Chapter 8

The "New Racism" of K–12 Schools: Centering Critical Research on Racism

RITA KOHLI
University of California, Riverside

MARCOS PIZARRO
San José State University

ARTURO NEVÁREZ
University of California, Riverside

While organizing efforts by movements such as Black Lives Matter and responses to the hate-filled policies and rhetoric of President Donald Trump are heightening public discourse of racism, much less attention is paid to mechanisms of racial oppression in the field of education. Instead, conceptualizations that allude to racial difference but are disconnected from structural analyses continue to prevail in K–12 education research. In this chapter, our goal is to challenge racism-neutral and racism-evasive approaches to studying racial disparities by centering current research that makes visible the normalized facets of racism in K–12 schools. After narrowing over 4,000 articles that study racial inequity in education research, we reviewed a total of 186 U.S.-focused research studies in a K–12 school context that examine racism. As we categorized the literature, we built on a theory of the "new racism"—a more covert and hidden racism than that of the past—and grouped the articles into two main sections: (1) research that brings to light racism's permanence and significance in the lives of students of Color through manifestations of what we conceptualize as (a) evaded racism, (b) "antiracist" racism, and (c) everyday racism and (2) research focused on confronting racism through racial literacy and the resistance of communities of Color. In our conclusion, we articulate suggestions for future directions in education research that include a more direct acknowledgement of racism as we attend to the experiences and needs of K–12 students of Color.

In October 2015, a video of a police officer slamming a young Black[1] girl to the ground in a South Carolina high school classroom as a method of discipline went viral (Dana Ford, Botelho, & Conlon, 2015). Part of a larger national conversation of anti-Blackness (Cullors, Garza, & Tometi, 2015), this incident brought to light current manifestations of racism—overt and subtle—that have been part of schools since the inception of the U.S. educational system (Spring, 1994). While organizing efforts by movements such as Black Lives Matter and responses to the hate-filled presidential campaign of Donald Trump are heightening public discourse of racism, in the field of education much less attention is paid to mechanisms of racial oppression. Instead, conceptualizations that allude to racial difference but are disconnected from structural analyses prevail (May & Sleeter, 2010; Patel, 2015). In a recent search of peer-reviewed educational scholarship over the past decade using Education Source and the Educational Resources Information Center, words such as "achievement gap," "diversity," and "multicultural(ism)" are included up to 8 times more frequently than concrete discussions of racism.

Brayboy, Castagno, and Maughan (2007) wrote a chapter in the *Review of Research in Education* that called for a centering of equity and justice in education research on race. As they point out, even within scholarship that names racial inequity, conceptualizations are often cursory or incomplete or avoid direct analyses of power altogether. In 2012, Harper reviewed 255 articles to illuminate how contemporary higher education research on race neglects critical discussions of racism. These scholars argue that until we concretely name racism as a problem, we will be challenged to resolve the glaring racial disparities of our educational system. With racial inequity as heightened as ever, we write to hone their call through a close examination of scholarship that directly examines racism in K–12 schools. While it is a small subfield in education, key studies over the past decade have deepened our understanding of the mechanisms by which schools systematically racialize, marginalize, and thwart the opportunities of students of Color.[2] In this chapter, our goal is to challenge racism-neutral and racism-evasive approaches to studying racial disparities by centering current research that makes visible the normalized facets of racism in K–12 schools.

In consonance with the theme of this volume, "Disrupting Inequality Through Education Research," we begin by introducing our rationale for centering scholarship that takes a structural analysis of racism (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Guided by our research questions, we narrowed over 4,000 education studies from the last decade that focus on racial inequity, to review and analyze 186 articles that explicitly examine racism:

Research Question 1: What insight does current research on racism in K–12 schools offer about the experiences of students of Color?

Research Question 2: What gaps and directions does this scholarship point to in education research?

As we categorized the literature, we built on a theory of the "new racism"—a more covert and hidden racism than that of the past (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Cross, 2005;

Fiske, 1993)—and grouped the articles into two main sections: (1) research that brings to light racism's permanence and significance in the lives of students of Color through manifestations of what we conceptualize as (a) evaded racism, (b) "antiracist" racism, and (c) everyday racism and (2) research focused on confronting racism through racial literacy and the resistance of communities of Color. In our conclusion, we offer an analysis of the collective literature and articulate suggestions for future directions of research that include a more direct acknowledgement of racism as we attend to the experiences and needs of K–12 students of Color.

THE NORMALIZATION OF RACISM IN K–12 SCHOOLS

Racism is the creation or maintenance of a racial hierarchy, supported through institutional power (Solorzano, Allen, & Carroll, 2002). Schooling in the United States has a history driven by racialization and racism. From Americanization schools and Native American boarding schools that spanned the 19th and much of the 20th century (Spring, 1994), to a socialization of inferiority in segregated schools serving African Americans (Du Bois, 1935; Irons, 2002; Woodson, 1933) and Mexican Americans (Drake, 1927; Gould, 1932), students of Color have been subjected to institutionalized conditions that contradict their interests and their humanity.

Despite the discourse of racial progress through integration, Judge Robert L. Carter (1968), who presented part of the oral argument in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, lamented the persistence of racism:

Few in the country, black or white, understood in 1954 that racial segregation was merely a symptom, not the disease; that the real sickness is that our society in all its manifestations is geared to the maintenance of white superiority. (p. 247)

Judge Carter argued that the changes in policy and practice that emerged from Brown and other civil rights legislation addressed superficial symptoms, leaving the disease of White supremacy/racism embedded in U.S. institutions. Starting in the late 1970s, critical race legal scholars echoed R. L. Carter's (1968) sentiment, arguing that institutional racism is an ever-present barrier to U.S. racial progress, as it protects and serves White interests (Crenshaw, 1995; Harris, 1993).

In the 1990s, key education scholars of race built on critical race theory legal arguments to deconstruct the ways that schooling, fraught with institutionalized racism, affirmed the racial status quo (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano 1997; Solorzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Parker & Lynn, 2002). These and other race scholars have illuminated institutional culpability in inequitable schooling outcomes by challenging ideologies, policies, and practices steeped in deficit thinking (Valencia, 2012; Valencia & Solorzano, 1997), colorblindness—the ignoring of race or racial difference (Bonilla-Silva, 2006)—and meritocracy—the belief that success is always the product of individual merit (Au, 2013; 2016).

In essence, as this trajectory of research points out, the post-Brown era has bred a "new racism" (Bonilla-Silva, 2006; Fiske, 1993) that has replaced the overt and blatant discriminatory policies and practices of the past with covert and more subtle

beliefs and behaviors, reflecting the persistent and pervasive nature of racism that R. L. Carter (1968) described. Through this process, racial inequality has become normalized and even accepted. Cross (2005), who applies the framework of "new racism" to teacher education, explains, "White privilege is maintained through invisible, insidious operations of power that foster whiteness and racism. This power is no longer enacted primarily through physical violence but is mostly achieved through more symbolic power" (p. 267). In this chapter, we use the concept of the "new racism" to shift our attention away from K–12 research that evades concrete discussions of racism toward scholarship that centers a direct and structural analysis of racism.

METHOD

As we are in yet another moment of heightened racial awareness nationally, it is important to understand how current education research is assisting in efforts to address racism. The articles selected for this chapter are peer-reviewed, U.S.-based, educational scholarship published between 2005 and 2016 that explicitly examine racism in a K–12 school context. We undertook a systematic inquiry and examination using the Education Source and the Educational Resources Information Center databases. We used the keywords *racial inequity/racial equity, racism, racial justice/racial injustice*, and *racial inequality/racial equality* to capture a range of scholarship that considers racism and related issues. We limited this search by excluding keywords such as *higher education, teacher preparation, adult education*, and *international*. This broad search yielded over 4,000 articles studying race, racial disparities, and racial inequity in education. We then sifted through those articles, eliminating those that did not directly name and center an analysis of racism.

To ensure that we carefully accounted for the scholarship that uses racism as a primary tool of analysis, we conducted a second search for articles that included the word *racism* in their titles, keywords and abstracts, and compared our results with our original search. Recognizing that there are other terms intimately associated with racism, we also searched *White supremacy, anti-Blackness, critical race theory*, and *racial microaggressions*. While there may have been a related body of work that we could have found by searching other terms such as *race* or *Whiteness*, we chose to exclude those terms to avoid research divorced from specific analyses of racism.

There are obvious limitations to our process because there is likely research that includes racism in its analysis but does not use the word (or related words) in the title, keywords, or abstracts. Additionally, there is work that discusses systems of racialized oppression in important ways but that because it does not explicitly name racism falls outside of the scope of our search. It is also probable that there is scholarship in other fields such as psychology, sociology, and ethnic studies that consider racism in K–12 schools but may not show up in an education research search engine. Thus, this chapter has boundaries to its scope and generalizability that are important to recognize.

After we narrowed the articles of both searches along our criteria, we were left with a total of 186 articles. These articles were then coded and organized along two

distinct categories: (1) research that examined racism in K–12 schools (140 articles) and (2) research that explored examples of confronting racism in K–12 schools (46 articles). These categories, the deeper subtopics that emerged, and our analysis were developed using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The 18 articles that focus on racism in K–12 schools were not included in this review because they were either surface level in their consideration of racism, took a historical approach, and thus were outside the scope of this study or because they were theoretical and related to K–12 schools yet were not directly situated there. While we reviewed and coded each article in our process, we do not discuss every piece from our search here. Thus, this chapter more accurately represents our analysis of important trends in the field of education research rather than an exhaustive survey of the literature.

THE "NEW RACISM" OF K–12 SCHOOLS

The purpose of this chapter is to draw attention to education research that examines how contemporary racism disrupts the educational opportunities of students of Color in K–12 schools. As we reviewed the scholarship, we found three main patterns to how researchers identified racism in schools, which we theorize as (1) evaded racism (10 articles), where equity-explicit discourse is divorced from institutional analyses or concrete discourse on race and racism (this type of racism is often used to avoid, silence, or invisibilize racism); (2) "antiracist" racism (66 articles), where racially inequitable policies and practice are actually masked as the solution to racism; and (3) everyday racism (64 articles), where the racism manifests on a micro or interpersonal level, and thus is often unrecognized or viewed as insignificant. Our analysis of the research collectively points to the "new racism" of K–12 schools, a system of institutionalized power and domination that works best when invisible. In this section, we review research that illuminates the specific mechanisms of how this 'new racism' manifests in K–12 schooling policy and practices.

Evaded Racism

Prominent race scholar, Richard Valencia (2012) argues that while in the past intellectual inferiority and cultural deprivation were prominent theories used to uphold racial inequity in schooling, today, individualized analysis of underachievement are tools that maintain the status quo. K. D. Brown & Brown (2012) contend that dominant rhetoric blames students of Color and their families for a lack of academic success, promoting a shift in their behavior as the solution (e.g., reminding parents to read more to their children; advocating for a growth mind-set), rather than suggesting shifts to structures or policies that systematically fail students of Color (e.g., limited resources, racial profiling; Malagon & Alvarez, 2010). Blaming communities of Color for educational inequality at the individual level invisiblizes institutional responsibility, thus providing a rationale to study race yet evade concrete analyses of racism (Bonilla Silva, 2006).

There is a body of current scholarship that draws attention to this practice of evading racism in K–12 schooling, and its negative impact on students of Color. The focus on the achievement gap in education research is one clear example. In a conceptual article, Ladson-Billings (2006) argues that the framing of the achievement gap serves as a distraction from "the historical, economic, sociopolitical, and moral decisions and policies that characterize our society [and] have created an education debt" (p. 5) owed to Black and Latinx[3] students. While recognizing racial disparities in the success of students is important, without understanding the critical role of structural racism in the outcomes being analyzed, as Ladson-Billings (2006) points out, "this all-out focus on the 'Achievement Gap' moves us toward short-term solutions that are unlikely to address the long-term underlying problem" (p. 4).

In addition to the achievement gap, the literature points to other equity framed concepts used to avoid racism. For example, there is widespread acknowledgment of the importance and reality of diversity in schools. However, as Doucet and Keys Adair (2013) explain in their review of research on early childhood classrooms, much of the work emphasizing "diversity" does so as an undeveloped afterthought rather than through an actual paradigm shift that weaves diverse histories and perspectives into the school, thus reifying racism. In critiquing this approach, they argue,

The underlying message, then, is that from day to day, the classroom reflects White, middle-class, mainstream events, foods, attire, but, say, for Chinese New Year or Rosh Hashanah, the curriculum pauses to focus on how a culture or a child or a family is different from the norm. (p. 90)

A superficial response to changing demographics in public schools, additive frames of diversity that maintain Whiteness as central often serve as substitutes for concrete discussions of race or racism, thus maintaining or exacerbating racial inequity in schools.

Similarly, while McGee Banks and Banks's (1995) original framing of multiculturalism was intended to combat the effects of racism on students of Color in schools, a cluster of studies we reviewed argue that much of current multicultural research and practice is used as a mechanism to evade discussions of power or inequity in education policy and practice. Analyzing a unit taught in a New England school under a multicultural framework, Bery (2014) argues, "Multiculturalism, when combined with color blind ideology, results in a reassertion of racism and racist hierarchies" (p. 334). She concludes, "Multiculturalism is, simultaneously, the consequence and the materialization of white supremacy" (p. 350), as it is often lauded as a challenge to racism while it replaces any critical or structural approach to thinking about racially marginalized communities. In the literature, we also see key studies that critique how well intended practices such as "antibias" teaching and "culturally responsive pedagogy" can work to affirm Whiteness in the education of students of Color when divorced from a clear analysis of racism (Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Epstein, Mayorga, & Nelson, 2011; Lindsay, 2007).

We see a push in the scholarship to problematize frameworks and practices that subvert or overlook the multifaceted realities of racism in contemporary schooling.

These studies demonstrate how evaded racism in education research, policy, and practice results in deficit-minded or superficial approaches to reform that center Whiteness rather than improve the educational opportunities of students of Color.

"Antiracist" Racism

Another body of current scholarship demonstrates that much of the racism we experience in K–12 schools today is not evaded but is actually framed through equity, justice, and antiracist rhetoric. Three subcategories of this research emerged within our review, articles that discuss: (1) neoliberal racism and its influence on policy, (2) hostile school racial climates, and (3) racist processes of designation that serve to further marginalize working-class students of Color.

Neoliberal Racism and Policy

As privatization practices have increased in K–12 schools over the past decade, so have racial disparities. In recent years, a growing body of education research has documented neoliberal-driven policies that exacerbate what the racialization and racism communities of Color endure in K–12 education through issues such as testing, school choice, charter school development, and a divestment from public education (Buras, 2009; Gay, 2007; Prins, 2007). Through a policy analysis of recent federal education reforms such as No Child Left Behind and Race to the Top, Au (2016) argues that high-stakes, standardized testing policies increase racism by centering individual achievement without any structural analysis—what he calls "Meritocracy 2.0." Masked as an accountability narrative for achieving racial equality in schools, corporate-driven testing practices affirm racial hierarchies of student success (Au, 2013; 2016). Urrieta (2006), in a case study of a predominantly White charter school, and Roda and Stuart Wells (2013), through interviews with kindergarten parents, argue that school choice policies, which often take a colorblind stance, advantage White and affluent parents and increase segregation. Through an ethnographic case study (Stovall, 2013), and critical race discourse analysis of newspaper articles, community forum transcripts, and school board meeting notes (Briscoe & Khalifa, 2015), two key studies illuminate how school closures disproportionately and negatively affect working-class urban Black neighborhoods. A parent from a community forum explained, "You know if you kill the school, you know you're killing the community, right?" (Briscoe & Khalifa, p. 748). Recognizing schools are an extension of communities, the authors argue that school leaders driven by neoliberal mandates pay less and less attention to the community's voice and needs, exacerbating educational inequity (Briscoe & Khalifa, 2015).

As many public schools are being closed, research also points to the insurgence of charter schools as a form of contemporary racism. In semistructured interviews with educational stakeholders and through policy analyses, Henry and Dixson (2016) critique the discourse of charter schools as the "common sense" solution to inequity by pointing to charter authorization and application processes in post-Katrina New Orleans that resulted in an influx of White-dominated corporate charters and the

marginalization of Black school leaders. Buras (2015) echoes the sentiment in her New Orleans study, arguing that many corporate charter schools and alternative teacher recruitment reforms displace veteran Black teachers for young White teachers and are funded by White philanthropists whose purpose is to align public education to business. Other charter school critics point to racist, deficit-minded pedagogies masked as classroom management (Casey, Lozenski, & McManimon, 2013) that stratify and limit the learning opportunities of students of color (Foiles Sifuentes, 2015).

A collective analysis of these studies pushes us to understand a new form of educational racism that is masked by equity language and driven by capitalist, market-driven goals. This literature reveals how rhetoric of equity and justice is being used to promote neoliberal-driven educational laws, policies and institutions that, in fact, protect and exacerbate racial inequity in and through K–12 schools.

Colorblind Racism

Another prominent theme to emerge from the literature was the manifestation of colorblind racism in schools. Despite attempts to equate colorblindness to equity, qualitative and conceptual studies demonstrate how silence around race maintains and legitimates racism, thus constructing hostile racial climates for students of Color (Castagno, 2008; Chapman, 2013; Love, 2014) and teachers of Color (Amos, 2016; Kohli, 2016; Souto-Manning & Cheruvu, 2016). Steeped in deficit thinking, colorblindness reduces any visible racism to the actions of a few ignorant individuals (Hardie & Tyson, 2013). This allows systemic mechanisms of racism (e.g., tracking, curriculum, student surveillance) to be ignored as explanations for racial inequality and replaced by individual-based rationales (i.e., students of Color are lazy, behaviorally challenged, intellectually deficient; Donna Y. Ford, 2014; Rozansky-Lloyd, 2005; Tarca, 2005).

The reviewed research is critical of colorblind understandings of school punishment, which obscure structural analyses of the severity and frequency of discipline faced by students of Color (Milner, 2013). From the racial and gender profiling of Black students in integrated suburban schools (Chapman, 2013; Gordon, 2012; Modica, 2015), to teachers' criminalizing and deficit perceptions of Black male students (Love, 2014), and the hypersurveillance of Black girls (Wun, 2015), while they do not all represent "colorblind" ideology, these studies all illuminate school practices that explicitly purport to not consider race and, yet, do exactly that.

Several studies employed textual analyses to reveal colorblindness in schools. Through a surface-level or distorted representation of racism in the history standards (Heilig, Brown, & Brown, 2012), social studies textbooks, and the pedagogies of history teachers (Chandler, 2009), representations of racial violence against African Americans and their resistance are typically individualized and detached from larger structural and institutional factors (A. L. Brown & Brown, 2010; K. D. Brown & Brown, 2010; Chandler & McKnight, 2009). Suh, An, and Forest (2015), in their content analysis of high school history textbooks, found that Asian American

experiences and histories are portrayed through the model minority myth, which ignores racism and exacerbates the deficit framing of other communities of Color.

Masked as equity discourse, colorblind ideology is actually a form of racism that erases the contemporary, lived, and systemic oppression of communities of Color. The literature that names colorblindness as racism, as manifested in school policies such as punishment and curriculum, shifts the analyses from individualizing explanations of inequity back to institutionally driven, systemic patterns of displacement, dehumanization, and criminalization.

Racist Policies of Designation

A third focus in the literature that examined institutional racism in K–12 schools was a critique of policies and practices that label and serve two frequently marginalized student groups—*dual-language learners* (DLLs), often referred to as English Learners; and students labeled with disabilities. There is a body of literature that illuminates the White supremacy of language policies and practices that devalue DLLs and their families. While there is a history of English-only impositions on immigrant youth, masked as a social good to remedy the supposed deficiencies of DLLs (Briscoe, 2014), English-only campaigns were reinstitutionalized in 2001 through the No Child Left Behind policy (Lapayese, 2007). Research illuminates trauma that immigrant, bilingual students of Color experience through policies that affirm White racial privilege (Lapayese, 2007; Malsbary, 2014), noting that English dominance in schools is actually a racializing process that undermines student potential and success (Pimentel, 2011), particularly for those labeled *long-term English learners* (Flores, Kleyn, & Menken, 2015). Perez Huber (2011) builds on the narratives of both documented and undocumented Chicanas to show how the English-language hegemony of California public schools institutionalizes racist nativism: "the institutionalized ways people perceive, understand and make sense of contemporary U.S. immigration that justifies *native* (*white*) dominance, and reinforces hegemonic power" (p. 380). Uncovering the racist, nativist microaggressions of teachers, she argues that as students are shamed for their Spanish, they are also socialized to understand themselves as outsiders in the United States, regardless of their immigration status or years of residence (Perez Huber, 2011; Perez Huber & Cueva, 2012). Simultaneous to the degradation of Spanish for Latina/o students, D. Palmer's (2010) qualitative study in a second-grade dual-language classroom points to a newly emerging trend of dual-language education that benefits middle-class White students. Bilingualism is thus gentrified as Latina/Latino, and Black students are prevented from enrolling in these specialized programs in their own schools (D. Palmer, 2010).

Collectively, this literature exposes language policy and practice as a racializing force that, as it stands, serves to perpetuate racial inequity. Interestingly, there is a parallel body of research that examined the racialization of students of Color through (dis)ability-focused policies and practices (Artiles, 2011). Because of intersecting forms of ableism and racism embedded in the Individuals With Disabilities Education

Act (2004) and the associated policies and practices (Beratan, 2006; Liasidou, 2014), schooling often results in the forced segregation and racist exclusion of (mostly Black male) students with special needs (Ferri & Connor, 2005). The research delineates the overrepresentation of Black and Latinx students in special education as guided by assumptions of cultural deficits and pseudoscientific placement processes that result in misguided conceptualizations of disability (Ahram, Fergus, & Noguera, 2011), as well as inequitable resource allocation, inappropriate curriculum and pedagogy, and inadequate teacher preparation (Blanchett, 2006). As a challenge to the rationalization that disproportionality occurs because there is something inherently wrong with Black bodies (i.e., their behavior, their cognition; Artiles, 2011), Fitzgerald (2006, 2009), through an analysis of school records in an integrated public school district, problematizes disproportionate behavior designations and the use of psychotropic medications (e.g., Ritalin) as a racialized process used to control the academic and social behavior of Black boys. Thus, without addressing racism—the need to pacify, control, and exclude Black and brown bodies—alongside ableism, students of Color continue to be overrepresented, segregated, and prevented from reaching their academic potential (Zion & Blanchett, 2011). Building on DisCrit, the union of disability studies and critical race theory (Annamma, Connor, & Ferri, 2013), Annamma, Morrison, and Jackson (2014) use policy and spatial analysis to make groundbreaking connections between disproportionality, racist school discipline practices, and the school to prison pipeline.

While programs serving DLLs and students labeled with disabilities have been framed as a benefit to these student subgroups, when examined through a structural analysis of racism, the literature reveals how these programs systematically exacerbate racial inequity. Understanding the racism associated with processes of designation alongside neoliberal policies and colorblind discourse, there is a pattern in K–12 schools where antiracist discourse is often misappropriated by policies and practices that racialize and further marginalize students of Color.

Everyday Racism

Historical scholar Thomas Holt (1995) theorizes,

The everyday acts of name calling and petty exclusions are minor links in a larger historical chain of events, structures, and transformations anchored in slavery and the slave trade. Together, they nourish the racial knowledge that produces and sustains the mentalities or subjectivities capable of engaging in the brutal, wholesale destruction of other human beings. (p. 7)

Holt and other scholars argue that we must pay attention to racialized microevents and how they connect to macrostructures of racial injustice, particularly because the normalizing everydayness serves as a barrier to dismantling racism (Essed, 1997; Holt, 1995; Lewis, 2003). Given the powerful evidence of racism in K–12 educational policy and practice, it is surprising that there is but a small body of research that unpacks the everyday racism of schools. This scholarship, focused primarily on

the practices of teachers and administrators, reveals interpersonal manifestations of institutionally driven racism.

A primary theme that emerged from this literature was the manner by which White teachers perpetuate racism in schools. In a 3-year ethnography, Buehler (2013) pointed to the ways in which White staff racialized students of Color and teachers of Color, while acting as barriers in efforts to improve school racial climate. And while White teacher racism can be overt, it is often upheld through colorblind or racism-neutral approaches to their daily work with students of Color (Chandler, 2009; Stoll, 2014). Several studies found that White teachers positioned themselves as "good teachers" while simultaneously reifying Whiteness by resisting an awareness of racism (Hyland, 2005; Vaught & Castagno, 2008, Young, 2011). Being "good" at teaching content but having no structural or social analysis for inequity was a prevalent blind spot of White teachers who maintained racism in K–12 schools.

Another significant contribution from scholars who study K–12 school racism was an in-depth exploration of student experiences with racism. From studies of Korean and Korean American students in the Midwest (J. D. Palmer & Eun-Young, 2005) to Puerto Rican students in the Northeast and Midwest (Irizarry & Antrop-González, 2013) and Native Hawaiian students (Borrero, Yeh, Cruz, & Suda 2012), the literature demonstrates how nuanced, yet universal, racism is experienced by students of Color in U.S. schools. Cammarota (2014) studied a process whereby Latina/Latino students researched their encounters with racism in a Tucson high school. They uncovered significant experiences with not only "direct racist statements" but also racial microaggressions—subtle racial assaults or insults (Kohli & Solorzano, 2012). Primarily studied in psychology, there is now a small but growing body of K–12 school research that analyzes the impact of racial microaggressions on students of Color in K–12 schools (A. Allen, Scott, & Lewis, 2013; Q. Allen, 2010, 2012). Kohli and Solorzano (2012) demonstrate the way that teachers enact racial microaggressions, through their treatment of the names of students of Color. They argue that situated within multiple policies and practices, the cumulative impact of these subtle manifestations of racism had lasting and damaging impact on the self-perceptions of students. Perez Huber and Cueva (2012) use the *testimonio* research method to understand how undocumented and U.S.-born Chicana/Latina students experience racial microaggressions as embodied systemic oppression. Q. Allen (2010) details the ways in which microaggressions define Black student experiences in predominantly White schools, resulting in feelings of invisibility and being devalued along with interracial conflict with Latino students.

As Black families move to the suburbs in search of quality educational experiences, a growing body of research identifies the constant racialization and racism they experience in predominantly White schools (Q. Allen, 2012; Carter Andrews, 2009, 2012; Frazier, 2012). Gordon (2012) argued that while one third of African Americans now attend suburban schools, the social mobility and aspirations of their families are not enough to protect them from the "othering" that they experience in these spaces. Matrenec's (2011) study affirms this finding, arguing that Black

students are challenged by the dominance of racist stereotypes, manifested by the "constant and inescapable, racist, hegemonic fog in the air of the school" (p. 230), a helpful metaphor to understand the persistence of racism in Black student schooling experiences. There is also a small body of work that considers how parents of Color experience racism in middle-class schools, providing a deeper understanding of the pervasive ways the primacy of Whiteness is maintained (Howard & Reynolds, 2008; Yull, Blitz, Thompson, & Murray, 2014).

Given the challenges of effectively confronting racist beliefs and practices among teachers and administrators, one of the most critical issues that must be understood regarding the schooling of students of Color is the impact racism has on their lives. Perez Huber, Johnson, and Kohli (2006) connect the construct of internalized racism to historical and contemporary experiences with racism in schools in terms of curriculum, resources disparities, and teacher competency, arguing that it has a deep psychological impact on students of Color. Other researchers have explored related impacts by considering internalized oppression (Irizarry & Raible, 2014) and, perhaps most important, racial trauma and the need for holistic models of counseling (Curry, 2010).

Of course, the impacts of racism do not exist in a vacuum and are often intimately connected to other vectors of oppression in school. A critical theme that emerged from the literature is the necessity for intersectional frameworks and analyses to understand how students of Color experience racism alongside other forms of oppression, and their complex and cumulative effects. In a 2-year ethnographic study of a public school, Cruz (2008) explored homophobia and heteronormativity faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer migrant students, many of who were undocumented. Malagon and Alvarez (2010), through extensive oral history interviews, examined the intersectionality of gender, race, and class of five Chicana women enrolled in a continuation high school. Several qualitative studies also examined the racialized and gendered experiences of Black female students (Ricks, 2014), Mexican American female students (K. A. Taylor & Fernandez-Bergersen, 2015), and Chicana students (Malagon & Alvarez, 2010).

The most poignant and revelatory research in this area uncovers the hidden and typically unacknowledged ways that institutional racism manifests in intersectional, mundane, interpersonal interactions in K–12 schools. The researchers addressing covert racism often acknowledge the challenges of highlighting racism in what many have wrongly deemed postracial times. Thus, the insights gained from these analyses help uncover the often unseen ways everyday racism along with evaded racism and "antiracist" racism serve as collective and systemic mechanisms to maintain the status quo of racial inequity.

CONFRONTING RACISM

In light of the continuing severity the covert nature of the "new racism" of K–12 schools revealed in the literature, it is troubling to us that only 45 articles focused on

confronting racism emerged in our search. As we draw attention to the need for research on applied approaches, we highlight scholarship that conceptualizes responses to racism in K–12 contexts. Two interrelated bodies of research emerged in our review of the literature: (1) articles that examine curriculum and pedagogy to develop K–12 students' racial literacy—the ability to name and examine the effects of structural racism on society, institutions, and people (Skerrett, 2011) and (2) studies focused on resistance and resilience of students of Color to racism in K–12 schools.

Considering the need for students to critically engage with a world structured by an insidious new form of racism that covertly diminishes their educational opportunities and life chances, the literature points to the importance of racial literacy for both students and teachers, shifting their understanding from an individualized to an institutional analysis of racism (K. D. Brown & Brown, 2011; Epstein & Gist, 2015). A primary component to developing students' racial literacy articulated in the research was their teachers' ability to understand and discuss racism. Rogers and Mosley (2006), in their study with second graders, demonstrated how racial literacy development is an interactive process requiring teachers adept at guiding students through a development of race and racism discourse. Teachers with high racial literacy were able to support students' recognition of institutionalized racism. As Skerrett (2011) illustrates in a study with English teachers, teachers' racial literacy ranged widely, from "ill-informed" practices that poorly prepared students to confront and process the racialized experiences they faced to approaches that helped students expose, critique, and take action against racial inequity. A teacher's racial literacy, as infused in his or her pedagogy, made a considerable difference in students' ability to process and confront racism, something that the literature conveyed in the previous sections suggests is necessary. Taken together, studies on racial literacy highlight the need for professional development support, antiracist school environments, as well as teaching and curriculum focused on race and racism (K. D. Brown & Brown, 2011; Epstein & Gist, 2015; Rogers & Mosley, 2006; Skerrett, 2011).

Beyond teachers' comfort and skill with racial discourse, critical pedagogy emerged in the literature as a prominent mechanism for developing students' ability to navigate and deflect racism. From dialogic spaces for students to increase their understanding of racism (Flynn, 2012; M. Taylor & Otinsky, 2006), to critical engagement with storytelling (Bell & Roberts, 2010; Castagno, 2008), and the use of theatre and the arts to teach students about human rights, immigration, and internalized racism (Hanley, 2011; Gutiérrez-Vicario, 2016), the research provided classroom-level illustrations of curricula that opened possibilities for productive conversations and engagement around race, racism, and antiracism.

In addition to students' ability to name, navigate, and process racism, scholarship draws attention to the resilience and resistance of students of Color. Research highlights the instrumental role of positive racial identity and positive self-concept in the academic achievement and resilience of students of Color in the face of racialized experiences (Ani, 2013; Berry, 2005; D. J. Carter, 2008). On a school level, Pulido (2008) highlights Mexican-descent and Puerto Rican students' use of hip-hop to

understand their racialized experiences in the United States and as a means of resistance to official school discourses that relegate them to the margins. Other studies centered K–12 students as researchers of racism and as agents of change for their communities, using the frame of youth participatory action research (Cammarota, 2014; Cammarota & Aguilera, 2012). Recognizing the power of parents' resistance alongside their children's, Stovall (2013) highlights the hunger strike activism of Black and Latinx families in Chicago, used to challenge systematic and racist divestment from the community manifested in the form of a school closure.

From storytelling, theater, and art to explicitly teaching racial literacy, as well as student and community-based resistance, much of the scholarship was focused on naming, navigating, healing from, and resisting racism. And while this research, rightfully, does not articulate how to dismantle the complex and hegemonic "new racism" of K–12 schools, these articles serve as models of the collective power that students and communities of Color have in reclaiming access to an education that is both humanizing and empowering.

ANALYSIS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Over the past decade of K–12 education research, there are relatively few articles that center racism in the analysis of educational inequity. And while there are many research areas that can support efforts to improve educational conditions for students of Color, because racism is persistent and central in our society and our schools, it is essential that there is a strong body of literature that acknowledges and confronts its detrimental impact. The scholarship reviewed in this chapter, although few and far between in the broader field of education research, brings light to such important insights about the role of racism in maintaining racial inequities in K–12 schools. We see nuances of racial injustice from school closures in Chicago, to post-Katrina displacement of Black teachers through charterization in New Orleans, to the hostile racism students of Color experience in Tucson schools. Collectively, these articles help us understand how racism currently operates in K–12 schools.

Through this review, we see manifestations in the past decade of a "new racism" in K–12 schools that is evasive, subtle, and challenging to identify because it is normalized and hidden under the guise of multiculturalism, colorblindness, and everyday individualized interpretations of policy and practices. However, this does not make the racism any less painful for students of Color. Instead, legalized racial violence has now been institutionalized through school policing and excessive school punishment, while the inequitable resources of de facto and even de jure segregation are now invisibilized by "equity" discourse in neoliberal policies such as "school choice." Overt racial slurs, while still present, have overwhelmingly turned to racial microaggressions, subtle yet powerful in their impact. In these hostile racial climates, students of Color—like the young Black girl from South Carolina we center at the start of this chapter—continue to be dehumanized and disproportionately denied academic and economic opportunities.

The research we highlight exposes the way in which racial equity discourse, when divorced from a structural analysis of racism, serves to maintain the systemic oppression of students of Color. Thus, this review calls into question the ongoing trend in research to ignore the role of racism in shaping school experiences. There is a large body of work, which for a host of reasons, alludes to racism without discussing it directly. It is not our purpose to denounce the utility of this scholarship or dichotomize the field into "good" or "bad" scholarship. To be clear, it is important that research is drawing attention to racial inequity. The insidiousness of this 'new racism' of K–12 schools, however, demonstrates why it is even more significant that education researchers must name racism.

While the critical scholarship analyzed in this review exposed mechanisms of racism in K–12 schools, there is still much work to be done. The majority of the existing literature is focused on the racism that Black students, particularly Black boys, face. Not only must education research improve its articulation of the prominence and impact of anti-Black racism on school policies and structures (Dumas, 2016), it must also strengthen its intersectional analyses of racism (Hopson & Dixson, 2011), as well as specific and nuanced analyses of the racialized educational experiences of Latinx, indigenous, Pacific Islander, and Asian American students. Very little research exists on issues such as the racial and gendered violence that young women of Color experience in schools, the denied opportunities of K–12 undocumented students of Color, the almost complete erasure of indigenous student experiences in mainstream educational discourse, or the obscured racism of the model minority myth. Additionally, it seems the insidious and mundane pervasiveness of racism in schools leaves those committed to confronting racism forced to focus on preparing students and/or teachers to address this reality, as institutional and systemic shifts seem insurmountable. And while the tools to confront racism are also far understudied, there is little research analyzing systemic shifts in racism.

Through this review of research, we argue for an enhanced commitment of practitioners and researchers to more frankly discuss, critically analyze, and challenge structural racism. Many of the concepts in the reviewed scholarship were developed within other disciplines such as law, ethnic studies, higher education, and psychology and have been borrowed into K–12 scholarship. Rather than continuing the trend of evading racism in K–12 school research, we argue that there is a utility in an interdisciplinary approach to racism research in schools, as improved tools are needed to name, challenge, and transform the racializing conditions in which students of Color are educated. With these tools, education scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and activists will be better equipped to disrupt the "new racism" of K–12 schools and move us further toward a racially just educational system.

NOTES

[1]We primarily use the term *Black* but do use *Black* and *African American* interchangeably, selecting the term of a selected author whenever possible.

[2]We use the term *of Color* throughout to reference African Americans, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, Latinxs, and Native Americans to identify their shared racialization in the United States.

³We use the term *Latinx* to reference all people of Latin American descent in the United States but adopt the term used by specific authors when appropriate. This term is increasingly being used to address the gender norming implicit in other ethnic labels derived from Spanish.

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