

Chapter 68

Liberty Needs Glasses: A Critical Race Theory Analysis of a Culture of Miseducation in the Intersection of Power, Privilege, and Positionality

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the outcomes of school communities who leverage an antiracist political agenda to address the racial achievement gap. In New York City, the Equity and Excellence for All agenda is a series of programs and mandates designed to improve student achievement through an antiracist, equity driven lens. This chapter examines policy implementation with an understanding of preexisting school culture conditions that impact policy efficacy. Toward this goal, this research is part of a larger body of work that prioritizes data from the vantage point of students, teachers, and school leaders. A multi-methods study, this research leverages a priori quantitative analysis to articulate distinction in school race culture and then qualitative analysis to capture the counter narrative of the marginalized who are situated in the educationally stratified spaces.

INTRODUCTION

There is a pervasive meritocratic narrative in America, the land of opportunity, that everyone has an equal chance at mitigating their circumstances to achieve success. This is inaccurate. Everyone does not have the same resources to navigate success, and our American education system is a prime example of disparity. Historically, our education system was created to intentionally withhold resources and opportunity from a select group of “others.” Those people of color, who have historically been othered, have yet to recover. The achievement gap is one symptom of the long-standing impact of Racism. This chapter will examine student, teacher, and administrator perceptions of power, privilege, and positional-

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ity as pertaining to the adoption of anti-racist policy implementation. As we continue to be inundated with widespread dominant discourse attesting to “badges of inferiority” worn by children of color, this chapter will explore how racial bias contributes to the disparity between races and the school-based equity practices that sustain those disparities.

This research investigates the outcomes of school communities that leverage an anti-racist political agenda to address the racial achievement gap. In New York City, the Equity and Excellence for All agenda is a series of programs and mandates designed to improve student achievement through an anti-racist, equity-driven lens. This chapter examines policy implementation with an understanding of preexisting school culture conditions that impact policy efficacy. Toward this goal, this research is part of a larger body of work that prioritizes data from the vantage point of students, teachers, and school leaders.

A vast number of studies explain policy failure through implementation gaps. Existing research on this topic fails to include the narrative of those for whom the policy is intended. For policy implementation to be successful, an organization must consider the nuances of the population it is intended to serve. The goals of this research are threefold. First, this work sets out to delineate a set of preexisting conditions that must be present in a school community in order to implement race-based, equity-driven policy. Second, this work distinguishes four parts of school race culture that impact policy efficacy. Finally, this study advances the literature at the intersections of school race culture, policy, and student achievement intended to address the racial achievement gap by centering youth experiences.

A multi-methods study, this research leverages a priori quantitative analysis to articulate distinction in school race culture and then qualitative analysis to capture the counter-narrative of the marginalized situated in the educationally stratified spaces. Descriptive quantitative analysis is accomplished through the method of QuantCrit. Primarily an ethnographic study, this research asks two central research questions. The first question, “To what extent does school ‘school race culture’ play in school-based, equity driven policy implementation?” and the second question, “How do students learn under anti-racist policy regimes?” will be explored in a comprehensive study within six New York City schools in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx, the three most poverty-stricken boroughs.

*excuse me but lady liberty needs glasses
and so does mrs justice by her side
both the broads r blind as bats
stumbling thru the system
justice bumbed into mutulu and
trippin on geronimo pratt
but stepped right over oliver
and his crooked partner ronnie
justice stubbed her big toe on mandela
and liberty was misquoted by the indians
slavery was a learning phase
forgotten with out a verdict
while justice is on a rampage
4 endangered surviving black males
i mean really if anyone really valued life
and cared about the masses
theyd take em both 2 pen optical*

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