who received this punishment

Each odds-ratio can be interpreted as the difference for males compared to females in likelihood of receiving that type of punishment. As such, it provides an effect-size estimate of the difference between genders in each ethnic group.

Findings

Comparison of Discipline Type by Ethnic Group for Non-Disabled Students

Table 3 shows the comparisons of ethnic groups indicated as having received each discipline type. Each row is a separate chi-square analysis, showing the percent within each ethnic group and then the odds-ratio comparing the likelihood of receiving that punishment for that ethnic group compared to White students. The chi-square estimate is shown under each row.

If there was no relationship between ethnicity and likelihood of receiving a given discipline, the percent of each ethnic group would be the same. The results reported in Table 3 make it clear that, while the levels indicated for each discipline type were small compared to the overall sample, the proportional differences between each group were substantial. In every category, the levels reported for either African American or Native American students were much higher than any other group.

Table 3

Results of Cross-Tabulation of Types of Disciplinary Actions by Ethnicity for Students Without Disabilities with Odds-Ratio Compared to White Students

Discipline type	Amr. Indian/ Alaskan Ntv percent (OR)	Asian percent (OR)	Hispanic/ Latino percent (OR)	Black/Afr American percent (OR)	White percent (OR)	Two races percent (OR)
Corporal punishment	0.67%	0.02%	0.12%	0.75%	0.34%	0.02%
$\chi^2_{(6df)} = 58,648.9, p < .001$	(1.96)	(0.06)	(0.35)	(2.20)	(1.0)	(0.06)
One or more in-school suspensions	7.21%	1.43%	6.15%	12.88%	5.02%	5.77%
	(1.40)	(0.30)	(1.22)	(2.35)	(1.0)	(1.14)
$\chi^2_{(6df)} = 1,123,168.5, p < .001$						
One or more out-of-school suspensions	7.05%	1.36%	5.35%	14.53%	3.69%	5.46%
	(1.84)	(0.37)	(1.42)	(3.49)	(1.0)	(1.45)
$\chi^2_{(6df)} = 1,202,902.2, p < .001$						
Expulsions with or w/out educational services	9.3%	0.05%	0.2%	0.6%	0.1%	0.2%
	(84.44)	(0.50)	(2.00)	(6.00)	(1.0)	(2.00)
$\chi^2_{(6df)} = 3,168.9, p < .001$						
Referral to law enforcement	0.91%	0.13%	0.46%	0.79%	0.36%	0.38%
$\chi^2_{(6df)} = 28,504.1, p < .001$	(2.51)	(0.36)	(1.28)	(2.19)	(1.0)	(1.06)
School-related arrest	0.21%	0.03%	0.12%	0.21%	0.09%	0.10%
$\chi^2_{(6df)} = 9,469.2, p < .001$	(2.33)	(0.33)	(1.33)	(2.33)	(1.0)	(1.11)

For example, African American students were more than twice as likely as white students to have been suspended in school (OR of 2.35), and more than six times as likely to receive this punishment than Asian students (12.88% compared to 1.43%). Similarly, African American students were three and a half times more likely to have received an out-of-school suspension than were white students (OR of 3.49), and were over 10 times more likely to receive this punishment than were Asian students (14.53% compared to 1.36%). In fact, African American levels were highest for suspensions (both in-school and out-of-school) and corporal punishment. Native American levels were highest for referral to law enforcement and for expulsion with or without school services, and these two groups were at the same level of school-related arrests. Across all types of discipline, Asian students had the lowest reported levels, with odds-ratio calculations below .50 (indicating 50% less likely to receive this punishment compared to white students).

Of the six types of disciplines, three specifically remove a child from school. Figure 1 shows the distribution of reported levels within each ethnic group that result in removal of children from the school environment.
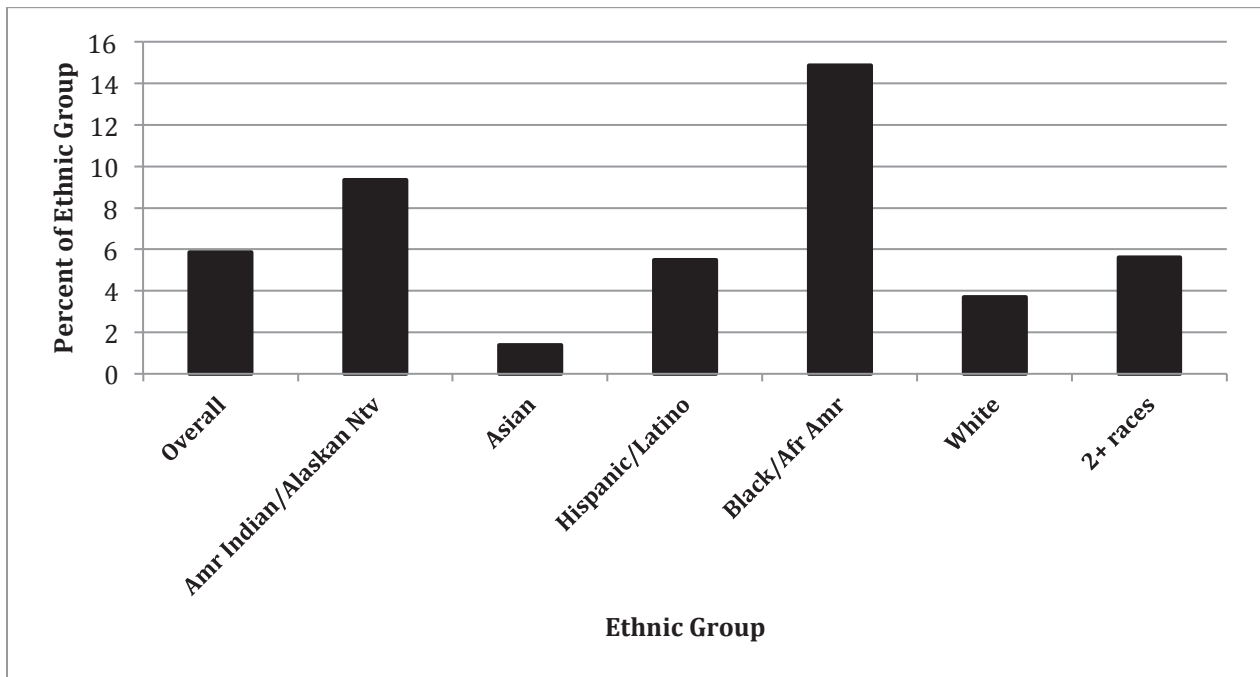

Figure 1. Percent of each ethnic group reported receiving punishments that remove the student from school in school year 2011-2012.

This figure clearly demonstrates that the different ethnic groups face a very different set of experiences that remove students from school. Across the different ethnicities, Asian children were the least likely to receive this level of punishment. Interestingly, the levels experienced by white students and by Hispanic/Latino students are somewhat similar, although white students were still about half as likely to be removed from school as were Hispanic/Latino students (3.7% compared to 5.5%). This result might shift critically if the designation of Hispanic/Latino were to incorporate race in its identification. However, this figure shows clearly that African American students were at a much greater risk for this level of punishment. Almost 15% of these children, or three out of every 20 students, received this level of punishment in the 2011-2012 school year.

Gender Subgroup Comparison of Discipline Type by Ethnic Group for Non-Disabled Students

Given the differences observed in Table 3, we followed with a post-hoc examination within each ethnic group, examining the pattern of differences between male and female students. Table 4 shows the comparisons by gender within each ethnic group who were indicated as having received each discipline type. Each row is a separate chi-square analysis, showing the percent within each ethnic group for male and then female students. The next column shows the chi-square statistic testing the difference in distribution between male and female students receiving that punishment, and the final column shows

the odds ratio of male/female, which indicates the difference in odds of receiving that punishment between male and female students within that ethnic group.

Within each ethnic group, the gender distribution was approximately the same. Therefore, if there was no relationship between gender and punishment, the percentage of boys who received each punishment would be about the same as the percentage of girls. However, for almost every gender comparison within each ethnic group, male students were more likely to receive punishment than female students, with only one set of exceptions.

Table 4

Results of Cross-Tabulation of Types of Disciplinary Actions by Gender Overall and Within Each Ethnic/Racial Group for Students Without Disabilities

Discipline Type	% of Male w/in Ethnic Grp	% of Female w/in Ethnic Grp	χ^2 Gender w/in Ethnic Grp	Odds-Ratio Male/Female
Corporal punishment				
Overall	0.50%	0.20%	2809375.39***	2.49
Ntv. American/Alaskan Ntv	0.40%	0.30%	5.56*	1.33
Asian	0.03%	0.01%	161.37***	3.00
Hispanic/Latino	0.20%	0.10%	3399.13***	2.00
Black/Afr. American	1.10%	0.40%	9158.87***	2.73
White	1.00%	0.10%	24129.24***	9.91
Two+ races	0.20%	0.10%	482.41***	2.00
One or more in-school suspensions				
Overall	8.40%	4.40%	286373.77***	2.16
Ntv. American/Alaskan Ntv	3.00%	5.50%	6206.90***	0.56
Asian	2.00%	0.60%	5918.09***	3.29
Hispanic/Latino	7.80%	4.50%	49360.24***	1.67
Black/Afr. American	15.10%	10.60%	29464.32***	1.35
White	6.60%	3.40%	129648.94***	1.89
Two+ races	7.10%	4.40%	3935.54***	1.57
One or more out-of-school suspensions				
Overall	7.90%	3.70%	340844.95***	2.04
Ntv. American/Alaskan Ntv	3.10%	5.00%	2355.55***	0.63
Asian	2.10%	0.60%	8274.08***	3.45
Hispanic/Latino	7.20%	3.40%	73431.09***	2.03
Black/Afr. American	17.60%	11.30%	53275.15***	1.45
White	5.10%	2.20%	135917.22***	2.25
Two+ races	7.10%	3.70%	6374.89***	1.85
Expulsions with or without educational services				
Overall	0.30%	0.10%	20517.93***	2.99
Ntv. American/Alaskan Ntv	9.00%	10.10%	194.94***	0.90
Asian	0.10%	0.02%	327.95***	5.00
Hispanic/Latino	0.30%	0.10%	73431.09***	2.99
Black/Afr. American	1.00%	0.30%	4062.92***	3.31
White	0.20%	0.10%	7088.75***	2.00
Two+ races	0.30%	0.10%	308.05***	2.99
Referral to law enforcement or School-related arrest				
Overall	0.80%	0.30%	37151.90***	2.65
Ntv. American/Alaskan Ntv	0.50%	0.80%	209.94***	0.63
Asian	2.40%	0.10%	778.60***	23.45
Hispanic/Latino	0.80%	0.40%	8661.11***	2.00
Black/Afr. American	1.30%	0.70%	4677.13***	1.85

White	1.00%	0.30%	14190.36***	3.32
Two+ races	1.00%	0.30%	459.52***	3.31

For Native American students, girls were more likely than boys to receive in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion either with or without educational services, and to be referred to law enforcement or experience school-related arrest. For every other group and for every type of punishment, boys were more likely to receive it than girls. In every case, boys range from being almost twice as likely (for example, Black/African American referral to law or school-related arrest, OR of 1.85 with boys more likely to receive than girls) to more than 20 times as likely (for example, Asian referral to law or school related arrest, OR of 23.45 indicating that boys were more than 23 times more likely to receive than girls). Apart from the experiences of Native American students, there was a strong gender bias at play in which boys were more likely than girls to be punished.

Recommendations and Strategies

Farrington (2014) argues that two contradictory types of policies and practices impacting high schools involve either "selection and stratification" or "equity and excellence" (p. 6). The former serve to classify and place students based upon their "expected position" (p. 6). By contrast, the latter holds that "regardless of race, class, gender, nationality, language, social position, or disability—should receive the same high-quality education" (p. 6). We must dismantle this dichotomous structure pertaining to the purpose of schooling and put all students on an equal footing, allowing them to decide their life paths for themselves. We can begin these discussions within teacher education programs. Lensmire and Snaza (2010) argue that because most teachers and professors of education are white, "Whatever is happening in teacher education has much to do with social relations among [w]hite people" (p. 420). Likewise, our results demonstrate that teacher education programs must be revamped to include critical multiculturalism (including gender issues) and the interrogation of white supremacy in schools and in society.

According to Milner (2006), for pre-service teachers to be prepared to work in diverse settings, they must be well versed in the following areas: cultural and racial awareness, critical reflection, and the merging of theory and practice. We must do better in preparing future teachers for diversity by reframing teacher education through critical multiculturalism: reconceptualizing our instruction to create the belief that educational opportunities should be granted to every student, regardless of race, culture, language, gender, or any other identity marker (Akiba, 2011). We must also defy the notion that lack of student success, particularly in urban schools, is the fault of students, their parents, their home cultures, and their communities (Milner, 2008). To this end, we must advocate for multicultural education courses that seek to challenge and confront the dominant social order (Bolotin Joseph, Luster Bravmann, Windschitl, Mikel, & Stewart Green, 2000). Although this work is difficult and students tend to resist it (Martin, 2015; Milner, 2013), there are steps that professors can do to minimize this resistance.

According to Akiba (2011), professors who value their students' opinions enabled a level of comfort within the classroom where students felt comfortable expressing themselves, when students were able to learn from one another, and where the professors created a learning community within the classroom; when these conditions are met,

students are more likely to develop positive views on diversity. Being sensitive to students' own cultural backgrounds and presenting concepts in a constructivist environment are also effective techniques (Akiba, 2011).

Dover (2013) provides further suggestions for fostering positive views on diversity in teacher education. Pre-service teachers must cultivate the following beliefs:

1. "assume all students are participants in knowledge construction, have high expectations for students and themselves, and foster learning communities;
2. acknowledge, value, and build upon students' existing knowledge, interests, cultural and linguistic resources;
3. teach academic skills and bridge gaps in students' learning;
4. work in reciprocal partnership with students' families and communities;
5. critique and employ multiple forms of assessment; and
6. explicitly teach about activism, power, and inequity in schools and society" (p. 90).

Finally, teacher education candidates and professors of education must:

- Deconstruct white privilege and racism (Blanchett, 2006);
- Defy colorblindness;
- Confront stereotypes of Blackness;
- Interrogate the notion that schools are neutral, fair, and equitable spaces, where all students are treated equally and can expect they be offered the same chance at success (Bartolome, 1994).

Schools much change their policies, and teachers their attitudes that success is a white domain (Carter Andrews, 2012). Carter Andrews (2012) argues that teachers must examine race, racism, whiteness, and how these concepts relate to teaching and learning. Finally, teacher education programs should utilize Gay's (2000) approach to culturally responsive pedagogy, where pre-service teachers are encouraged to utilize the "cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them" (p. 29). If these changes do not occur, then stereotypes and the dehumanization of non-hegemonic populations will prevail—furthering perpetrating the miseducation and criminalization of many of our youth.

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