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ACCESS VERSES EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES: RACE, SOCIAL STATUS AND NAVIGATING THE "SUBURBAN" TERRAIN

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ABSTRACT

ACCESS VERSES EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES: RACE, SOCIAL
STATUS AND NAVIGATING THE "SUBURBAN" TERRAIN

by

Toshiba L. Adams

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2019
Under the Supervision of Professor Raquel Farmer-Hinton, Ph.D.

In 1954, due to the prevalence of structural inequalities, the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling sought to equalize educational opportunities for African American students by granting them access to predominantly White school districts (Bell, 1980; Gunier, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2004). The ideology was that African American students would excel academically in predominantly White schooling environments because these establishments were known for housing quality resources that better support upward mobility, including postsecondary matriculation (Arriaza, 2003; Farmer-Hinton, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Stanton-Salazar & Dornbusch, 1995; Stanton-Salazar, 1997). In 1976, the Chapter 220 legislation erupted in Milwaukee as a subsidiary of *Brown*. Chapter 220 allowed African American students who resided in urban areas to access predominantly White suburban school districts and White students who lived in the suburbs were granted access to specialty schools in Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) (Dahlk, 2004; Nelsen, 2014). Similar to *Brown*, the goal of Chapter 220 was to ensure an equitable schooling experience for students of color.

In 1976, the Brown Deer School District (BDSD) was one of the first suburban districts to voluntarily comply with the Chapter 220 law. However, due to minimal students being transferred across district lines, the school district was mandated to increase its Chapter 220 participation in 1984 (Nelsen, 2015; Stolee, 1993). Since then, the BDSD has transitioned to a

majority-minority school district and the Chapter 220 law expired in 1995 (Department of Public Instruction, 2019; Bonds, et al., 2009). Yet, no research has been conducted to thoroughly critique the desegregation laws of *Brown* and Chapter 220. Furthermore, no research has examined the schooling experiences of African American students who attend the desegregated suburban school district of Brown Deer.

Therefore, through a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens, this study analyzes the *Brown* and Chapter 220 legislations and illuminates their limitations in supporting the academics of African American student populations. Furthermore, also through a CRT framework, this study explores the experiences of 18 African Americans who graduated from Brown Deer Middle High School (BDMHS) between 2012-2018 to better understand their racialized schooling experiences. Their narratives shed light on the manner in which racialized hierarchies were established and permeated at BDMHS and how study participants perceived such exclusionary structures, policies and practices to have negatively implicated the experiences of the majority of the African American students who attended the suburban high school.

To

my parents, Bazel and Jesse Stewart

my husband, Vincent Adams

and especially my kids, Aerial and Isaiah

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thank God for you daily. I would like to especially thank you for answering my phone calls, during this dissertation process, and for providing me with the necessary words of encouragement and prayers. Thank you for believing in me and encouraging my efforts. Thank you for pushing me along, especially during the moments when I couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. For some reason, Momma, you always saw the light and I thank you for your vision!

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glass ceilings. Please realize that God has given you the precise talents that will allow you to

materialize your most sought after dreams. Aerial and Isaiah, you two are the best parts of me.

Walk into your blessings!

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This qualitative inquiry examines the social and academic experiences of a group of African Americans who graduated from Brown Deer Middle High School (BDMHS) between 2012-2018. The Brown Deer School District (BDSD) has an extensive history with the school desegregation movement which dates back to 1976. In 1976, leaders in the BDSD voluntarily accepted Milwaukee-dwelling African American students into their school district to support desegregation (Stolee, 1993). The legislation that prompted this form of metropolitan desegregation is known as Chapter 220. While some suburban school district' leaders voluntarily complied with the Chapter 220 legislation, their participation failed to include an adequate number of minority students into their school buildings (Nelsen, 2015; Stolee, 1993). Thus, in 1984, the federal government enforced participation by mandating Milwaukee's suburban districts to significantly increase its enrollment of minority students (Stolee, 1993).

In 2007, the BDSD met its Chapter 220 mandate by including a maximum of 30 percent minority students from Milwaukee into its' school district (see Bonds, et al., 2009); since then, the BDSD graduated its last class of Chapter 220 participants during the 2014-2015 school year. The Chapter 220 legislature supported the increased African American student presence in the BDSD. According to participants highlighted in this study, the suburban school district of Brown Deer was sought after by their families. Thus, other families accessed the suburban school district through participation in the Open Enrollment program, which allowed White and minority students to transfer across district lines, and by moving into the Village of Brown Deer. As a result, since the inception of Chapter 220, the BDSD has transitioned from a majority White to a majority minority student population (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

To a certain extent this study incorporates the Chapter 220 narrative because this law prompted the desegregation of the BDSD; however, this study also moves beyond Chapter 220 by examining the experiences of a group of African Americans who attended Brown Deer Middle High School during a post-Chapter 220 era.

Significance of the Study

Racial educational achievement and attainment gaps continue to exist (see Boykin & Noguera, 2011; Guinier, 2004; Noguera, 2011; Rothstein, 2004) despite efforts to ameliorate such disparities. The school desegregation movement served as one such effort to address the racial achievement and attainment gaps. However, upon close examination of the implementation processes of school desegregation, historically, and through a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens, one will realize that in many cases school desegregation actually served to perpetuate racial gaps in achievement and maintain white privilege (Bell, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2007; Orfield, 2009; Rothstein, 2014).

A body of literature covers the social and academic experiences of students of color who attended predominantly White suburban schools to better understand how the structural forces, inherent within such educational institutions, worked to impede the academic success of students of color. These studies, as a whole, point to notions of within school disparities such as racial tracking (see Allen, 2010; Chapman, Joseph, Hartlep, Vang & Lipsey, 2014; Diamond, 2006; Diamond, Lewis & Gordon, 2007; Huidor & Cooper, 2010; Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Lleras, 2008; Noguera, 2008; O'Connor, et al., 2011; Wells et al., 2009); the disproportionate number of minority student suspension and expulsion, especially for males (see Allen, 2010; Noguera, 2008); deficit discourse and negative perspectives held by White teachers toward students of color (see Carter, 2005; Lleras, 2008; Siegel-Hawley & Frankenberg, 2012); students embodying

feelings of inferiority (see Diamond, 2006; Diamond, Lewis & Gordon, 2007); low teacher expectations of students of color and limited connectedness (see Allen, 2010; Chapman, 2014); the tolerance of curriculum that fail to prepare students of color for college admission (see Chapman, 2007; Chapman, et al., 2014); and the disproportionate burden of busing placed upon African American families to achieve school desegregation (Bell, 1980; Morris, 2006; Woodward, 2011). Such within school disparities serve as a reminder that, although desegregated, suburban schools have historically failed to promote true racial integration which is manifested through equitable school experiences and overall racial inclusion (Ladson-Billings, 2006b; Wells et al., 2016). This close examination of the scholarly literature, as further illuminated in chapters two and three, serves as the foundation for the continued exploration of the experiences of African American students who attend schools in desegregated suburban settings.

As previously discussed, Milwaukeeans fought to desegregate their public school system across district lines through the implementation of the Chapter 220 legislation and the Brown Deer School District (BDSD) was one of the first districts to voluntarily participate in the busing program (Stolee, 1993). By 2017 the Village of Brown Deer became home to 30 percent of African American families while White resident population was expected to decline (see U.S. Census Bureau, 2017) and the BDSD currently represents a majority-minority school population (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019). Based on the racial demographic shift of the Village of Brown Deer and other inner-ring suburbs (see Fry, 2009; Frankenberg, 2008; Frey, 2001, 2009; Fry, 2009; Orfield, 2001, 2009; Siegel-Hawley), the desegregation literature also signifies a need for continued research that examines the experiences of African American students who attend majority-minority suburban schools in our contemporary era. Thus, the

purpose of this study is to examine the social and academic experiences of African Americans who graduated from Brown Deer Middle High School between 2012-2018.

The Brown Deer School District

The Brown Deer School District is nestled within the inner-ring suburb of the Village of Brown Deer, in close proximity to the City of Milwaukee. The Village is comprised of approximately 1300 residents (Brown Deer Wisconsin, 2019). The Brown Deer School District is a K4-12 public school system comprised of two schools located on one campus. The Brown Deer Elementary School houses grades K4 through 6th grade and the Brown Deer Middle High School houses grades 7 through 12th. During the 2017-2018 school year, the school district of Brown Deer serviced approximately 1600 students with 744 of those students being serviced at the middle/high school level (Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

In alignment with the aforementioned neighborhood demographic data which highlight the Village of Brown Deer's steady transition to a more racially diverse neighborhood, the racial breakdown of Brown Deer Middle High School has also changed to include a more racially diverse student population, including 6 percent Biracial, 6 percent Hispanic, 11 percent Asian, 22 percent White, and 52 percent African American (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019). Regarding the academic progress of the high school's majority African American student population, during the 2015-2016 school year, African American students' ACT performance lagged their White peers (17.5 and 22.2 respectively); only five percent of African American students accessed Advanced Placement (AP) classes; and African American students served as the disproportionate recipients of the school district's suspensions, for example 150 of the 182 suspensions were bestowed upon African American students (Wisconsin Department of Public

Instruction, 2019). A more detailed composite of the Brown Deer Middle High School will be presented in Chapter 4 of this paper.

The unique racial demographic trends and student's academic progression along racial lines offers Brown Deer Middle High School as an ideal site for exploring the social and academic experiences of its African American graduates. Thus, the purpose of this study was to conduct individual and focus group interviews to examine the experiences of a group of African Americans who graduated from Brown Deer Middle High School between 2012-2018. This study is guided by the following major and sub-research questions:

Major Research Questions:

1. What were the social and academic experiences of a group of African American students who attended Brown Deer Middle High School?

2. How might the social and academic experiences in Brown Deer Middle High School, as reported by this group of African American graduates, impact their postsecondary college and career choices and experiences, according to these participants?

Sub-research Questions:

The following sub questions were used to guide this research:

1. What are the perceptions of African American graduates regarding the development of student/teacher relationships?

2. What are the perceptions of African American graduates regarding the school's curriculum, including extracurricular activities?

3. What are the perceptions of African American graduates regarding the school's discipline policies?

4. How do African American graduates perceive the school's resources to have supported their academic achievement and postsecondary college and career choices?

5. What role did school officials, particularly counselors, play in guiding students postsecondary college and career choices?

The Research Study

This study serves as a qualitative inquiry of the high school experiences of a group of African American graduates of Brown Deer Middle High School (BDMHS). A qualitative approach, informed by a Critical Race Theory methodology, was selected because it allowed me to collect individual interview and focus group data to gain insight into the participants' overall high school experiences. My main objective was to advance the voices of African American graduates of Brown Deer Middle High School. This study was framed by the theoretical lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Race Theory in Education because such frameworks allowed me to ask questions specific to the participant's racialized schooling experiences. Employing CRT's tenets (*the burden concept, whiteness as property, white privilege, permanence of racism, colorblind and interest convergence*), this study attempted to better understand the racialized experiences of a group of African American students who attended Brown Deer Middle High School (BDMHS).

The sample population consisted of 18 participants (12 females and 6 males) who graduated from BDMHS between 2012-2018. Multiple data collection methods were used to understand the experiences of these graduates, including: first round interviews with 18 participants; second round interviews with 17 participants; 2 focus groups, consisting of a total of 8 participants (4 graduates who primarily completed Advanced Placement curriculum and 4 graduates who primarily completed a traditional track curriculum); a demographic survey, used

to collect data specific to the participant's race, gender, academics and family's socioeconomic status; and documents retrieved from the school's website, the school district's website and Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction (DPI) (i.e., student and parent handbooks and district reports). While analyzing the data, I explored for factors relating to the participant's involvement in the school's curriculum, including classroom pedagogy, course placement, extracurricular involvement, student/adult relationships, peer relationships and discipline policies and practices.

My Interest in Studying the Experiences of African American Students who Attend Desegregated Suburban Schools

My family has always believed that a solid education serves as the precursor to one's life' success. As such, my parents diligently worked to ensure that my siblings and I gained access to school systems that they perceived as "quality". When I was a young child, my parents purchased their first home and helped to integrate a predominantly White neighborhood in the central city of Milwaukee. Soon after my parent's arrival, "for sale" signs began flooding their urban neighborhood. By the time I was kindergarten age, the neighborhood and its surrounding schools, had become home to an increasing minority population. During that time, my parents perceived a racially segregated Milwaukee Public School (MPS) education as subpar to a suburban school offering. Therefore, my parents found an alternative to MPS; initially, my siblings and I utilized the Chapter 220 busing program to attend schools in the suburb of Wauwatosa.

The long bus rides provided hours of fun social experiences because my siblings and I were able to spend quality time with other students of color from our neighborhood. However, the distance between our city home and suburban school served as an inconvenience for my

parents as they struggled to coordinate a schedule that would allow them to attend our after school academic and extracurricular events. Thus, during the summer leading to my freshman year in high school, my parents purchased a home in the suburb of Brown Deer to allow my siblings and me easier access to a suburban education.

Overall, I enjoyed attending Brown Deer High School because it was a small school and I developed friendships with other African American students that remain intact today. I was fairly active during high school; I participated on the basketball and track teams, Future Business Leaders of American (FBLA) and assisted in operating the school store. My parents were equally active, attending every parent/teacher conference, track meet and basketball game. Yet, our collective attempts to make connections with the school and its culture, failed to shield us from incidents of racial discrimination. For example, when requesting bus service for my siblings and me, the White female school secretary told my mother that our family wouldn't need a bus if my mother would take us back to Milwaukee where we "belonged". The secretary's response was alarming since the White family who previously owned our Brown Deer home had received a bus service for their children. Also, during my senior year in high school, a large group of African American students, with the support of our parents, orchestrated a walk-out when school administrators failed to allow us to coordinate a Black History Month program during school hours (our demands were eventually met and celebrated). Finally, during the same school year, some of my White "friends" developed and disseminated an underground newsletter that highlighted African Americans as monkeys. Needless to say most of the African American students were hurt by our White "friends" perception of us and severed friendships with most of them. These are only a few of my racialized experiences while attending Brown Deer High School.

Yet, despite my racialized experiences while attending this predominantly White suburban school, I perceived this establishments as superior to urban schools because of the curriculum and safe neighborhoods. As such, both of my children also attended schools in the Brown Deer School District and graduated from Brown Deer Middle High School. Similar to my educational experiences while attending predominantly White suburban schools, from an early age, my children began reporting frequent encounters of racial discrimination as well. It was difficult for me to comprehend their racialized schooling experiences because I am an educator; my husband and I stretched our finances to pay for tutors, summer enrichment programs, music lessons, sports fees, field trips, college bound specialty camps and international immersion experiences. In our minds, we were making the right choices in supporting our children's education. Ultimately, similar to Allen's (2010) study, I realized that my family's middle-class status failed to shield our children from experiencing racialized schooling encounters. Thus, this research serves as a personal and professional interest for me because I am genuinely interested in hearing the stories of other Brown Deer Middle High School' students.

Conclusion

This chapter began by presenting a brief literature review which highlights the experiences of African American students who attended predominantly White desegregated suburban school districts. The research illuminates the racialized hierarchies that were manifested within these suburban school contexts and its negative implications on the academic and postsecondary progression of minoritized communities. The current literature signifies a need for continued research that examines the experiences of African American students who attend suburban schools in our contemporary era. Thus, the purpose of this study is to examine

the social and academic experiences of African Americans who graduated from Brown Deer Middle High School between 2012-2018.

The next two chapters will provide a review of literature that further supports this research. Chapter 2 incorporates a discussion related to Critical Race Theory (CRT) and school desegregation. Included, is a detailed introduction of Critical Race Theory and further rationale for framing this study through its critical lens. Next, I present a CRT analysis of *Brown.* As previously discussed, the racial demographics of the Village of Brown Deer and the Brown Deer School District (BDSD) has changed since leaders in the BDSD originally complied with the federally enacted Chapter 220 stipulations (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019). Since 1976, the BDSD graduated its last class of Chapter 220 participants (in 2015). While Chapter 220 no longer serves as a federal mandate, this legislation initially prompted the BDSD' engagement with school desegregation. Thus, Chapter 2 will also include a CRT analysis of the Milwaukee-based Chapter 220 program. My goal was to illustrate the shortcomings of these policies in supporting the academic achievement of minority students who attended schools in suburban educational spaces. Understanding this historical element sets the foundation for understanding the contemporary racial inequalities found within suburban school settings. Within this discussion, I also provide a historical timeline of events which transpired and led to the immersion, implementation and demise of Milwaukee's Chapter 220 Program.

Chapter 3 presents a literature review specific to the experiences of African American students who attend racially diverse suburban school environments. Within the suburban school context, the school's curriculum is materialized as "intellectual property" reserved primarily for the "use and enjoyment" of its' White students (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995, p. 59). In this manner, the school's curriculum perpetuates white privilege through the development of its

materials, policies, lesson plans and instructional strategies (Chapman, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Therefore, Chapter 3 concludes with a discussion on Multicultural Education (ME) and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) and how such theoretical constructs were manifested to address the remnants of *Brown* and our country's ongoing tolerance of educational inequalities between the races.

Chapter 4 of this paper provides rationale for framing this study as a qualitative inquiry with the adoption of a Critical Race Methodology, and related methods, in order to advance the voices of African American graduates of Brown Deer Middle High School. Additionally, this chapter provides a detailed explanation for how I proceeded with conducting this study and the results of my methodological efforts.

Based on the methodological strategies and outcomes included in Chapter 4, Chapter 5 presents the findings expressed by this study's participants within three major themes which emerged from the data analysis process. Finally, Chapter 6 includes a discussion on research implications and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2: A CRITICAL RACE THEORY ANALYSIS OF

SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) is positioned as an interdisciplinary theoretical framework that is used to examine concepts related to race and racism, class and gender (Bell, 1987; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Employing CRT's framework as a theoretical lens, the following discussion includes an analysis of race and racism in the desegregation laws of *Brown* and Chapter 220. First, the chapter provides an overview of CRT and Critical Race Theory in Education; within this discussion, through the lens of CRT and CRT in Education, I provide an analysis of the experiences of African American students who attended suburban school systems. Second, through a CRT framework, I attempted to explore how the promises of the *Brown* legislation were limited due to its flawed implementation which failed to support the academics of African American students. Finally, also through CRT, I present a discussion that critiques the Chapter 220 law. However, in order to further problematize the Chapter 220 law and its busing program, I first provide an in depth historical analysis of the twenty-year fight that some Milwaukeeans endured in order to racially integrate Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and public schools across suburban and urban district lines. This twenty-year history is meaningful and provides a foundation for realizing the unfulfilled promises of the Chapter 220 legislation and the racialized experiences of the African American participants presented in this study.

It is important to realize CRT's tenets in order to fully understand why I selected this lens to frame this study which centers the concept of race.

1. Racism is woven within the fabric of American life and has historically been
    ingrained in the laws and culture of our U.S. society (Bell, 1980).

2. Racism intersects with other subordinated identities such as gender and class status (see Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001) to complicate our understanding of how inequities are present within schools and the schooling process (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

3. CRT purports that African Americans will only gain civil rights and racial liberation when their agenda aligns with the interests of Whites (Bell, 1980 & 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings, 2004).

4. CRT challenges Eurocentric claims of neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, meritocracy and equality of access and opportunity across racial lines and other subordinated identities, including class and gender (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller & Thomas, 1995; Crenshaw, 1995 & 2011; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Gotanda, 1991).

5. CRT interrogates ahistoricism and argues that racism has implicated historical and contemporary manifestations of group advantage and disadvantage (Bell, 1980, 1992).

6. The "whiteness as property" construct articulates property, from a historical perspective where privilege and property ownership has been granted to White people and maintained through a series of federal policies that support the status quo. Through this lens, property is understood as a "right" that has historically advantaged Whites while disadvantaging African Americans and other minority groups (Bell, 2004; Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

7. CRT scholars recognize the voice of communities of color, as essential, in analyzing concepts related to the law and society, including educational institutions (Bell, 1980, 2004; Delgado, 1990; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, Villalpando, Bernal & Solorzano, 2001).

8. CRT's overarching goal is to abolish racial oppression through a social justice agenda, including within educational institutions (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Solorzano & Ornelas, 2004).

9. To remove blame from the shoulders of African American students, from a CRT perspective, Ladson-Billings (2006a) poses a challenge to move beyond the rhetoric of the "achievement gap" to the "education debt" that has accumulated over time to subjugate African American students within school settings.

Critical Race Theory in Education

Using a CRT lens allows one to understand how the inequities found within the educational system impact students of color (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Through the *colorblindness* and *whiteness as property* tenets of CRT, this section will include an analysis of public school systems.

Colorblindness plays a vital role in the establishment and maintenance of historical and contemporary inequalities found within the educational system. Critical Race Theory scholars argue that the manifestation of colorblindness serves as an ideological strategy where the court systems are actively involved in maintaining systems of hierarchy (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller &

Thomas, 1995; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). The colorblind concept purports that everyone is treated equally, regardless of one's race and ethnicity (Crenshaw et al., 1995; Crenshaw, 1995, 2011); this construct assumes that racial injustice is symbolic of a past era. Thus, limiting the engagement or acknowledgement of racism in the life experiences of minority groups (Crenshaw, 2011).

Gotanda (1991) further suggests that the colorblind analysis found in the law uses race to mean formal-race. A formal-race category refers to the development of socially constructed categories that view African Americans and Whites as neutral beings reflective of skin color. In this respect, formal-race is disconnected from social realities such as culture, education, wealth or language; thus, a colorblind perspective does not recognize the connection between one's race and social realities, for example racial discrimination. Therefore, the notion of colorblindness is a fallacy and in addition to concerns about ahistoricism, neutrality, and meritocracy, should not form the basis of legal decisions and policy making in educational domains. Furthermore, the disconnect between race and social realities limit potential remedies for racial injustice while maintaining white dominance and privilege (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Gotanda, 1991).

In school settings, the adoption of a colorblind approach allows teachers and other school officials the privilege of dismissing the views and perspectives of students of color because they separate the students from their social realities which are premised by race and racism (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). For example, operating through a colorblind lens allows school officials to disregard the ways in which racism implicates the disproportionate suspensions of African American students and racialized tracking practices (Allen, 2010; Chapman, Joseph, Hartlep, Vang & Lipsey, 2014; Diamond, 2006; Diamond, Lewis & Gordon, 2007; Huidor & Cooper, 2010; Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Lleras, 2008; O'Connor, et al., 2011; Wells et al., 2009). In a

contemporary landscape, colorblindness continues to create barriers to student learning and school matriculation (Dixson & Rousseau, 2005). According to Bonilla-Silva (2009), the colorblind concept acts as an artificial shield to institutionalized racism that transpires in a post-Civil Rights era.

Unfortunately, school environments are plagued with colorblind racism that works to marginalize minority students (Chapman, 2013, 2014; Guadalupe Valles & Villalpando, 2013). For example, the maintenance of power and white privilege is reflected through racialized suspension and behavior policies, curriculum offerings, limited access to "gifted" courses and preferential treatment of White students by school officials (Chapman, 2013, 2014; Guadalupe Valles & Villalpando, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009, pg. 29). Chapman (2013) used the tenet of CRT's colorblindness to examine school policies and practices, including tracking, curricula, teacher classroom practices and student surveillance. She found that predominantly White suburban schools work to support an Eurocentric ideology of colorblindness through their policies and differential treatment of students of color. Such treatment and exclusion from resources and curriculum has a direct impact on the student's social and economic possibilities, including persistence in and graduation from universities and other educational institutions.

The whiteness as property tenet is also reflected within the institutionalized structure of schools (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). Tactics, employed by some Whites, to segregate urban and suburban communities are realized as means to preserve predominantly White suburban neighborhoods, schools and the school's curriculum. Not only is the suburban space contested, the institutionalized use of curriculum, within these spaces, is also manifested as "intellectual property" (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995, p. 59). Ladson-Billings (2009) argues that restricted access to school' curriculum is exemplary of the function of property in respect to

"use and enjoyment" (p. 29). In this manner, the intellectual property status of curriculum allows school materials, programs, policies, structures and instructional strategies to support notions of white privilege (Chapman, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

Dixon and Rousseau (2005) extend Ladson-Billings & Tate's (1995) theoretical framework regarding school curriculum as property by arguing that racialized school tracking serves as another means for which the property right of whiteness is manifested in education settings. Dixson and Rousseau (2005, 2006) argue that racialized tracking serves as an essential means through which the property rights of Whites are asserted within educational institutions and denied to African American students. The continued denial of these "rights" may potentially result in the lack of social, political, economic and academic mobility for minority populations. At the same time, Whites continue to be granted access to resources that transform their lives in more positive ways.

Chapman (2013) research supports the Dixson and Rousseau (2005) assertion. Chapman (2013) conducted qualitative research in a school located in the Midwest and noted that students of color who attended a predominantly White school were tracked in lower level courses, while higher curriculum tracks were reserved as property for White students; thus, fewer minority students were able to access a rigorous curriculum that could better facilitate postsecondary trajectory. Such stratifications represent a desegregated school system versus a system that is truly racially integrated (Ladson-Billings, 2006b). Tracking policies and practices further support the deficit discourse which suggests that students of color are undeserving of access to elite curriculum (Ladson-Billings, 2008). Reserving high quality curricular offerings for White students ensures a more viable pipeline for college access that may potentially lead to social and economic stability while excluding minority students from similar advantage.

Throughout this study, CRT and CRT in Education will be used to illuminate the power differentials found between the structures of Brown Deer Middle High School and its African American graduates because this framework has the capacity to shed light on the racialized schooling experiences of African American students (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Finally, this framework allows us to understand the structural inequalities embedded within school systems, including racialized tracking and discipline measures, curriculum access and instruction (see Chapman, 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) in an effort to determine ways to improve the educational system for African American students (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995).

As presented in Chapter 1, many African American families sought after the suburban context of the Brown Deer School District. To some extent, the Chapter 220 legislation supported the desegregation of its school system; however, as previously discussed, according to Department of Public Instruction (DPI) data, the majority of African American students who attended Brown Deer Middle High School during the 2017-2018 school year were excluded from rigorous course tracks and disproportionately referred for school suspension (Department of Public Instruction, 2019). Chapter 220 was supposed to serve the purpose of generating equality of access to educational opportunity; however, DPI data offers an alternative depiction of the actual experiences of minoritized students who attended BDMHS. In order to better understand the schooling experiences of African American students who attended BDMHS, it is first necessary to understand the desegregation laws, including *Brown* and Chapter 220, and the manner in which these laws supported the racial desegregation of suburban schools but failed to guarantee African American students full integration within suburban school environments. These legacies significantly impact the schooling experiences of all students in public school

settings.

In the next section of this chapter, I utilize CRT to : 1) interrogate the desegregation policies of *Brown*; 2) paint the picture of how decades of racial tensions and competition over preferred suburban neighborhoods and its schools precipitated into the need for a federally mandated school desegregation plan, known as Chapter 220, implemented in Milwaukee with a goal to racially integrate the city's public schools across district lines; and 3) problematize the Chapter 220 policies to understand its limitations in supporting the academic success of African American students who attended suburban schools in Milwaukee such as Brown Deer Middle High School. Chapter 220 was the mechanism used in the Milwaukee context to support the racial integration of its public schools and to ensure academic equity for minority student populations. An interrogation of Chapter 220 is necessary because, as discussed in Chapter 1, the BDSD has an extensive history with Chapter 220 and the school desegregation movement which began in 1976.

The Broken Promises of Brown

The *Brown* decision serves as one of the most infamous court rulings in education. And, importantly, CRT scholars scrutinize its implementation and impact on the educational experiences and success of African American students (Bell, 2004; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Guinier, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Love, 2004). Sixty years post-*Brown* and the country continues to witness educational inequalities across racial groups. According to some scholars, (Bell, 1980 & 2004; Crenshaw, 2011; Guinier, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2006b), racialized school inequalities exist because the true goals of *Brown* placed the ideology of desegregation over racial equality and the development of race-conscious policies that could have better supported the academic success of students of color (Wells et al., 2016).

As such, Bell (1980) positions *Brown* to exemplify the interest convergence tenet of CRT. As previously discussed, Bell argues that social justice initiatives are only implemented when they service the interests of Whites, or at least pose as no threat to their rights and social status. Using the premise of Bell (1980, 2004), Crenshaw (1995, 2011), Harris (1993) and Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995), this section includes an analysis of *Brown* through the lens of CRT, specifically the tenets of *interest convergence, colorblindness, whiteness as property* and *the permanence of racism* will be applied to explore the shortcomings of *Brown* in ensuring academic equality for African American students.

The premise of *Brown* was built based on social science research which suggested that African American children, who attended racially segregated schools, were psychologically harmed by the experience (Guinier, 2004; Parker & Lynn, 2002). Post-*Brown* CRT analyses further suggest that *Brown,* with its narrow focus, was established based on the societal perception that African American students were incapable of learning unless they shared space with White students (Bell, 1980 & 2004; Guinier, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2004). In this analysis, sentiments reinforced an inferiority stigma (see Guinier, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2006b; Love, 2004) and the perception that African Americans needed "...to ask for benevolence on the part of whites" (Ladson-Billings, 2004, p. 7; also see Guinier, 2004; Love, 2004). In critically analyzing Brown, Ladson-Billings (2004) problematized the notion that it was essential for African American students to share academic space with White students in order to learn. Ladson-Billings (2004) suggested the underlying altruism of *Brown* actually set the stage for blaming students of color, who accessed predominantly White school spaces, and failed to yield academic gains similar to White students in the same setting. Ultimately, *Brown* was explicitly positioned

to support the racial achievement gap discourse and furthered school structural inequality (Ladson-Billings, 2004; Love, 2004).

Civil rights leaders were adamant in their fight for *Brown* because they believed such policies would yield equalized educational opportunities across the races; however, these leaders nonetheless realized that its implementation converged with the permanence of white supremacy over the abolishment of racial segregation (Bell, 2004; Guinier, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2004). In other words, Guinier (2004) explains that civil rights leaders realized that the fight was not against the notion of racial segregation but rather the structures of white supremacy and the inequitable distribution of power.

Furthermore, although *Brown* laid the foundation for recognizing racial inequalities which led to desegregation, it failed to declare the process by which desegregation would be implemented (Bell, 1980; Irons, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ogletree, 2004). Therefore, within a year of the initial Brown implementation, *Brown II* was established. Brown II ultimately proved to have been implemented to satisfy the interests of Whites who perceived an integrated society as an attack on their power and privilege (Bell, 2004; Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Ladson-billings, 2006b; Ogletree, 2004). For example, under the provisions of *Brown II*, the Supreme Court ruled that desegregation would need to be enacted with "all deliberate speed" (Bell, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ogletree, 2004, p. 10; Orfield & Eaton, 1996). Essentially, the "all deliberate speed" language ensured that desegregation would proceed based on an ambiguous timeline established by Whites. As a result, desegregation efforts were significantly delayed in many southern states (Orfield & Eaton, 1996). Thus, the slow response to the *Brown* ruling, and the submission to Whites, further support the interest convergence and whiteness as property thesis.

Critical analyses (Bell, 2004; Guinier, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2004, 2006b) further illuminated that *Brown* was symbolic in nature, representing the country's commitment to condemn racial segregation; however, its policies and practices were less effective because they simply upheld Jim Crow, within suburban desegregated schools, in a less overt manner. For example, while some suburban school districts met the desegregation demands by congregating White students and students of color in the same school building, they failed to racially integrate students into their college prep curriculum or within the overall community of predominantly White suburban schools (Ladson-Billings, 2006b).

The colorblind concept of CRT was evidenced through *Brown's* failure to actually provide racially integrated and equitable opportunities to African American students. The intent of *Brown* was that students of color would have a vehicle for enhancing academic achievement and social and economic mobility. However, *Brown's* limitations are evident through the disparate racial achievement gap (see Boykins & Noguera, 2011; Guinier, 2004; Noguera, 2008;) that continues to permeate educational discourse and the disproportionate rate of racial tracking found within suburban school establishments (Allen, 2010; Chapman, 2014; Diamond, 2006; O'Connor et al., 2011; Wells et al., 2006). Bell (2004) coins such tracking as reflective of "second generation segregation" problems and argues that tracking served as a means for Whites to "get what they want" by harboring elite school resources (p. 293).

Ultimately, *Brown's* greatest failure was its inability to dismantle the structures of racial inequality and white supremacy which permeated school segregation in the first place (Guinier, 2004; Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 2006b). Finally, each of these examples reminds us that, although race has fluid dimensions based on the temporal interests of Whites (Lewis, 2003; Omi

& Winant, 1994), race and racism serve as permanent and universal factors of American life (Bell, 1992 & 2004; Bonilla-Silva, 1997).

The lineage of *Brown*, as previously discussed, was reflected in the north, including Milwaukee, as some northerners fought to desegregate schools through court ordered laws that adopted busing programs to promote racial integration across urban and suburban public schools. In Milwaukee, the Chapter 220 busing program served as its vehicle for achieving racial integration in schools. As discussed in Chapter 1, the Brown Deer School District (BDSD) was one of the first districts to voluntarily participate in the busing program. Yet, as evidenced in a later section of this paper, Chapter 220's implementation was equally troubling and failed to fully support racial equality and the academic achievement of its African American student participants. In order to understand the limitations of Chapter 220, one must first understand the twenty (plus) year struggle that some Milwaukeeans endured in order to have a court ordered desegregation plan implemented in Milwaukee. This struggle for racial equality was inevitably reflected in Chapter 220's limitations in supporting the academic success of some African American students in Milwaukee, which is later discussed in this chapter.

The Story of School Desegregation in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

The Chapter 220 narrative is related to Milwaukee's long and agonizing struggle toward desegregating its public school system. The school desegregation battle began with a need to promote racial integration within the urban school district because de facto laws ensured preferential school choices for city-dwelling White families. Additionally, white flight precipitated hyper segregation within Milwaukee's neighborhoods and schools. In fact, efforts to desegregate Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), across district lines, emerged based on the proliferation of Milwaukee's undeniable residential segregation patterns and the implementation

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of de facto school policies, including intact busing, inequitable student transfers and school district boundaries which separated the inner city from the south side and suburban areas. Thus, the school desegregation battle ended with the orchestration of federally forced school desegregation through a metropolitan plan that would integrate schools across district lines once white flight precipitated hyper segregation within Milwaukee's neighborhoods and schools.

Between 1920 and 1980, African Americans began migrating from the south to cities like Milwaukee in search of social and economic opportunities (see Levine & Zipp, 1993; Levine, 2016), with the largest inflow transitioning during the 1960's and 1970's (Dahlk, 2010; Levine & Zipp, 1993; Levine, 2016; Trotter, 2007). This phenomenon complicated race relations as African Americans and Whites competed over residential, employment and school spaces. As northern migration accelerated Whites - with a goal of preserving particular spaces - implemented a series of policies which heightened residential and school segregation. The transitioning racial composition of the city and competition over space, heightened racial unrest and led to the development of a federal court ordered desegregation plan in 1973 to desegregate Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). This federal court case evolved into the state (and later federal Court) mandated Chapter 220 (1976) program which sought to promote racial integration across district lines.

Through a Critical Race Theory (CRT) lens, this section will describe and analyze the historical events and school desegregation court cases that transpired during the twentieth century to illustrate why the Milwaukee community - including some civil rights leaders, community members and parents - decided to resist school segregation through grassroots efforts and a series of court litigations. In order to understand the experiences of African American students who attended school in the Brown Deer school district, one must first fully

comprehend the ongoing struggles that the Milwaukee community endured to desegregate its public schools and the levels of resistance that some Whites employed to maintain their white privilege through the maintenance of a racially segregated school system.

Court Rulings That Set the Precedence for School Desegregation in Milwaukee

Initially, *Brown* was mandated in southern states because Jim Crow supported white supremacy and legalized racial segregation in those areas (Orfield & Lee, 2004). In the north, as a result of White flight, residential segregation and deindustrialization (Massey & Denton, 1993, 2007; Rothstein, 2015; Wilson, 1987, 1996), the *Brown* decision was contextualized as a means to desegregate schools to improve racial integration. In this respect, Milwaukee, Wisconsin became a champion of school desegregation and eventually devised several desegregation plans, including Chapter 220, to achieve racial integration between urban and suburban school districts.

A series of court rulings set the foundation for school desegregation in the north because, although racial segregation was illegal, many students in northern states were contained in racially segregated schools (Stolee, 1993). For instance, the *Green v. County School Board of New Kent County* (1968) case served as a follow-up to *Brown;* this ruling stated that the remedy for school segregation must include pupils, staff, extracurricular activities, physical facilities and transportation (Clotfelter, 2004; Dougherty, 2004; Stolee, 1993). Three years later, *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education* (1971) ruled that mathematical ratios and transportation were permissible in planning desegregation (Stolee, 1993). The *Keyes v. School District No. 1*, Denver (1973) case argued that the city of Denver, similar to Milwaukee and other northern districts, had never operated schools under a mandatory racial segregation law; therefore, it was necessary to prove that children were racially segregated based on the school

district's intent (Stolee, 1993). The *Keyes* case was specific to Milwaukee, and other northern cities, where school segregation resulted from housing patterns.

Collectively, these cases set the precedent for the establishment of court ordered desegregation plans and played a vital role in the attempted desegregation of Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). Yet, as previously discussed, the journey toward Milwaukee's court ordered plans was complicated by decades of racial tensions. The next section will discuss how residential segregation, stemming from the northern migration of African Americans, led to a perceived need to desegregate Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS). The need to desegregate public schools across urban and suburban district lines became evident after Milwaukeeans were unsuccessful in racially integrating MPS due to white flight and resistance to school integration.

The Backdrop to School Desegregation in Milwaukee: African American Migration to Milwaukee, Residential Segregation, Deindustrialization and Race Relations

1920-1930. The onset of World War I (WWI) in Europe prompted the demand for manufacturing products throughout the industrial North (Massey & Denton, 1992; Trotter, 2007; Wilson, 1996). At the same time, federal immigrant restrictions diminished the availability of cheap immigrant labor (Trotter, 2007). Additionally, Whites were transitioning from factory work to seek employment in more advanced fields, such as technology (Rury & Cassell, 1993). Thus, Milwaukee and other northern cities, searched for southern African Americans to fill such vacancies (Dahlk, 2010; Levine & Zipp, 1993). In response, in the 1920's, African Americans began migrating from the south to northern cities, including Milwaukee, in search of economic prosperity within the manufacturing industry (Jackson, 1985; Massey & Denton, 1992; Trotter, 2007; Wilson, 1996, 2004).

The African American presence in Milwaukee increased from 2,229 (1920) to 7,501 (1930) (Trotter, 2007), yet this racial group only comprised 1.2 percent of Milwaukee's total population (Dahlk, 2010; Trotter, 2007). The African American flow to Milwaukee was subdued by its close proximity to Chicago and Detroit, i.e., these cities were more attractive because the Illinois railroad system granted easier access to Chicago and due to the presence of large employment outlets, such as Sears and Roebuck and Ford Motor Company (Trotter, 2007). However, post-WWI economic downfall in Chicago prompted more African Americans to eventually migrate to Milwaukee (Trotter, 2007).

WWI prompted the initial recruitment of African Americans to Milwaukee; yet, their economic prosperity was complicated by tumultuous race relations. For example, the percent of African American factory workers in Milwaukee increased from 50 - 80 percent by 1930; however, due to employment discrimination, most of the manufacturing jobs were compensated at the lowest pay scale but higher than Southern wages (Dahlk, 2010; Trotter, 2007). African Americans access to equitable employment was further problematized by labor unions that instituted barriers to equalized compensation and safe work conditions (Trotter, 2007).

In addition to experiencing complications with accessing well-paid manufacturing jobs, Milwaukee's African American migrants were also disenfranchised by residential segregation. These new migrants were confined to a 120 block radius in Milwaukee's central city; yet, there were still enough Whites for the neighborhoods to be considered "...racially integrated during this period" (Dahlk, 2010, p. 13).

Due to concerns over congestion in the city, the City of Milwaukee devised a plan to annex land and develop new communities (Nelsen, 2015). The annexed plots of land, including suburban spaces, were exclusive to White families (Nelsen, 2015). To ensure racial exclusivity,

local banks and the federal government denied mortgage loans to African Americans who lived in Milwaukee's central city (see Levine, 2016; Nelsen, 2015; Trotter, 2017) thus confining them to urban communities. Additionally, racial restrictive covenants were developed and implemented to further exclude African American families from moving to the suburbs. These covenants forbade Whites from selling or renting property to African Americans beyond the central city (Trotter, 2007). Finally, zoning legislation also restricted the acquisition of improved homes and homeownership for African Americans. This law zoned the entire southern half of Milwaukee's central city for commercial and light manufacturing use and restricted new housing development until after WWII (Metropolitan Integration Research Center, 1979; Trotter, 2007).

The period between 1920-1930 witnessed the revival of Milwaukee's African American manufacturing working class. Their northern migration was materialized by limited employment opportunities in the south, federal laws that diminished European immigrant efforts to migrate to the U.S., and the need for low-skilled workers in the North. However, racial tensions and attitudes toward the new migrants minimized their social and economic opportunities in Milwaukee. The Great Depression further threatened their efforts. However, economic opportunities will resurge toward the end of WWII.

> **1930-1950.** Following a national trend, Milwaukee's economic state was negatively impacted throughout most of the 1930's. The Great Depression and World War II (WWII) deterred economic growth because factories closed and employees were displaced (Dahlk, 2010; Massey & Denton, 1993; Rury, 1993; Rury & Cassell, 1993; Trotter, 2007; Wilson W. J., 1996). Furthermore, the low paying factory jobs that were previously disproportionately assumed by Milwaukee's African American population, during WWI, were now being offered to Whites (see Trotter, 2007), making African

Americans more vulnerable to layoffs and displacement. Thus, this period revealed a decline in migration because it was difficult to find decent paying jobs in the North.

However, as the end of World War II (WWII) approached, industrialism was once again on the rise and many African American northerners were able to retreat back to the workforce and assume factory jobs (Dahlk, 2010; Trotter, 2007). Allis-Chalmers and A.O. Smith were two of Milwaukee's largest industrial firms during this time (Dahlk, 2010; Trotter, 2007). Collectively, these firms increased their African American workforce from 110 (1942) to 1,565 (1945) (Dahlk, 2010). Yet, discriminatory hiring practices limited African Americans chances for hire (Trotter, 2007). Corresponding with racial competition for manufacturing jobs, racial residential segregation intensified as more African Americans migrated to Milwaukee; thus, housing competition between the races proliferated.

In 1945, African Americans composed only 1.6 percent of Milwaukee's total population (Dahlk, 2010). However, this number would soon witness a drastic boost as the next wave of African Americans began migrating to Milwaukee to assume post-WWII jobs. Between 1950-59, Milwaukee was noted as having the highest rate of African American migration of any Midwestern city, averaging approximately 2,552 people per year during this decade (Nelsen, 2015). As a result, Frank Zeidler, mayor of Milwaukee (1948-1960), presented recommendations to alleviate overcrowding by expanding Milwaukee's population throughout the city, building public housing for African Americans at the edges of the city's periphery and encouraging homeownership across all racial groups (Nelsen, 2015). However, his strides were met with resistance by White suburbanites who feared that African Americans would settle in their neighborhoods (Nelsen, 2015).

In 1955, to preserve their racially homogeneous spaces, Whites successfully lobbied the state of Wisconsin to modify annexation laws to prevent Zeidler's recommended land expansion (Nelsen, 2015). Zoning laws were also passed which required massive home square footage stipulations for new construction in the suburbs; thus, home building opportunities were out of reach for the average African American family (Cohen, 2003; Jackson, 1985; Levine, 2016; Nelsen, 2015). While White families were able to secure Federal Housing Authority (FHA) and Veteran Administration (VA) supported loans, racial discrimination posed barriers to African Americans who were financially capable and interested in purchasing homes in the suburbs. African American families were further disadvantaged by the fact that the FHA and VA refused to financially support the purchase of multi-family units or the remodeling of older homes, which would have benefited African Americans social and economic well-being (Cohen, 2003; Nelsen, 2015; Trotter, 2007). These tactics further intensified the geographical segregation of African Americans in Milwaukee, disparately relegating them to the poorest and most unfit housing stock in the central city; thus, producing what Tyack (1974) references as a "nation within a nation" (p. 229).

African American life in Milwaukee between 1930-1950 paralleled with the larger context of the city's social, economic and political shifts. The Depression illuminated Milwaukee's weak economic state and its impact on its African American community. The end of WWII resurged industrialism and prompted a new emergence of African American migrants, from the south and Chicago (Trotter, 2007). Their increased presence further complicated race relations as African Americans and Whites continued to compete over jobs and residential space. In both respects, African Americans were exposed to the most unjust and inhumane treatment.

The process of northern migration accelerated during the 1960's and 1970's; this phenomenon set the premise for a school desegregation plan.

1960-1985. The northern migration of African Americans extended into the 1960's and 1970's (see Levine & Zipp, 1993; Levine, 2016) and Milwaukee experienced its largest influx of African American southern migrants settling in its central city (Geib, 1998; Rury & Cassell, 1993). The city's African American population drastically increased between 1940 (8,821) and 1985 (154,813) (see Dougherty, 2004; Geib, 1998; Levine & Zipp, 1993; Rury & Cassell, 1993) and the central city had become 86.9 percent African American by 1985 (Levine & Zipp, 1993). During these decades, the city was noted as demonstrating the highest rate of increase for any major city in the U.S. (Dougherty, 2004; Nelsen, 2015).

Due to southern structural inequalities, these migrants arrived poor and uneducated; yet, displayed strong work ethic (Dahlk, 2010). Unfortunately, their migration was accompanied by northern deindustrialization and heightened racial inequalities. For example, the availability of industrial jobs requiring minimal work skills began to decline in Milwaukee between 1950-1953; by 1985, Milwaukee had lost over 40 percent of such jobs (Dahlk, 2010; Levine & Zipp, 1993), with some jobs being relocated to suburban areas (Rury & Cassell, 1993). According to Levine & Zipp (1993), between 1960 and 1980, the majority of job growth in Milwaukee transpired in suburban areas; the city lost 28,000 jobs and the suburbs gained 33,000. Due to spatial mismatch and lack of mass transportation (see Wilson, 1996, 2004), it was difficult for city-dwelling African Americans to access employment in suburban areas.

Milwaukee's African American population was financially devastated by this reality. For example, by 1960, the African American unemployment rate had reached 12 percent, three times

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White unemployment (Dahlk, 2010) and 60 percent higher than Whites by 1966 (Levine & Zipp, 1993). In an earlier discussion, Allis-Chalmers was identified as a vital source of income for African Americans; however, in 1960, the company employed 448 African Americans as opposed to 782 during earlier times (Dahlk, 2010).

During the 1960-70 decade, race relations in Milwaukee were further problematized by continued blatant acts of racism toward the African American community. Richard Cudahy, president of the Milwaukee Urban League in 1966, recognized the attitudes of many Whites toward African Americans when stating that "The policy of keeping the Negro in his place, or out of this place or community - socially, geographically, economically, politically, and in every other respect - runs through the whole warp and woof of the social and political fabric of this community" (Dahlk, 2010, p. 30). Such racial attitudes were embodied by some Whites throughout the twentieth century and their efforts to exclude African Americans from the job market and particular residential spaces intensified as the century progressed and southern migration heightened. Massey & Denton (1993) argued that residential segregation served as the principal structural feature of American society which was responsible for the perpetuation of urban poverty and represented the primary cause for racial integration. The sentiments of these scholars (see Massey & Denton, 1993) rang truth for Milwaukee's African American residents. As such, the proliferation and implication of residential segregation eventually spilled over into Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) and served as justification for the development of a school desegregation plan.

Residential Segregation, Neighborhood Overcrowding and Milwaukee Public Schools

The Milwaukee school board imposed a neighborhood school policy which mandated students to attend school within their immediate neighborhood (Stolee, 1993). Based on this

policy, since Milwaukee's residents were racially segregated, the Milwaukee Public School

(MPS) district also became hyper segregated (Dahlk, 2010). In fact, in 1963-64, Milwaukee's

African American central city presence had swelled to 95 percent and MPS was racially

segregated in accordance to residential segregation (Dahlk, 2010; Nelsen, 2015). The large

migration of African American families posed constraints on the local school system because it

became overcrowded with students of color migrating primarily from southern states.

> To alleviate overcrowding in its urban schools, MPS instituted a series of racially
motivated policies.

> > **Intact busing.** The intact busing policy (Dahlk, 2010; Dougherty, 2004; Stolee, 1993)
> >
> > initiated the daily transfer of African American students and their teacher to different
> >
> > Milwaukee schools that could spatially accommodate them; however, upon arrival,
> >
> > students remained racially segregated at the receiving school rather than being integrated
> >
> > into the school's classes and curriculum (Stolee, 1993). These same students would
> >
> > return to their base school for lunch, due to limited space, only to return back to the
> >
> > receiving school for afternoon instruction (Dahlk, 2010; Stolee, 1993). The intact busing
> >
> > policy did not allow African American students to have recess or physical education class
> >
> > with their White peers (Dougherty, 2010). The CRT analysis here illuminates how this
> >
> > policy privileged White students who then disproportionately benefited from this
> >
> > institutionalized policy.
> >
> > **School district boundaries.** MPS drew school district boundaries which separated the
> >
> > inner city from the south side and suburban areas (Dougherty, 2004). This had the effect
> >
> > of further marginalizing African American students. Nelsen (2015) notes that the Center
> >
> > Street School district reflected a high population of African American students during the

1950's; therefore, the school board restructured this district in a manner that would allow the Pierce Street School district - which was predominantly White - to be detached. As a result, the Center Street School district became predominantly African American while the Pierce Street School district remained primarily White.

Student transfers. The school board's third mechanism for enforcing racial segregation was achieved by disproportionately allowing White students to transfer from central city schools. This policy granted students the freedom to transfer between Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) as long as their parents were able to provide transportation (Dougherty, 2004). As noted by Bell (1980), such transfer policies were intentionally implemented to allow White parents the freedom to evade the burden of school integration. This policy was unavailable to poor families of color who lacked the means for transportation. Furthermore, while White students were granted transfer options to better resourced urban schools, the MPS neighborhood school policy further restricted African American students to under-resourced central city schools.

Collectively, intact busing, school boundary decisions and student transfer policies served as the cornerstone of Attorney Lloyd Barbee's (1965) lawsuit against MPS with claims that the school district intentionally racially segregated schools and excluded African American children from accessing Milwaukee schools that housed advanced curriculum, appropriate school facilities and adequate resources that may potentially support academic mobility (Dougherty, 2004; Stolee, 1993). Building on *Brown's* 1954 psychological harm argument, Barbee wholeheartedly believed that segregated schools served as an "atrophy of aspiration" and unacceptable institutions for African American students (Dahlk, 2010, p. 42).

Desegregating Milwaukee Public Schools

A plea for school desegregation. Barbee and other integrationists made several attempts to work within the MPS system to achieve racial integration; however, their efforts were met with resistance from some Whites. Barbee believed their resistance stemmed from their lack of knowledge regarding the severity of racial segregation in MPS, which stemmed from residential segregation (Dahlk, 2010). Therefore, in July of 1963, Barbee along with members of the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) addressed the African American and White community regarding the level of racial inequality embedded within the structure of MPS (Dahlk, 2010). In the presentation, they declared that de facto school practices were harmful to African American students and shared a list of demands that would be made to the school board, including (Dahlk, 2010; Nelsen, 2015): 1) adoption of a school integration policy; 2) rezoning of school district boundaries and repositioning of new schools to promote integration; 3) adoption of an open enrollment policy to promote school integration through student transfers; 4) integration of African American teachers through the school system; and 5) proper integration of intact busing students into the community of the receiving school (Dahlk, 2010; Rury & Cassell, 1993).

Barbee's speech garnered mixed emotions from White community leaders. For example, the school board president, Lorraine Radtke dismissed his claims of intentional racial segregation by proclaiming that school segregation was a direct reflection of residential segregation. Her sentiments mitigated the school board from any wrongdoing and responsibility for alleviating the problem (Dahlk, 2010; Nelsen, 2015). Other community members were more empathetic. For example, an editorial in *The Milwaukee Journal* editorial advocated for desegregation but still supported the neighborhood school policy. And some clergymen opposed racial segregation of

schools based on moral high ground (Dahlk, 2010; Stolee, 1993). Barbee's suggestions were positioned to support school integration; however, most Whites adamantly resisted his proposal. Some even suggested that Barbee's demands were undeserving due to the White community's belief that MPS was one of the best systems in the country (Dahlk, 2010).

Barbee's declarations, and public presentation, gained the attention of the local school board. However, instead of meeting with Barbee and his supporters, the school board simply established a committee to review their grievances. The committee was referenced as "The Story Committee" (Dahlk, 2010, p. 62; Nelsen, 2015). The predominantly White committee was tasked with reviewing Barbee's complaints and coordinating three public hearings to review the complaints of school desegregation proponents (Dahlk, 2010). The seven member committee only included one African American member, Cornelius Golightly, a UWM philosophy professor (Nelsen, 2015).

The hearings began in September of 1963 (Dahlk, 2010; Nelsen, 2015). The first meeting addressed recommendations for improving Milwaukee's urban schools and the second meeting addressed issues related to school racial segregation (Dahlk, 2010). Between September and December of 1963, a series of testimonies were presented, by four African American groups, Lloyd Barbee and Morgan Gibson (NAACP and CORE activist) (Dahlk, 2010). The first African American group, comprised of eleven members representing various social organizations, recommended a dual agenda of compensatory education and integration, including expanded guidance programs, increased number of African Americans in administrative and supervisory positions, and "cultural understanding" in-service training for teachers (Dahlk, 2010, p. 63). Their desegregation initiatives included the implementation of an open enrollment plan that transferred African American students between MPS from predominantly African American

schools to more racially integrated schools, increased integration of African American faculty and supported the development of specialty schools to attract both African American and White students by offering innovative curriculum in specialty areas (Dahlk, 2010).

The second African American led group, the Northside Community Inventory Conference (NCIC) recommended a call for "complete school integration" (Dahlk, 2010, p. 64). The third group, the Near Northside Nonpartisan Conference (NNNC), supported the perception of the dual approach declared by others. In addition, this group illustrated the inequalities found within MPS by drawing a historical comparison of North Division High School between 1942 (predominantly White school) and 1963 (predominantly African American school) (Dahlk, 2010). Their grievances and distinctions were compelling. For example, the latter version of North Division demonstrated a decline in world language classes, from four to one. The number of clubs and activities declined from thirty-four to less than fifteen and the 1964 version of North Division did not develop and distribute a school newspaper (Dahlk, 2010). Finally, these leaders argued that residential desegregation would best serve a school desegregation agenda (Dahlk, 2010).

Milwaukee's local Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) chapter was the final group to testify before The Story Committee. Initially, this group declared that segregated schooling was inherently unequal but they also proposed a compensatory education plan. However, by the end of 1963, this group's vision became more closely aligned with Barbee's unrelenting position (see Dahlk, 2010), declaring school integration as the sole remedy of educational apartheid in Milwaukee. As explained by Dougherty (2010), collectively each committee supported school desegregation; yet, individually the groups believed that more than one route would lead to an equitable education for African American students. These varying positions were most likely

supported by the fact that many African American leaders were graduates of majority minority schools and embodied positive memories of those experiences (Dahlk, 2010).

Finally, in December of 1963, Lloyd Barbee and Morgan Gibson presented their case to The Story Committee (Dahlk, 2010). These civil rights leaders rationed that racially segregated educational facilities harmed the psyche of African American children based on the premise that separate is inherently unequal and demanded that the board recognize this inequality and its implication on the academic success of African American children (Dahlk, 2010). They further requisitioned the institution of a school desegregation plan by September of 1964 (Dahlk, 2010). Finally, these leaders cautioned the Story Committee about proposed plans to launch sit-ins at school board meetings, school boycotts and pickets at segregated schools if their demands for school integration were not met by January of 1964 (Dahlk, 2010; Nelsen, 2015).

In the end, the unsympathetic school board only vowed to implement an open enrollment transfer policy to address MPS' history of racial segregation. To address the other demands would mean that school board members would have to acknowledge the importance of an integrated education and ultimately abandon their neighborhood school policy (Dahlk, 2010). The acceptance of an open enrollment policy was complicated by the fact that parents would be responsible for providing transportation; as such, the policy disproportionately served White families over low-income African Americans (Dahlk, 2010).

In response to the school board's denial of school segregation and unwillingness to honor the community's proposals to combat the issue, Barbee realized the necessity of using the court system to address Milwaukee's vestiges of racial inequality (Dahlk, 2010).

The mobilization of the African American community and court hearings. Prior to filing a lawsuit, between 1963 - 1966, Barbee organized a series of sit-ins,

demonstrations, bus blockings, pickets and school boycotts in opposition to intact busing and racial inequality (Dahlk, 2010; Stolee, 1993). To support such efforts, Barbee and his followers founded the Milwaukee United School Integration Committee (MUSIC) (Dahlk, 2010; Dougherty, 2004; Nelsen, 2015; Stolee, 1993). This organization, along with the NAACP, CORE and Parents Action Committee for Education (PACE) further mobilized the African American community, including parents, against school segregation (Dahlk, 2010; Nelsen, 2015).

School boycotts began during the spring of 1964. By this time, multiple freedom schools had opened in African American churches (Nelsen, 2015; Stolee, 1993). These schools were administered by local activists, including African American and Whites. The goal was to serve as educational alternatives to MPS and allow African American students to participate in the school boycott while simultaneously receiving a proper education (Dahlk, 2010; Nelsen, 2015). It was estimated that between 11,000 - 16,000 students participated in the school boycott movement (Stolee, 1993).

The school desegregation protests persisted and were situated to magnify. For example, the Milwaukee chapter of CORE drafted a letter to Superintendent Vincent threatening to take further demonstration pursuits if intact bussed students were not racially integrated into MPS (Stolee, 1993). CORE members stated that actions could take the form of people chaining themselves to buses, sit-ins, pray-ins, stand-ins and picketing (Stolee, 1993). When school board action was not taken, demonstrators followed through with their threats (Stolee, 1993). In May of 1965, Barbee sent a similar letter to the school board on behalf of MUSIC, once again demanding that the board relinquish their intact busing policy and allow African American students to be integrated with their White peers (Stolee, 1993). He declared that another series of

demonstrations would transpire if demands were not met by May 15, 1965 (Stolee, 1993). Once again their plea fell on deaf ears and the school board refused to acknowledge their complaints. As such, boycotts and demonstrations continued (Stolee, 1993).

Many of the demonstrations resulted in arrests, resistance from some Whites, a bombing of the local NAACP office and threats from African Americans to destroy certain segregated schools (Stolee, 1993). Similar to other cities that pursued civil rights efforts, including Boston (see Nelsen, 2015), Milwaukee struggled to resolve deeply entrenched racial inequalities that historically shaped its school system. However, local community action was so profound that Milwaukee became recognized on a national level. Long-time civil rights activist, Dick Gregory, declared "...that the MPS boycott had been one of the most effective in the country" (Stolee, 1993, p. 243).

Nonetheless, such demonstrations failed to change the hearts and minds of the school board members. However, Barbee firmly stated that "...the purpose of the boycott...was not to change Whites' minds but to galvanize Milwaukee's black community… (Dahlk, 2010, p. 25). Barbee was successful in mobilizing his target community and their collective resistance to racial inequality served as a significant victory for the African American community (Dahlk, 2015). Although momentum for protests declined, the African American community mobilizing efforts were integral in igniting the crusade toward federal court action and state legislation.

Amos et al. v. The Board of School Directors of the City of Milwaukee. On June 17, 1965, Barbee filed a lawsuit against MPS, on behalf of parents of thirty-two African American students and nine White students (Nelsen, 2015). The case was referenced as *Amos et al. v. the Board of School Directors of the City of Milwaukee* (Nelsen, 2015) and alleged that the board: 1) established school boundary lines that promoted racial

segregation; 2) allowed White pupils to transfer while restricting African American students to segregated schools; 3) restricted African American teachers to segregated schools; 4) approved construction of predominantly African American schools; 5) failed to integrated intact busing students; 6) refused to promote plans to integrate MPS; and 7) drafted plans to promote school segregation (Stolee, 1993).

The school board immediately filed a response in denial of such segregationist practices (Stolee, 1993) and requested the dismissal of the lawsuit (Dougherty, 2004). As a result, the case remained unattended until 1973. The court hearing began on September 10, 1973 and concluded on January 31, 1974, followed by the submission of proposed findings, conclusions and motions which continued until December 13, 1974 (Stolee, 1993).

Voluntary plans to desegregate Milwaukee Public Schools. In the interim, to avoid losing their local control, the school board devised a series of alternative plans (to court mandate) to address race conflicts and support school integration, including the development of magnet schools and a metropolitan school desegregation plan (Dahlk, 2010; Nelsen, 2015). The role of magnet schools was to promote voluntary desegregation by advocating for quality education and attracting White and African American students into the same educational space (see Dahlk, 2010; Nelsen, 2015); the ultimate goal was to integrate schools without prompting White flight (Nelsen, 2015). However, magnet schools failed to alleviate racial segregation of schools and conversely, through the implementation of an entrance exam, primarily served the needs of high achieving White students and middle-class African American students (Dahlk, 2010). The metropolitan school desegregation plan would merge predominantly African American urban and

predominantly White suburban school districts and use busing to transport students across district lines (Dahlk, 2010).

Barbee was a vocal supporter of the metropolitan school desegregation plan; yet, opposers were skeptical because they feared the plan would disrupt the African American community and transfer the "best" African American students to the suburbs (Dahlk, 2010, p. 294). The plan was also opposed by Whites who resisted racial integration (Dahlk, 2010).

In July of 1975, the school board elected Lee McCurrin as the new school superintendent because he was known as a progressive who had a background in racial integration and worked well with diverse groups (Nelsen, 2015). McMurrin believed the expansion of choice options would lead to voluntary desegregation of schools (Nelsen, 2015). Some school board members were leery of the magnet school approach due to the models ineffectiveness in other states; however, the majority appreciated the voluntary concept embedded within the plan (Nelsen, 2015). The magnet school and metropolitan desegregation plans were reviewed by the school board but neither were implemented during this time.

Court ordered school desegregation. In the meanwhile, on January 19, 1976, Judge Reynolds ruled in favor of school desegregation, arguing that Milwaukee intentionally developed and maintained a dual school system based on race (Dougherty, 2004; Stolee, 1993). Dr. John A. Gronouski was appointed with the task of developing the desegregation plan (Stolee, 1993).

Within two weeks of Reynold's *Amos* order, the school board filed a motion to suspend the court's findings of segregation (Stolee, 1993). Such school board backlash, exemplified through the development (and court denial) of several inadequate desegregation plans and constant denial of wrongdoing persisted until 1980 (Stolee, 1993). Thus, the journey toward

desegregating MPS was reflective of a fifteen-year legal battle; the feud was finally retired

through the development of a consent decree (Stolee, 1993).

    Consent decree. Due to the school boards relentless power struggle and unreceptiveness

to change, the court saw fit to solicit other perspectives to facilitate the design of

Milwaukee's desegregation plan. As previously discussed, Superintendent McMurrin

devised a desegregation plan (in 1975) which focused on the development of magnet

schools at the elementary, middle and high school levels to orchestrate voluntary parental

choice. However, Judge Reynolds allowed a more eclectic group to develop a

desegregation plan; this group included school board members, a group of community

members referenced as the Committee of 100 (C100) and Superintendent McMurrin

(Stolee, 1993).

    Once again, the school board was unwilling to collaborate to devise a joint plan for

school desegregation (Stolee, 1993). Frustrated by the school boards resistance, in 1976,

Reynolds ordered the plaintiffs to submit a desegregation plan by February 23, 1979 (Stolee,

1993). This threat humbled the school board members and led to a collaborative agreement,

between the school board and plaintiffs, on a proposed consent decree (Stolee, 1993).

    The consent decree was essentially built upon the vision of Superintendent McMurrin'

magnet school plan (Stolee, 1993). The decree promised to ensure that at least 75 percent of

students would attend schools with enrollments identified within racial balance (Stolee, 1993).

These terms were effective during the 1979-80 school year and proposed to continue through the

1983-84 school year (Stolee, 1993). According to Stolee (1993), the consent decree was

problematic because while 75 percent of the students were mandated to desegregated schools, the

remaining 25 percent were left to attend racially segregated schools. Furthermore, African

American students bore the burden of school reassignment when their neighborhood schools were closed and converted to magnet schools to entice the voluntary participation of White students (Stolee, 1993).

The second plan to desegregate schools on a metropolitan scale was devised and implemented, in 1976, at the state expense to transfer African American and White students across district lines. By this time, some Milwaukeeans saw the need to desegregate across school district lines because the heightened level of White flight from the city had left Milwaukee racially segregated (Nelsen, 2015). As a result, Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS) was never fully desegregated and remained reflective of 97 percent African American students (Nelsen, 2015). Thus, the long ongoing battle to desegregate MPS resulted in a more intense level of racial segregation within the school system. Since Milwaukee had adopted a neighborhood school plan, it was pertinent for Milwaukeeans to devise a desegregation plan to allow African American and White students to transfer across district lines.

The Chapter 220 Program: Desegregating Across Urban and Suburban School Districts

> **The voluntary busing program.** In 1976, Milwaukee implemented a state program, referenced as Chapter 220. The goal of this program was to adopt a busing plan to transport African American students from the city to predominantly White suburban schools and suburban White students to specialty urban schools to promote racial integration across district lines (Stolee, 1993).

The *Milliken v. Bradley* (1974) ruling complicated a metropolitan plan by ruling that a court was unable to mandate interdistrict busing unless school districts were proven to have intentionally promoted segregation (Dougherty, 2004; Nelsen, 2015; Orfield & Eaton, 1996).

Therefore, Wisconsin initially sought to devise Chapter 220 as a voluntary program to integrate schools.

Chapter 220 allowed African American students to transfer from an MPS school with more than 30 percent minority enrollment to another MPS school that had less than 30 percent minority enrollment (Stolee, 1993); this process was known as an intradistrict transfer. However, this study is based on the interdistrict aspect of Chapter 220 which allowed the transfer of students across school districts to achieve racial balance (Stolee, 1993).

To encourage participation, the receiving district would be compensated at 100 percent of the student cost and the sending district would also be compensated state aid as if the student had remained in their district (Stolee, 1993). Additionally, if the number of student transfers exceeded five percent of its resident enrollment, receiving districts would be awarded a 20 percent bonus or 120 percent of its cost per pupil, (Stolee, 1993).

Chapter 220 required the establishment of a planning committee, consisting of 10 members from 18 Milwaukee county school districts, five members from MPS and five from the suburban district (including three school board members, a superintendent and one community member) (Stolee, 1993). The goal of the planning council was to recommend to its suburban board whether or not the board should vote in favor of Chapter 220 (Stolee, 1993). However, the board would ultimately decide if the district would participate in the program (Stolee, 1993).

In June of 1976, the school districts of Nicolet, Brown Deer, Shorewood, Greendale and Whitefish approved the plan for implementation during the 1976-77 school year (Stolee, 1993). The following year, Oak Creek, South Milwaukee, Wauwatosa and Whitnall school districts approved the plan (Stolee, 1993). In 1983, Franklin, Greenfield and St. Francis school boards joined the Chapter 220 program (Stolee, 1993). In 1984, after MPS filed a lawsuit against

suburban districts, the school boards of Cudahy and West Allis/West Milwaukee also joined

(Stolee, 1993). All Milwaukee county school districts, plus Menomonee Falls and Mequon-

Thiensville, had joined the Chapter 220 program by the end of 1987 (Nelsen, 2015; Stolee,

1993).

Resistance to Chapter 220. Although all 24 districts eventually agreed to participate,

due to community opposition, participation was not easily reached. For example, some

suburban residents rejected the plan due to a disinterest in racial integration and others

objected to the presence of African American students in their neighborhoods and the

concept of "forced busing" (see Nelsen, 2015; Stolee, 1993, p. 258), even though the plan

was voluntary. Some MPS board members and city dwellers were equally dissatisfied

with the plan because it failed to result in a significant change in suburban school policies

(Stolee, 1993). For example, for the 1976-77 school year, 330 African American

students from the city applied for transfer to 8 suburban districts and were accepted, with

Brown Deer accepting 95 of such transfers (Stolee, 1993). During this same year, only

11 suburban students transferred to Milwaukee Public Schools (MPS), with no transfers

from Brown Deer, Fox Point-Bayside and Maple Dale-Indian Hill (Stolee, 1993).

Court ordered busing plan. By the 1986-87 school year, the numbers had increased,

but marginal for suburban districts. The number of MPS transfers increased to 3,074,

with the largest transfers (539) to Wauwatosa and MPS received 769 White transfer

students from the suburbs (Dougherty, 2004; Stolee, 1993). Based on these data, and

examples of resistance, MPS filed a federal lawsuit against state officers, agencies and 24

suburban school districts claiming that the suburban districts further contributed to racial

segregation of MPS because they failed to transfer an adequate number of White students

to urban schools (Stolee, 1993). School board members also perceived that some districts were being selective in determining which students they would accept as transfers (Nelsen, 2015; Stolee, 1993). The lawsuit failed to garner universal support from Milwaukee's African American community because, by the 1980's, some African Americans no longer viewed desegregated schools as the solution to educational equality and alternatively elected to embrace racial pride and the preservation of neighborhood schools (Nelsen, 2015).

Nevertheless, the school board moved forward with the 1984 lawsuit alleging that the defendants supported the segregation of MPS. Stolee (1993) notes that the suburban school districts supported the segregation of MPS by: 1) excluding Milwaukee from interdistrict school reorganization efforts; 2) violating certain obligations under state law to promote equal educational opportunities and rejecting proposals to desegregate schools; 3) requiring MPS to pay transportation for Milwaukee students to attend private schools even though it impeded desegregation; 4) excluding MPS from interdistrict activities in exceptional and vocational activities; 5) refusing to allow a significant number of MPS students as suburban transfers even though funds were available; 6) committing intradistrict educational violations which had interdistrict impacts; 7) maintaining segregation and inequality of educational opportunity through a series of actions and inactions; and 8) promoting residential racial segregation which supported the creation and maintenance of segregated schools (Stolee, 1993).

Hearings began in 1987 and the case was settled by consent decree during the fall of 1987 (Nelsen, 2015; Stolee, 1993). The consent decree stated that the suburbs would double their Chapter 220 acceptances, encourage their resident students to transfer to MPS, engage in efforts to recruit and employ minority professional staff and continue to support state funding of the

Chapter 220 program; the State agreed to provide funds to MPS for educational improvements

and to establish affordable housing programs to racially integrate the suburbs; MPS agreed to

make at least 10 percent of specialty school seats available to suburban transfer students, make

summer school available for suburban transfers and expand the number of specialty programs

(Nelsen, 2015; Stolee, 1993). Yet, all of these integration plans were abandoned when Chapter

220 failed to live up to its intended goals.

Problematizing the Chapter 220 Program

Milwaukeeans spent over two decades fighting for a court ordered plan to racially

integrate its suburban and urban public schools. To some degree, they won the fight with the

implementation of Chapter 220. However, if educational equality is considered an institutional

priority, why then would Milwaukee abandon its original goal to support the academic success of

its most vulnerable population - African American students? The answer to this question may

potentially provide a further backdrop for understanding the academic experiences of African

American students who attended Brown Deer Middle High School.

This section will problematize the Chapter 220 plan through the following CRT tenets to

better realize the plans limitations: the *burden concept*, *whiteness as property*, and *interest*

convergence.

The Burden Concept and Whiteness as Property

According to some scholars (see Bell, 1980; Morris, 2006; Woodward, 2011),

desegregation plans burdened the African American community while allowing Whites to

maintain their white privilege of limited participation. This section will provide examples of

how the Chapter 220 program burdened its African American participants while granting

privilege to the White community.

First, the Chapter 220 program was initiated as a voluntary program that lacked

enforcement details (Richards, 2015). The "voluntary" (see Dougherty, p. 156) language,

inscribed within the desegregation plan, did not require suburban school districts to maintain a

commitment to accepting minority students into their districts. Thus, one suburban district chose

not to participate (Dougherty, 2004). Dougherty (2004) contends that the remaining suburban

districts continued their participation in Chapter 220 because their "right" (see Ladson-Billings

& Tate, 1995) to maintain a predominantly White school system was not adjusted or threatened.

Second, the policy inscribed a 30 percent maximum student transfer protocol. This

provision allowed the suburban school districts to control the number of minority students

transferring to their districts. The literature (see Wegmann, 2001) explains the theory of the 30

percent racial tipping point. This theory contends that when the African American student

representation reaches a certain point, White exodus accelerates; thus, tipping the racial balance

in schools. As such, the 30 percent threshold was established and maintained to avoid White out-

migration from suburban schools.

Third, due to the laws lack of permanence and enforcement details (see Richards, 2015),

the Chapter 220 settlement expired in 1995, resulting in a decrease in minority transfers (Bonds,

et al., 2009; Richards, 2015). As of 2007, ten suburban school districts - including Brown Deer -

became ineligible for further participation because they had reached the 30 percent maximum

threshold as outlined in the settlement agreement.

Fourth, the Open Enrollment program, instituted in 1998, was a more attractive program

because it allowed participation from all students (not a race-based policy) and paid the student

expenditure during the same academic year while Chapter 220 compensated suburban districts

during the following year (Nelsen, 2015). This "race-neutral" law was actually racially biased

because it reduced the participation of minority students and simultaneously increased the chances for White students, from the city, to access seats in suburban districts. This was possible because White families were more likely to provide the necessary transportation for their children (Nelsen, 2015).

Finally, *Parents Involved in Community School (PICS) v. Seattle School District 1* (2007) and *Meredith v. Jefferson County Board of Education* (2007) ruled race-based policies as unconstitutional (Bonds, et al., 2009), thus further alleviating school districts from participation. The PICS ruling declared that the Seattle school district's voluntary efforts to diversify the area's most academically inclined school was unconstitutional. According to Donnor (2013), the ruling served the interest and historical advantage of White parents who were uninterested in sharing seats of the prestigious high school with students of color. This decision exemplified how racial disparities and disadvantages were reproduced and white supremacy was maintained. These rulings impacted Milwaukee's Chapter 220 program because, in response, Wisconsin's Governor, Scott Walker, instituted a 2015 legislation to eventually eliminate Chapter 220 by discontinuing new student enrollment (Borsuk, 2016). In fact, the Brown Deer School District (BDSD) graduated their last class of Chapter 220 students in 2015. Wisconsin's governor suggested that race-based policies were no longer necessary in an era of post-racism (Borsuk, 2016). According to Journal Sentinel article (April, 2014), the elimination of this program would phase out 28,821 Chapter 220 participants among the 22 remaining districts.

The CRT lens suggests that Whites were hesitant to reduce their school based "property" status by fully supporting the Chapter 220 legislation; this was evident through their unwillingness to transfer White students to magnet schools to support school desegregation and the institution of a (30 percent) maximum student transfer policy. For example, during its first

year of implementation (1976), 330 minority students applied for transfers (with 111 being accepted) while only 11 White students requested transfers to magnet schools. During this same year 91976), although Brown Deer accepted the highest number of transfers (95), this school district didn't transfer any students to the city (Stolee, 1993). Ten years later, the gap in participation was still evident. During the 1986-87 school year, 3,074 minority students transferred to suburban districts and only 769 White students transferred to the magnet schools in the city.

Furthermore, since no measures were established to sanction suburban districts for non-participation in the Chapter 220 program, it was fairly easy for White suburban districts to adhere to the desegregation plan because it allowed them to appear compliant - and accepting of school desegregation - while not fully sharing the policy "burden" (Dougherty, 2004, p. 161). Suburban districts consistently evaded the burden by refusing to send an adequate number of White suburban students to schools in the city schools to help achieve racial balance.

Interest Convergence and Financial Incentives

Bell (1980) argues that the White community will tolerate school integration if its ideology and implementation does not interfere with their system of privilege. This section will illuminate how Chapter 220's implementation was plausible because its existence converged with the interest of the suburban and urban White communities.

The state of Wisconsin offered to fund the desegregation effort, including an additional financial provision which awarded a 20 percent bonus to the receiving school district (Dahlk, 2010; Stolee, 1993). Thus, a main consideration for suburban districts to accept Chapter 220 transfers, from the city, was the fact that these minority students were accompanied by financial incentives (Dahlk, 2010; Dougherty, 2004). As previously illustrated, African American

students were the primary participants; thus, suburban districts disproportionately reaped the financial gains. In the end, suburban school districts were recipients of funds that would enhance their budgets while attention and money was being diverted from quality education and urban schools (Dahlk, 2010).

Overall, the Chapter 220 program was perceived as a viable option for cross racial interactions; however, similar to *Brown,* it fell short of accomplishing its goal of racially integrating school systems because it merely allowed for the shuffling of bodies between school districts. For example, while some African American students gained access to suburban school spaces they were also excluded from accessing the school's more rigorous curriculum tracks (Nelsen, 2015). Understanding Chapter 220's long and complicated history is important for realizing ways in which its implementation was flawed.

Conclusion

Through the theoretical lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT), this chapter provided a critical and historical analysis of the *Brown v. Board of Education* law and Milwaukee's Chapter 220 desegregation plan. Based on these interrogations, it is evident that neither law has demonstrated optimal success in achieving their stated goals of racial inclusion and closing the racial achievement gaps. To the contrary, findings illuminate the perpetuation of hierarchical structures which supported the subordination of communities of color.

Brown's failures were evident through its inability to destroy the racist structures of white supremacy which served as the premise for legalized racial segregation. The policies and practices, embedded within *Brown,* merely allowed for the development of subtler forms of racial inequality to exist within school systems, including racialized tracking and discipline, deficit discourse and the prevalence of a racial achievement gap in suburban school districts.

Ultimately, as presented throughout Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, African American students who attended desegregated suburban school districts post-*Brown* continued to be marginalized within these spaces because suburban school officials were adamant in situating its' curriculum as "property" for the selective "use and enjoyment" of its' White students (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995, p. 59; see also Chapman, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Thus, such exclusionary policies and practices disproportionately excluded African American students from fully participating in their schooling experiences.

Chapter 220 was influenced by *Brown,* thus similar trends were evident within its implementation. For example, African American students bore the burden of busing while White families demonstrated minimal interest in accessing magnet schools in urban districts. In both scenarios, according to CRT, whites were adamant in maintaining their white privilege by affixing policies and practices that allowed them to demonstrate minimal participation in fulfilling the school desegregation plan which ultimately supported the demise of the Chapter 220 program.

Such realities have led some researchers to further examine the experiences of African American students who attend desegregated suburban schools to better understand the students' racialized schooling experiences. While, at the onset of this chapter, the experiences of African American students are specifically illuminated through a CRT lens, the next chapter will provide a broader literature review of research that investigated the experiences of students of color who attended suburban school districts.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to understand how Brown Deer Middle High School shaped the academic experiences of its African American students, it's essential for one to first understand how suburban schools in general have historically served or disserved the academic interests and needs of students of color. This chapter will discuss the literature which highlights the academic experiences of students of color who attended racially integrated suburban schools in order to illustrate how such schools have historically impacted the academic experiences of these student populations. As discussed in chapters one and two, the experiences of African American students who attended suburban school contexts, have been problematized by the suburban school's development and perpetuation of racialized policies and structures that excluded African American students from full participation in the school's curriculum (Chapman, 2013; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2009). To address such school inequities, the constructs of Multicultural Education (ME) and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) are also discussed within this chapter.

Race, Ethnicity, Identity and School Systems

The scholarly research presented in chapters one and two is clear in illuminating racialized hierarchies that are embedded within the structures of some suburban school establishments and the manner in which inequitable policies and practices work to impede the academic success of African American students (Carter, 2007; Chapman, 2014; Chapman et al., 2014; Diamond, 2006; Diamond, Lewis and Gordon, 2007; Huidor and Cooper, 2010; Lewis and Diamond, 2015; O'Connor et al., 2011). Despite these research findings, some scholars (see Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; McWhorter, 2001; Ogbu, 2003, 2008) offer identity related and cultural explanations for the academic achievement gap. For example, according to these scholars (see

Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; McWhorter, 2001; Ogbu, 2003, 2008), students of color are responsible for the indifference found within their academic progress because they intentionally display an oppositional attitude inclusive of non-dominant behaviors and dispositions that operate against school success. Such oppositional behavior, according to Ogbu (2003), is developed because students of color view schooling as a form of forced assimilation; thus, African American and other non-voluntary minorities equate academic success with "acting white" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986).

While Ogbu's (2003, 2008) arguments have dominated scholarly discourse on culture and education it embodies a monolithic ideology of culture and ethnicity and, furthermore, fails to account for the structural inequalities manifested within school systems. Other scholars (see Carter, 2005; Diamond et al., 2007) have countered this theory when evaluating the implications of peer culture on educational experiences and success. For example, Diamond et al., 2007 conducted 90 minute, semi-structured interviews with 70 students to examine the experiences of African American and White students who attended a desegregated school and found that, contrary to the "oppositional attitude" theory, African American students in their study aspired to perform well in school regardless of their prescribed academic track (i.e., high or low track). These findings suggest that African American students, even "involuntary minorities" (see Ogbu, 2003, 2008), hold similar academic aspirations and mainstream ideology regarding the value of education as their White peers. Additionally, Diamond et al., (2007) findings further refute the "oppositional attitude" thesis because, in their study, African American high achievers and their families sought after spaces in the school's advanced courses and low achievers offered positive peer support to their classroom peers by encouraging them to improve their academic performance. Furthermore, African American students were cognizant of the limitations

established by racial discrimination, including racialized track placement. Finally, these students reflected on how they received negative peer pressure from their White counterparts and teachers and encountered challenges navigating predominantly White Advanced Placement (AP) and Honor courses. This study was important because it helped to dispel the myth that African American students are unconcerned about their academic progress and upward mobility. In many respects, this research sheds light on the suburban school systems that support the academic underachievement of African American students.

Carter (2005) further challenges the "acting white" thesis and employs us to move beyond the binary limitations offered through the "acting white" or "acting black" discourse in an effort to better understand the homogeneous cultural and educational experiences of students of color (p. 323). Carter (2005) interviewed 68 low income African American and Latino students between the age of 13-24 who attended urban schools. Carter (2005) sought to unveil cultural diversity in educational experiences and to understand how students of color negotiate the contexts of school, including peer group associations. Carter (2005) exemplifies how, in response to the status hierarchies of schools, students of color develop multidimensional racial and ethnic identities in an effort to navigate their school spaces. The participants, in her study, internalized identities differed based on how they perceived race and culture to have impacted their individual academic lives; the manner in which they navigated differential spaces; and how they strived to maintain their sense of self pride through the display of their preferred cultural attributes. As such, Carter (2005) theorized that the ideological constructs expressed by racialized group members are not linear as suggested by Ogbu (2003 2008); alternatively, such constructs vary dependent upon how group members perceive how other group members should behave in relation to race and cultural constructs. In fact, Carter (2005) found significant

variation in the ideological dimensions of her study' participant's racial and ethnic identities. As such, three types of ideological accounts emerged from her research based upon how participants responded to the boundaries established between peer groups and their stratified schooling environments. Carter (2005) characterized the student ideological types as the *cultural mainstreamers*, *cultural straddlers and noncompliant believers*. Cultural mainstreamers are those who act according to traditional assimilationist values; they accept the Eurocentric ideology of assimilation, yet they can also be racially and ethnically aware. Cultural straddlers are the most successful negotiators of school success; they understand dominant and non-dominant cultural capital and acquire the necessary skills to participate in multiple cultural environments. Finally, in an effort to "keep it real", noncompliant believers accept and appreciate their own cultural representations and employ little effort to conform to cultural prescriptions of school and White society; furthermore, noncompliant believers value education but are not typically high achievers because they are more critical of systemic inequalities.

Furthermore, similar to Diamond et al. (2007), the participants in Carter (2005) study claimed that their lack of school engagement resonated with their perception that school officials, and the overall culture of the school, issued rewards and sanctions according to the acquiesce of dominant cultural rules. Carter (2005) found that students of color were aware of the ways in which the school operated in an unjust manner and marginalized those who failed to utilize mainstream cultural dispositions to their advantage. While students' academic performance varied, all participants valued education and its relation to employment and economic mobility. Finally, Carter (2005) found that students' maintenance of differential cultural capital, dominant and non-dominant (not oppositional), served them well as they worked to maintain status positions within their communities, families and school spaces. For example, "black" cultural

capital was employed to maintain important racialized friendships and dominant cultural capital was instrumental when navigating more conventional spaces, including school and work. However, as exemplified in Carter (2005) study, navigating through multiple spaces and adopting multiple personas can be problematic for youth of color because they risk being reckoned as superficial when socializing with their racial peers. This form of code switching could potentially cost some students of color their peer group membership. These complexities further allude to the contextual specificity of cultural capital, suggesting that dominant cultural capital is essential for social, academic and economic attainment; yet, non-dominant cultural capital is critical to status positioning within socially marginalized groups, which ultimately increase youth of colors' sense of self-worth through their embodied cultural production.

Diamond et al. (2007) and Carter (2005) scholarship allow researchers and educators to veer away from deficit discourse to better understand how school systems develop and maintain internal structures of inequality that inevitably support the academic lag of African American students. Furthermore, this body of research (see Carter, 2005; Diamond et al., 2007) provides multilayered explanations for the academic disengagement and low performance of students of color by illuminating how school systems reproduce societal inequalities (see Bourdieu, 1973, 1986) by promoting cultural assimilationist ideologies and habitus; as such, students of color are unable to solely focus on learning, instead they are forced to respond to the Eurocentric environments of schools through the formation of heterogeneous racial ideologies (Carter, 2005). While students of color are indeed possessors of cultural capital that transfer into forms of wealth for their communities (see Carter, 2005; Yosso, 2005), school systems fail to value such capital because "Black cultural capital" (see Carter, 2005, p. 47) fails to converge with a conformist doctrine. Thus, students of color' "oppositional behaviors" does not serve as a form of resistance

to schooling but as a form of resistance to structural inequalities that are often found within the schooling processes, policies and discourse (Yosso, 2002, 2005).

Thus far, this literature review has shed light on the manner in which public school systems, in general, exist to impede the academic aspirations and achievement of students of color. The next section will specifically discuss how school structures implicate the educational experiences of students of color who attend suburban school settings similar to the school highlighted in this study.

The Academic Experiences of Students of Color in Suburban Schools

White suburban school environments have been noted within the literature as preferred educational spaces (Bell, 2004; Dougherty, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2007; McNally, 2001; Nelsen, 2015; Orfield and Eaton, 1996). However, as briefly discussed in Chapter 1, the educational experiences of students of color who attend suburban school environments have historically been complicated by the suburban school's development and maintenance of inequitable structures that negatively implicate minority student's academic experiences, outcomes and postsecondary success. This section will provide a more robust literature review that supports the research findings which illuminate the manner in which suburban schools have historically developed systems that exclude students of color from full integration into suburban school contexts (Ladson-Billings, 2006b; Lewis, 2003; Wells et al., 2016).

This literature review explores the academic and social experiences of minority students who attended predominantly White suburban schools. O'Connor, Mueller, Lewis, Rivas-Drake & Rosenberg (2011) conducted individual interviews with 44 African American students, including in-depth interviews with 8 high achieving students to document the educational experiences of African American students who were subjected to a racially stratified academic

hierarchy (RSAH) in a majority White high school. These scholars found that students strategized for excellence - despite racialized burdens - by how they defined blackness as either a structured or cultural phenomenon. These definitions then influenced social interactions with same - and other race peers - and the strategies used to navigate their environment. Ultimately, the findings illuminated how racial identity and tracking impacted African American achievement, amongst the group studied. Within the academic domain, the high achieving African American study participants were forced to isolate themselves from their same race peers because the school stratified classes (i.e., AP and regular) on different floors of the school. For example, high achieving students were situated on the third floor and low achieving students remained in classes on the first floor of the school building. As a result, curriculum was stratified in a manner that effectively ensured that certain academic opportunities were inaccessible to many students of color. The study also noted that African American high achievers found ways to share school space with their racial peers as a means to safeguard themselves from elements of racism. Similar to research conducted by Carter (2007), common gathering spaces for African American students included the cafeteria, basketball courts and other non-academic spaces

Similar to O'Connor et al. (2011), Carter (2007) also conducted a study to understand how nine high achieving African American students navigated their predominantly White school space. Carter (2007) noted that African American students, in her study, created racial "counter spaces" (p. 543) to affirm their racial identity and to serve as a barrier against acts of racism. This scholar (Carter, 2007) found that African American students developed a strong sense of self identity that was expressed in secluded social spaces through their dress, speech and behavior which represented a "...style of Blackness…" (p. 543). Thus, they were very cognizant as to how race and racism existed, in this White establishment, to hinder their presence in such

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elite spaces.

Chapman et al, (2014) conducted 22 focus group interviews with 97 high school students of color to examine the role of school curriculum and its ability to hinder and benefit students of color. Highlighting the "double-edged sword of curriculum" (p. 97), these scholars found that students of color had access to a variety of AP courses, extracurricular experiences and tutorial support. However, similar to O'Connor et al. (2011), Chapman et al., (2014) found that due to tracking and preferential treatment of White students, the African American students demonstrated limited participation in such offerings. For example, many students felt a sense of isolation, being the only African American student present, which led to disengagement. These findings support studies on school connectedness which suggests that school environments should exist based on inclusivity and programs that ensure representation of all student groups (Chapman, 2013; O'Connor, et al., 2011). Students, in this study, also expressed concern with their ability to attend before and after school academic support sessions and extracurricular programs; attendance was problematic because the participants did not live in close proximity to the suburban school and due to home-related responsibilities (i.e., caring for siblings and working part time jobs). Other students identified money as a barrier to extracurricular participation and many students were unable to participate due to non-payment of school fees. This is problematic and points to the limitations of school integration because the law's implementation was not constructed to ensure that all students of color were able to effectively matriculate through the racist terrain of these suburban schools. Furthermore, these integrated spaces, illuminated in this study, failed to fully integrate students of color within their curriculum by providing after-school transportation options so students could easily access schools during extracurricular and study sessions that are held outside of normal school hours. Such barriers

perpetuate racial inequalities and limit academic success.

With a goal to explore the racial academic achievement found between students of color and White students in suburban districts, Chapman (2014), conducted 22 focus group interviews with 97 high school students of color to further understand the academic experiences of students of color in predominantly White high school settings. She (Chapman, 2014) found that students perceived teachers as holding negative perceptions of them, which led to inequitable distribution of discipline across the races. Furthermore, participants of color believed White students were granted preferential treatment. For example, White students were given verbal warnings or escaped discipline altogether while students of color were given harsher punishment or suspensions. Students of color also noted that counselors selected less rigorous courses for them and failed to guide them toward university admission. Instead, students of color were tracked into technical schools or open admission colleges. The ways that this school's personnel excluded their students of color from accessing the rich resources available within the suburban school is exemplary of ways that some White communities reserve rigorous courses for the benefit of their white students while excluding students of color from reaping similar benefits. Additionally, the students in this study were disproportionately singled out for discipline infractions, such actions may have potentially lead students of color to disconnect from the school, in turn implicating their academic achievement.

Huidor & Cooper (2010) examined the experiences of 20 students of color who voluntarily attended a racially integrated school. Through a questionnaire, African American and Latino students discussed their perceptions of their local racially segregated school, their experiences at the integrated school site, and the value of navigating the educational opportunities offered by participating in a voluntary integration program. Collectively, the

African American students voiced their dissatisfaction for the urban school while expressing satisfaction for their racially diverse school. The study participants stated that the urban schools were "bad" (p. 154) because they were plagued with gangs, violence and exhibited an overall unsafe place for learning. To the contrary, they deemed the integrated school as "good" (p. 154), characterizing it as a highly resourced, safe place to learn. The findings reveal that although students expressed pleasure with their suburban schooling experience, similar to aforementioned studies, there was minimal evidence of racial integration and student engagement transpiring within their school space. For example, the students predominantly socialized with their same race peers during school, choosing to hang out in non-academic spaces like the "cafeteria" (p. 158), similar to students highlighted in O'Connor et al. (2011) and Carter (2007) studies. Additionally, the African American students rarely enrolled in AP courses (1/20 participants) or participated in extracurricular activities (2/20 participants).

Unlike the aforementioned studies which primarily examined the experiences of students of color, Lewis and Diamond (2015) conducted interviews with students, parents and school officials to explore racial disproportionality in disciplinary measures and tracking in a racially mixed Midwestern suburban high school. Their findings revealed that school officials regularly operated based on the perceived desires of the most influential parents, in this case White parents. This was evident in the manner in which they inflicted inequitable enforcement of school policies, including discipline. Additionally, even though African American families fought for their children to earn a seat in Advanced Placement (AP) courses, White students were disproportionately given preference. These scholars extend current research on African American student's experience in racially mixed schools by employing the parent's perspectives as well as the perspectives of White students. As such, they found that White families explained

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such preferential treatment by placing blame on the African American parents and their children. Their responses illustrate the continued prevalence of white privilege and colorblindness.

Similar to Huidor & Cooper (2010), Diamond (2006) investigated the academic achievement of African American students who attended a court ordered desegregated school district located in a Midwest suburb to determine how race, class and educational opportunities intertwine to reinforce the racial achievement gap. He found that institutional inequalities limited minority students' equal access to a rigorous education because they were tracked in lower-level courses (vs. AP and honors) and were instructed by less qualified teachers who implemented less challenging and less engaging teaching strategies.

The body of research presented in this chapter exist to promote a better understanding of the differential treatment that is regarded to African American students who attend suburban high schools based on suburban school's permeation of racialized hierarchies. For example, suburban school contexts maintain white privilege through the manner in which they perpetuate structural systems through the development of its policies and practices, including primarily reserving its curriculum as "property" for White students and disproportionately inflicting discipline upon African American students (Chapman, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). All of which limits African American students access to quality instructional time and postsecondary college and career opportunities (Chapman, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009).

In response to such racialized experiences that African Americans students have endured while attending school settings, including the suburban context, ideologies related to multiculturalism and cultural relevancy were formulated in an effort for all school systems, including suburban, to create policies and practices that best regard the academic needs of all

students but, in response to their racialized history, especially students of color. Thus, scholars (see Banks, 2007; Chapman, 2013; Dixson and Ladson-Billings, 2017; Irvine, 2009; Jordan, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1992) argue for the inclusion of a multicultural and culturally relevant framework to address school inequality and support the academic needs of African American students who have been marginalized in educational institutions, including desegregated suburban schools. A multicultural education perspective moves beyond the mere notion of classroom instructional content to include "...policy, learning climate, instructional delivery, leadership, and evaluation…" (Gay, 2004, p. 32) and should serve as an integral part of everything that transpires within the school environment. The goal of a multicultural framework is to improve the academic achievement of students of color and prepare them for democratic citizenship within a stratified society (Gay, 2004) by making the overall curriculum more relevant to the experiences of students through the representation of ethnic groups and their major contributions, adopting varied instructional strategies to address the learning needs of all students and infusing a multicultural context throughout all content areas (i.e., art, music, language arts, math, economics, sociology, science, history, etc.) (Gay, 2004).

Some scholars (see Gay, 2004; Ladson-Billings 1992, 1994, 1995) have stretched the ideology of multiculturalism to support a social justice agenda expressed through a culturally relevant pedagogy framework. Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) is a construct that is committed to collective empowerment and rests on the notion that 1) students must experience academic success, 2) students must develop and maintain cultural competence and 3) students must develop a level of critical consciousness that will allow them to challenge the status quo of a societal hierarchy (Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1994, 1995). Ultimately, Ladson-Billings (1995) argues that a critically relevant pedagogy must centralize the academic experiences of African

American students and other students who have been historically marginalized within the public school system.

Similar to Multicultural Education principles, a culturally relevant pedagogical approach is not restricted to the classroom (see Dixson and Ladson-Billings, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1995); for example, schools are challenged to examine its current school-wide policies and practices and realign their approaches to incorporate community engagement and diversification of its teaching staff (Dixson and Ladson-Billings, 2017; Henry, 2017; Warren, 2017). In regard to staff diversity, recent studies (see Henry, 2017; Warren, 2017) link the importance of a diverse teaching staff with CRP. Warren (2017) and Henry (2017), for example, illuminate the ways that African American teachers supported the academic success of their African American student population. Specifically, Warren (2017) supported the CRP literature by examining the teaching practices of African American teachers who specifically work in suburban schools. Warren (2017) found that students of color remained underserved in these environments even though suburban schools are known for housing better resources that support secondary and postsecondary success. To counter this racial injustice, African American teachers, in Warren's (2017) study, developed personal connections and kinships with their African American student body. For example, African American teachers served as "cultural navigators" to help African American students navigate through suburban spaces (Warren, 2017, p. 12). In this role, African American teachers served as academic and racial advocates, protecting students of color from various forms of mistreatment, neglect and micro and macro forms of racism; served as pertinent channels of resources to better support their students of color' social, emotional and cultural opportunities; and taught students of color how to better manage racialized terrains.

Collectively, both culturally and ethnically driven approaches of ME and CRP resist an assimilation ideology and places the academic needs of African American students and their cultural competence as essential to their schooling experiences. Additionally, such race and cultural specific approaches offer opportunities for students of color to critically examine power and hierarchies of privilege while still being able to operate within the school system (see Irvine, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Milner, 2012), including scrutiny of policies targeting minority students, racial tracking and access to extracurricular activities for students of color (Chapman, 2013).

Grounding the Current Study

This literature review provided scholarly evidence that refutes identity based and cultural explanations for the racialized achievement gap and alternatively sheds light on school based inequalities as explanations for African American students' academic lag. Specific to African American students who attended desegregated suburban schools, the literature review illuminates racialized hierarchies within these suburban spaces and highlights a gap in the school desegregation literature. First, all aforementioned studies were conducted at suburban schools that were predominantly White (over 50 percent), with three of these studies being conducted at affluent schools (Carter, 2007; Diamond, 2006; O'Connor, et al., 2011). As previously discussed, the racial demographics of some suburban schools is changing to include more students of color (Frankenberg, 2008; Frey, 2001, 2009; Fry, 2009; Orfield, 2001, 2009; Siegel-Hawley). Thus, the omission of a suburban research site like Brown Deer Middle High School that is less representative of White students, with the exception of Chapman (2014), points to the fact that the majority of the research which explores the experiences of students of color in suburban spaces is limited and could be positioned within a contemporary frame.

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Additionally, what is missing from the literature is an examination of the experiences of African American students who attended a unique suburban high school like BDMHS. As discussed in chapters one and three, BDMHS is situated within a majority-minority suburban school district which has a long and convoluted history with the school desegregation movement, originating in 1976. The BDSD met its Chapter 220 demands in 2007 by allowing 30 percent of its school population to be representative of minority students. Yet, no research has been conducted to better understand the racialized experiences of African Americans who attended a desegregated suburban high school in Wisconsin during a post-Chapter 220 legislation period. Finally, all previous research has explored the experiences of students while they were currently attending high school; this research captured the voices of adult graduates who are perhaps better positioned to reflect on their high school experiences in a manner that allowed them to critique such experiences and reveal how they perceived their suburban schooling experiences to have implicated their lives. As such, this study veers from previous studies and contributes recent findings to the school desegregation literature by elucidating the schooling experiences of 18 African Americans who graduated from Brown Deer Middle High School between 2012-2018.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature that examined the racialized achievement gap and experiences of students of color who attended public school settings, including predominantly White suburban high schools. Collectively, the research on African American students' experiences who attended suburban high schools shed light on the existence of structural systems which permeate racial inequalities and negative academic and postsecondary implications for African American students. Phenomena like a disproportionate concentration of students of color being tracked into low level courses, students of color being perceived through a negative

lens, and the inequitable distribution of punishment for students of color seemed to not only interfere with the students' abilities to exhibit excellence within and beyond high school, but such disparities may have also pointed to the school's personnel as being colorblind to the needs of their entire student body. Milner (2012) references such influences of colorblindness as examples of "opportunity gaps" (p. 701) because teachers, and other school officials in these studies, may have potentially missed the opportunity to develop policies and practices that genuinely respect the racialized experiences, cultural background and contributions of African American students in their schools. As such, these missed opportunities had the potential to perpetuate racial achievement gaps, particularly within suburban school districts.

Based on the racialized history which exemplifies the unfulfilled promises of *Brown,* some scholars reasoned that all students would benefit, socially and academically, from the school's implementation of a multicultural and culturally relevant approach which centers the cultural and ethnic experiences of African American student populations within the overall culture of the school.

Finally, as previously noted, this study attempts to expand the school desegregation literature by including the examination of African Americans who attended a desegregated, suburban high school during a more current era. The following chapter details the methodology and methods that were employed for this study.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of a group of African American graduates of Brown Deer Middle High School. As previously presented, BDMHS has a prolonged history of school desegregation, dating back to 1976. Specifically, I explored the following major and sub-research questions:

Major Research Questions

1. What were the social and academic experiences of a group of African American students who attended Brown Deer Middle High School?

2. How might the social and academic experiences in Brown Deer Middle High School, as reported by this group of African American graduates, impact their postsecondary college and career choices?

Sub-Research Questions

1. What are the perceptions of African American graduates regarding the development of student/teacher relationships?

2. What are the perceptions of African American graduates regarding the school's curriculum, including course options and extracurricular activities?

3. What are the perceptions of African American graduates regarding the school's discipline policies?

4. How do African American graduates perceive the school's resources to have supported their academic achievement and postsecondary college and career choices?

5. What role did school officials, particularly counselors, play in guiding students' postsecondary college and career choices?

Qualitative Research Approach

According to Denzin & Lincoln (2011), "...qualitative research is a field of inquiry...that locates the researcher in the field" (p. 3) in an effort to apply practices that will "transform the world" through stories, narratives and other appropriate forms of data collection. For this study, I adopted a qualitative approach to better understand the social and academic experiences of 18 African American graduates of Brown Deer Middle High School (BDMHS). A qualitative framework was further selected because the associated methods, which are later outlined in this chapter, were useful in discovering the meaning that these graduates gave to their experiences while attending BDMHS (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

As presented in chapters one and two, this study adopted the theoretical frameworks of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Race Theory in Education to interrogate the laws associated with *Brown* and Chapter 220 through a racialized lens and to develop interview questions that would allow me to gain a better understanding of the schooling experiences of this study's participants whose high school has had an extended narrative with the school desegregation movement and whose population is currently majority-minority. In alignment with this approach, which centers the concepts of race and racism, I selected a Critical Race Methodology to further guide this study's methodological approach.

Critical Race Methodology

As previously discussed in Chapter 2, Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Critical Race Theory in Education are theoretical frameworks that are used to examine concepts related to race and racism within a variety of domains, including the field of education (Bell, 1980, 2004; Delgado, 1990; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Ladson-Billings & Tate,

1995; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002; Yosso, Villalpando, Bernal & Solorzano, 2001). Employing CRT as a theoretical lens, for this study, led me to adopt Critical Race Methodology to better understand the racialized experiences of African American participants who attended Brown Deer Middle High School.

Building upon the concepts of Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Theory in Education, Solorzano and Yosso (2002) introduce Critical Race Methodology (CRM) as a research approach that focuses on the stories and experiences of students of color. Such counterstories can be used to expose, analyze and challenge the majority's story of racial privilege. These scholars (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002) introduce CRM for education as a "...theoretically grounded approach to research…" (p. 24) that does the following:

1. Foregrounds race and racism throughout the research process

2. Challenges the traditional research paradigms, texts, and theories used to explain the experiences of students of color

3. Offers a liberatory or transformative solution to racial, gender, and class subordination

4. Focuses on the racialized, gendered and classed experiences of students of color

In alignment with the literature presented in chapters one through three, this study adopted CRM to realize how the structural systems embedded within BDMHS served as barriers of exclusion for this study's participants which, in turn, implicated their postsecondary college and career preparation and choices.

The Intersection of CRT, CRM and Storytelling

One key principle of CRT and CRM is applying voice to those marginalized by systems of stratification (Delgado, 1989; Duncan, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002). Thus, CRT employs a storytelling component which allows

communities of color to share their lived experiences (Solorzano & Yosso, 2001). Ladson-Billings (1998) suggests that storytelling serves as a tool that allows educators to understand the experiences of students of color through intentional "listening techniques" (p. 10) and Delgado (1989) rationalize storytelling as a "cure" (p. 2414) to the dogma that disenfranchise people of color. Based on the notions expressed through CRT, CRM and storytelling, CRT scholars are encouraged to employ any and all relevant methods to address problems of inequality within school systems (DeCuir-Gunby & Walker DeVose, 2013; Dixon & Rousseau, 2005).

Through the sharing of voice, this study's participants were able to challenge the mainstream concepts of colorblindness and expose racial inequalities that existed within Brown Deer Middle High School during their tenure (Crenshaw, 1995, 2011; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Parker & Lynn, 2002; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

Research Site – Brown Deer Middle High School

This study investigates the schooling experiences of a group of African Americans who graduated from Brown Deer Middle High School between 2012-2018.

The Village of Brown Deer

Brown Deer Middle High School is located in the predominantly White suburb (55.4 percent) of Brown Deer, Wisconsin. Geographically, Brown Deer is situated as a typical inner-ring suburb, bounded by the Village of River Hills on the east, the city of Mequon on the north and the city of Milwaukee on the south and west (Piotrowski et al., 2016). As such, Brown Deer is sandwiched between one of the poorest (Milwaukee) and wealthiest (River Hills and Mequon) suburbs. This geographic position has placed Brown Deer in the "middle ground" (Piotrowski et al., 2016, p. 2), between the social and economic extremes of the city and the prestigious suburbs of Milwaukee.

In 1970, Brown Deer was home to predominantly White households - nearly 100 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 1970). However, by 2010, the African American representation slowly grew to 28.6 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). In accordance with the national demographic shifts witnessed in suburban and urban neighborhoods (Frankenberg, 2008; Fry, 2009; Orfield & Luce, 2012), in Brown Deer, the African American population was estimated to reach 31.8 percent by 2015 and White resident population was expected to gradually decrease (U.S. Census Bureau Estimate, 2010). Today, the Village boasts as one of the most diverse suburbs in Wisconsin and home to families representing a variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds (Piotrowski et al., 2016; School District of Brown Deer, 2019).

The Brown Deer School District

Historically, the Brown Deer School District (BDSD) consisted of four schools: one early elementary (Algonquin); one elementary (Dean Elementary School); one middle school (Brown Deer Middle School); and one high school (Brown Deer High School). In 2015, the BDSD merged to include two schools on one campus. Currently, Brown Deer Elementary School houses grades K4-6 and Brown Deer Middle High School houses grades 7-12 (School District of Brown Deer, 2019).

The district currently serves approximately 1600 students (School District of Brown Deer, 2019). As of the 2016-17 school year, the district served 46 percent African American, 26 percent white, 12 percent Asian and 7 percent Hispanic students, with over 48 percent of its students living in poverty (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019). With respect to racial demographics of the school district's staff, during the 2017-2018 school year, the district employed 22 percent African American, 69 percent White, .03 percent Asian, 0.1 percent

Hispanic, 0.1 percent Indian and 0.1 percent Biracial school staff (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

In this district, there are major differences in academic achievement across the races. For example, although Brown Deer's African American students perform significantly better than Milwaukee's on average, they perform significantly worse than their White peers who attend the same school district (Wisconsin Department of Instruction, 2018). During the 2015-16 school year, the ACT test performance between African American and White students in Brown Deer was 17.5 and 22.2 respectively (Wisconsin Department of Instruction, 2018). Though African-American students comprise the largest segment of the student body in the BDSD, they have achieved the lowest level of Math and English proficiency out of the five ethnic groups represented in this school district (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

In 2015, regarding Advanced Placement (AP) enrollment status, 13 percent of students in the BDSD were enrolled in an AP Course; the racial break-down includes 23 percent White, 15 percent Hispanic, 14 percent Asian and 5 percent African American. Specific to AP exam passing rate, the racial breakdown included 80 percent Asian and 57 percent White students. Although African Americans and Hispanics combined make up the majority of the student body, neither racial group passed an AP exam in 2015 (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

The district's discipline trend is equally alarming; during the 2016-17 school year, the BDSD authorized 239 suspensions, with 185 (77 percent) of these infractions bestowed upon African American students (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019). However, the numbers are less disparate when examining graduation rates. Overall, in 2016-17, the school district exhibited a 94 percent graduation rate, including Asian (100 percent), African American

(95 percent), Hispanic (90 percent) and White (91 percent) (Wisconsin Department of Public

Instruction, 2019). Specific to post graduation plans, in 2016-17, 85 percent of White students

planned to attend a four-year university post-high school, compared to 84 percent Asian and 59

percent African American, with 41 percent of African Americans planning to attend a 2-year

college (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

Brown Deer Middle High School

As previously discussed, in Chapter 1, the racial demographics of the high school have

gradually increased to represent a majority minority student population. As of 2016-17, the

racial break-down of the middle/high school is as follows: Biracial (6 percent), Hispanic (6

percent), Asian (11 percent), White (22 percent) and African American (52 percent). A six-year

historical snapshot of the school's racial demographic shift, by graduation year, is illustrated in

Table 1.

Table 1. *Percentage of Brown Deer Middle High School enrollment, by race*

Race	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Minority	-	73	73	No DPI data available for this year	74	76	78
African American	53	54	54		50	54	52
White	29	27	27		26	24	22

Regarding graduation rates, BDMHS has been successful in graduating the majority of

their student population; the graduation data for the 2017-18 school year is as follows: African

American (95 percent) and White (91 percent) (see Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction,

2019); no other racialized data was reported by DPI in this area. Yet, the academic progress of its

African American student population is comparable to data presented for the BDSD, with

African American students performing the lowest in English and Math proficiency. The racial

achievement data, for the 2017-18 school year, is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. *BDMHS English and Math Proficiency by Race/Ethnicity, 2017-2018*

| | **English/Language Arts** | | | **Math** | | |
Race/Ethnicity	**Proficient**	**Basic**	**Below Basic**	**Proficient**	**Basic**	**Below Basic**
White	42%	28%	22%	26%	20%	26%
Asian	30%	58%	11%	30%	36%	33%
Hispanic	35%	20%	35%	45%	10%	45%
African American	17%	36%	44%	12%	29%	58%

Research Methods

For this study, in my attempt to add voice and perspective to the school desegregation

literature, I employed a variety of data collection sources, including individual interviews; focus

groups; a demographic survey; and school specific data collected from the following websites:

BDMHS, the Brown Deer School District (BDSD) and Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

A discussion regarding my recruitment methods, data collection methods and their respective

outcomes is included within this section.

Selection of Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants who could provide rich accounts

regarding their racialized schooling experiences while attending Brown Deer Middle High

School (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1988; Seidman, 1991). Merriam (1998) defines purposeful

sampling as being "...based on the assumption that one wants to discover, understand, and gain

insight; therefore, one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most" (p. 48). In

this regard, I intentionally selected to interview African Americans who graduated from Brown

Deer Middle High School between 2012 - 2018. These individuals provided rich accounts

related to their experiences, including their exposure to certain courses and activities, their

relationships with school officials and peers, the manner in which the school enforced their

discipline policies and the ways in which the curriculum and school officials prepared them for

their postsecondary college and career choices and success. To ensure confidentiality,

pseudonyms were assigned to all research participants (Creswell, 1998; Seidman, 1991).

Recruitment of Participants

Participant recruitment, for this study, was conducted between June, 2018 – December,

2018. I used the following methods to recruit participants for this study. The social media and

recruitment flyers are attached as Appendix A and Appendix B.

Social media. I solicited participants through my secured and personal Facebook

account as well as the following sites: "Brown Deer Middle High School Friends";

"Village of Brown Deer"; and "School District of Brown Deer". I utilized Facebook in

the following manner: 1) I posted a message that introduced myself as a UWM dissertator

and explained the purpose of my research; and 2) In this same message, I shared my

personal email address and cell phone number.

Community approach. I emailed and/or posted recruitment flyers at 1) a local barber

shop; 2) two churches in the Milwaukee area; 3) Brown Deer Library, 4) Pick n' Save

grocery store in Brown Deer; 5) Brown Deer branch YMCA; 6) NAACP and 7) the

Urban League. These flyers were posted beyond Brown Deer, since some potential

participants may reside in other neighborhoods.

Brown Deer School District. Since members of the Brown Deer School District's staff

and administrative teams have previously expressed an interest in my research findings, I

emailed the research flyer to teachers and the school's superintendent. I requested these

school officials to share a copy of my research flyer, via email (or other desired means),

with high school graduates that fit the study's criteria.

Snowball method. Finally, snowball methods (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998) were

employed to allow me to acquire leads for additional informants from those who had

already been interviewed. At the end of each interview, I asked the graduates to identify

and share my information with others who fit the research criteria (i.e., identify as

African American and graduate of BDMHS between 2012-2018) (Babbie, 1989).

However, only one participant specifically provided me with the name and contact

number of a potential participant. In turn, I was able to make phone contact (text) with

this person; we scheduled a first round interview, however, the respondent cancelled and

discontinued contact.

Recruitment results. While aforementioned recruitment strategies yielded a total of 26

participants who contacted me and expressed an interest in the study, I was only

successful in securing interviews with 18 of those respondents. Table 3 provides a

demographic breakdown of this study's participants; all data is self-reported and was

obtained from the demographic survey that was completed by research participants prior

to attending the first interview. Participants are presented based on their assigned

pseudonym.

Table 3. *Demographic Data for Study Participants*

Name	G	Age	Grad Year	Acad. Track	Access to BDSD			Socioeconomic Status				Post High School
					220	OE	BDR	Lived w/M,F,B	Mother's Education	Father's Education	Free Lunch	
Mali	F	19	2016	AP			X	M	M.A	HS	N	Completing B.A.
Sheba	F	19	2017	AP		X		M	M.A.	-	N	Completing B.A.
Nefertari	F	22		AP			X	B	M.A.	-	N	Completing B.A.
Kenya	F	23	2013	AP		X		M	M.A.	-	N	Completing B.A.

Name	G	Age	Grad Year	Acad. Track	220	OE	BDR	Lived w/			Free Lunch	Post HS
Nairobi	F	21	2015	AP		X		M	M.A.	A.A	N	Completing B.A.
Moses	M	22	2014	AP		X		B	M.A.	A.A.	N	Completing B.A.
Lybia	F	19	2017	AP			X	M	B.A.	B.A.	N	Completing B.A.
Malia	F	24	2012	TC/HA			X	-	-	H.S.	N	Completed B.A., Completing M.A.
Nandi	F	19	2017	TC/HA			X	B	HS	HS	N	Unemployed
Cleopatra	F	19	2017	TC/HA			X	B	H.S.	M.A.	N	Completing A.A.
Algeria	F	18	2017	TC			X	B	A.A.	A.A	Y	Working
Sudan	M	20	2016	TC				M	PhD	-	N	Completing B.A.
Nigeria	F	23	2013	TC	X			M	H.S.	A.A	Y	Working
Niger	M	24	2012	TC			X	-	-	-	N	Completed B.A., Completing M.A.
Chad	M	20	2015	TC			X	B	HS	M.A.	Y	Completing Certificate
Niger	M	24	2013	TC	-	-	-		-	-	N	Completing B.A.
Ashanti	M	21	2015	TC			X	B	M.A.	HS	N	Completing A.A.
Ghana	F	20	2016	TC			X	B	B.A.	A.A.	N	Completing A.A.

Notes: "G" refers to Gender; "Grad Year" refers to Graduation Year; "Acad. Track" refers to Academic Track; "AP" refers to Advanced Placement; "TC" refers to Traditional Track; "HA" refers to High Achiever ; "Lived w/" refers to Lived with - M (mother); F (father); B (both) "Access to BDSD": "220" (Chapter 220); "OE" (Open Enrollment); "BDR" (Brown Deer Resident); "B.A." refers to Bachelor Degree; "M.A." refers to Master Degree; "A.A" refers to Associate Degree; Regarding the "Free Lunch" column, "Y" refers to Yes and "N" refers to No "Post HS": Post High School
*all data was self-reported by study participants via an electronic demographic survey

Data Collection

Individual interviews. I partially constructed my individual interviewing efforts

according to Seidman (1991) recommendations by attempting to conduct at least two

individual interviews with each participant. Ample time had to be reserved for this

process because I asked participants to "...reconstruct their experience, put it in the

context of their lives, and reflect on its meaning" (Seidman, 1991, p. 13). The use of a

multiple interview approach potentially allowed for the building of participant/researcher

trust and rapport (see Creswell, 1989; Seidman, 1991), between first and second round

interviews, and hopefully allowed participants an opportunity to ease their comfort level

and be more forthcoming with their racialized stories during the second interview. I

allowed at least one to three weeks between interviews to allow participants an

opportunity to reflect on the first interview; allow for the establishment of a more

intimate researcher/participant relationship; allow time for transcription of the round one

interviews and to allow me an opportunity to review and apply initial codes to the first

interview transcript in order to devise follow-up and/or clarifying questions for the

second interview (Seidman, 1991).

During the onset of the first individual interview, I introduced myself, thanked the

participant for their participation, reviewed the purpose of the study and time commitment (see

Creswell, 1989; Merriam, 1998) and allowed the participant to read and sign the consent form

(the consent form was also emailed to each participant prior to the individual interview). The

consent form is attached as "Appendix D". If the interview was conducted via phone or virtually

(i.e., via Google Hangouts), I read the consent form aloud (while tape recording) and requested

that the participant grant me with a verbal approval to proceed with the interview. Once

approval to proceed with the interview had been granted, I proceeded with asking interview

questions in a manner that scaffold from a general to a more specific line of inquiry. Throughout

the course of each interview, follow-up questions were asked based on statements made by the

participants as they related to the overarching research questions (Creswell, 1989).

I demonstrated flexibility in this process by conducting some of my interviews via phone

and Google Hangouts with participants who lived in a different state, relocated to a different

state between first and second round interviews or who were unavailable to meet face-to-face for

their second round interview (Creswell, 1989; Seidman, 1991). The breakdown of interview types is as follows:

- Interview #1: Fifteen interviews were conducted in-person; however, due to the fact that some participants lived out of state, two interviews were conducted via phone and one interview was conducted via the iPhone's Facetime application.

- Interview #2: During the time when the second round interviews transpired fewer participants were available for in-person interviews because one participant relocated to a different state and five participants had returned to their out-of-state universities. Thus, eight interviews were conducted via phone; one interview was conducted via the iPhone's Facetime application and eight interviews were conducted in-person equaling a total of seventeen second round interviews because I was unable to secure a second round interview with one participant.

- Focus Group: Focus group #1 was conducted in-person and focus group #2 was conducted via Google Hangouts.

Interview data for all interviews were audio recorded (see Patton, 1989; Seidman, 1991) using the Voice Memo application on my cell phone, uploaded to my password protected personal Google Docs folder titled, "Interview Data"; transcribed (see Seidman, 1991) and then maintained in a separate password protected Google Docs folder, titled "Interview Transcriptions" in preparation for the coding and analysis process. The coding and analysis process is discussed later in this section. The next three sections provide a description of the specifics of each interview, including individual interview #1, individual interview #2 and focus group.

Individual interview #1. The first individual interview established the context of the participants' schooling experiences by asking them to reconstruct the details of their experiences while attending Brown Deer Middle High School. This interview served as a basic inquiry of the participants social and academic schooling experiences. An interview guide was developed and guided the interview process (Appendix C).

Individual interview #2. Since my research questions required participants to share racialized stories about their school experiences while attending BDMHS, as ascertained by Seidman (1991), I conducted a second interview with all participants except one African American male who never responded to my multiple second round interview requests. As previously stated, between the first and second interview, I reviewed the first interview transcript several times to determine follow-up questions and preliminary codes for the second interview. The additional questions are included in Appendix C, in italicized font.

Additionally, the main goal of the second interview was reserved to inquire specifically about the participant's racialized experiences while attending the high school as reflected in Appendix C. During the second interview, I asked participants to reflect on the meaning of their experiences as a BDMHS student and to specifically address questions regarding their perceptions related to how concepts of race and racism played out within their educational context.

Each individual interview lasted approximately 50 - 120 minutes and was held at sites determined by the study's participants. At the conclusion of second round interviews, participants were given a $20 gift card to Starbucks; the gift card was either hand delivered or

sent via email. The first and second round individual interviews were supplemented by data

collected during two focus groups.

Focus groups. Focus groups were chosen to supplement the individual interviews

because, through participant interaction, I was able to gain insight into the ways that

meaning was constructed within the context of a small group (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas

& Robson, 2001). Furthermore, this method was selected because focus groups have the

potential to help participants feel empowered, during the research process, by allowing

them to take charge of the discussion and move in different directions based on the flow

of the discussion (Morgan, 1997). In fact, during each focus group, some of the

participants assumed the role of moderator and led discussions which allowed their peers

to reflect on particular incidents or discussions that transpired during high school.

After reviewing first and second round interview transcripts and providing preliminary

codes to the data, I realized that participant's perspectives of their high school experiences

diverged along the lines of their participation in academic tracks and residency (i.e., Advanced

Placement v. traditional track curriculum and Milwaukee v. Brown Deer resident). Since my

goal was to facilitate information recall which may yield rich data in a comfortable environment,

supported by research (see McLafferty, 2004; Mkandawire, 2010 Robinson, 1999), I developed

homogeneous focus groups based on the participant's self-reported academic tracks (i.e.,

Advanced Placement v. traditional track curriculum) and residency (i.e., Milwaukee v. Brown

Deer resident). Additionally, the creation of homogeneous focus groups across academic tracks

and residency, was established to potentially minimize the privilege differentials that were

reported during individual interviews and offer a more equitable space to encourage free

dialogue about their high school experiences. For example, some participants who primarily

completed AP track curriculum shared reflections regarding how they perceived school officials and other peers to have regarded them as more privileged (than their lower and traditional track peers) within the high school setting. I was able to achieve some level of diversity within each focus group based on the following: gender, socioeconomic status, access to the school district (i.e., resident, Chapter 220, Open Enrollment, lived with relative), graduation year and post-high school academics. Table 4 highlights the diversity represented within each focus group that was established based on participants self-reporting of their academic track and residency.

Table 4. *Demographic Breakdown of Focus Group Participants Across Academic Track and Residency*

Academic Track	Gender		Access to BDMHS				Graduation Years	Post HS Engagement			
	M	F	220	OE	BDR	Other		In College	Completed 4-year College Degree	Working	Un-employed
Advanced Placement	1	3	0	4	0		2013, 2014, 2015, 2017	3	1		
Traditional Track	1	3	1	0	2	1	2012 (x2), 2013, 2017		2	1	1

Notes:
"Gender": F (female); M (male); "Access to BDMHS": "220" (Chapter 220); "OE" (Open Enrollment); "BDR" (Brown Deer Resident); "Post HS": Post High School
*all data was self-reported by study participants via an electronic demographic survey

The interview questions for the focus group were created after completion of the first and second round individual interviews and were constructed to gauge a better understanding of the course selection process and college and career resources that were available during the participant's high school years. During individual interviews, participants spoke in depth regarding the racialized tracking process and exclusionary practices that they perceived existed at

BDMHS based on race and residency; thus, focus group questions were also crafted to better understand the racialized and class hierarchy of BDMHS' tracking policies and procedures.

During the onset of the focus group, I thanked the participants for their participation, reviewed the purpose of the study and time commitment (see Creswell, 1989; Merriam, 1998) and allowed the participants to read and sign the consent form (the consent form was also emailed to each participant prior to the individual interview). The focus group consent form is attached as "Appendix F". The second focus group was conducted via Google Hangouts, thus, I read the consent form aloud (while tape recording) and requested that the participants grant me with a verbal approval to proceed with the interview. Once approval to proceed with the interview was granted, I proceeded with asking interview questions. Throughout the course of each interview, follow-up questions were asked based on statements made by the participants as they related to the overarching research questions (Creswell, 1989).

Each focus group lasted approximately 90 – 120 minutes and was held at sites determined by the study's participants. The focus group protocol is attached as Appendix E.

Demographic survey. A demographic survey was disseminated via email and completed by each participant prior to the first scheduled interview. First, the goal was to gather pre-interview data to ensure that the participants identified as African American and BDMHS graduates between 2012-2018. Additionally, I used the demographic survey to collect data regarding the graduates' academic performance, extracurricular involvement, family's socioeconomic status during high school, and postsecondary college and/or career engagement. Finally, the demographic survey was used to ensure that a level of diversity was represented within the selection of study participants, for example age, gender, socioeconomic status and means for accessing the BDSD. The

survey was developed as a Google Form and disseminated electronically (via email) to all

participants who expressed an interest in this study; individual and summary responses

were automatically compiled into the "individual" and "summary" sections of the Google

Form. The demographic survey is included as "Appendix E".

Timeframe for data collection. As previously stated, the data for this research were

gathered during the summer and fall semesters of 2018. A snapshot of the data collection

activities and timeframe is illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5. *Timeframe for Data Collection and Completed Activities*

Time Frame	Activity	Completed Steps
July - November	Participant Recruitment	-I posted recruitment flyers on Facebook
		-I shared a recruitment flyer, via email, with Brown Deer School District's personnel, including teachers and administrator
		-I posted recruitment flyers within the Brown Deer and Milwaukee community
July - December	Individual Interviews	-I replied to interested individuals via whatever means they initially contacted me (i.e., personal email or text message). During the message, I thanked them for their interest and asked them to share their availability for an interview (i.e., preferred date, time and location).
		-Based on their scheduling choice, I immediately scheduled interviews with them at times and locations of their choosing.
		-Immediately after securing a date and location for an interview, I disseminated the demographic data survey, via email and/or text message (according to the participants choosing). I secured the interview prior to the dissemination of the demographic survey because I was anxious about losing participants if I waited to schedule the interview. However, I was prepared to cancel the interview if the potential participant failed to meet the study criteria that was previously expressed.
		-Prior to the scheduled interview, I disseminated consent forms via email.

		-A day prior to the scheduled interview, I contacted each participant, via phone or email (depending on how they originally contacted me), I thanked them again for their participation and reminded them of our scheduled interview.
		-During the onset of the interview, I also reviewed a paper copy of the consent. The reviewing of the consent form was either done in person or I read aloud via phone or Google Hangout (while audio recording), depending on the context of the meeting.
		-I collected the signed consent forms from participants during the interview. I initially stored the consent forms in my research binder. These documents were later scanned and uploaded into my personal Google Docs folder titled, "Participant Consent Forms". Then, the original consent forms were shredded in my home office.
		-I conducted participant interviews.
		-At the closure of second round interviews, I either hand delivered the promised $20 Starbucks gift card or immediately sent to participants via email.
		-The interviews were recorded and data was later transcribed and coded.
October - December	Recruitment for Focus Group Interviews	-I contacted graduates, via text message or email, who I thought delivered meaningful individual interviews and invited them to participate in a focus group interview, based on the diversity expressed in the previous section (i.e., according to academic track, residency and other level of diversity, including age, gender and graduation year).
December	Focus Group Interviews	-I arranged the focus groups by contacting the selected focus group participants, via text message, and asking them to participate in a focus group so I could gain a better understanding of their high school experiences in a small group context.
		-I scheduled the focus group based on the group's availability. This was a tedious process since I was trying to coordinate schedules with 12 participants with hopes of retaining at least 8. It was also tedious because, due to confidentiality, I was unable to use a scheduling application such as "Doodle".

-Consent forms were reviewed during the focus group. I disseminated consent forms in person for focus group #1 and read aloud, while audio recording, via Google Hangout for focus group #2.

-I collected the consent forms from participants who attended the in-person focus group. I initially stored them in my research binder. These documents were later scanned and uploaded into my personal Google Docs folder titled, "Participant Consent Forms". Then, the original consent forms were shredded in my home office.

-I conducted each focus group.

-The interviews were recorded and data was later transcribed and coded.

Researcher Positionality

I am an African American female educator who believes that structural inequalities exist to marginalize African American students in educational settings. In accordance with Omi & Winant (2014), I believe that race is a social construct which categorizes people, based on skin color, and has the effect of granting disproportionate advantage to whites over other races. I respect the verbal contributions of people of color and accept their voices as truth because historically their truth has been conceived through a lens of white supremacy. Our tainted history of racial injustice is problematic; thus, the narratives of African Americans within racialized social and institutionalized structures, including school settings, are important to consider as we move from a universal, rational sense of truth to a post-modern and localized sense of truth and self. Thus, I reject mainstream epistemology and research approach that support deficit and colorblind notions because such principles permeate white supremacy and structural inequality.

As a researcher, I possess what Berger (2013) references as "insider" status because I share the racial identity of the research participants and I am a former resident of the Village of

Brown Deer and graduate of Brown Deer High School (p. 4). While this "insider" status may have potentially granted me with researcher privilege it may have also problematized the process because I carried the risk of obscuring the research boundaries by projecting my personal biases throughout the research process. This can be troubling because it carries the risk of the participant's voices being muted (see Berger, 2013) by my experiences and insights. Thus, my challenge was to maintain my experiences with the phenomenon (which may have offered a more intimate connection with the participants) and familiarity with the phenomenon while, simultaneously, striving to not impose my experiences on those expressed by the study's participants. Thus, my engagement in reflexivity was necessary, throughout the research process, to ensure the credibility of my study.

Researcher Reflexivity

Reflexivity, in social science research, is viewed as an ongoing process of internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation of the researcher's positionality and acknowledgement about how this position may impact the research process and outcome (Berger, 2013). According to Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2011), the practice of reflexivity functions to decenter the role of the researcher to promote a more democratic research process. Since no research is void of bias, assumption and researcher's epistemology, reflexivity strategies are encouraged to ensure credibility and trustworthiness throughout the research process, from formulation of questions through the write-up phase (Gilgun, 2010). Gilgun (2010) suggests that reflexive journaling serves as a practice that should be adopted throughout the research process because it allows the researcher to self-scrutinize in an effort to "come clean" (p. 3) and not impose personal perspectives on the "accounts and actions of research informants" (p. 3).

Therefore, in an attempt to restrict my researcher bias, I maintained a journal to reflect

upon my personal insights and how such perceptions may have potentially impacted the study. The details of this journaling process is included in the next discussion on "credibility".

Credibility

Credibility determines whether (or not) the research findings and interpretation are derived based on the participant's original data and viewpoint (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The credibility of this research was verified based on the following strategies:

Crystallization

I crystallized (Richardson, 2005) the data collection methods by collecting data from a variety of sources including two individual interviews; two focus groups; a demographic survey; and data obtained from the Brown Deer Middle High School (BDMHS), Brown Deer School District (BDSD) and Department of Public Instruction (DPI) websites. The use of multiple data collection methods allowed me to investigate the data from multiple perspectives and angles. Meeting with the study's participants multiple times (in some cases 3) further strengthened the trustworthiness of my findings because I requested participants to clarify statements made during previous interviews and I asked follow-up questions. Also, the construction of a focus group allowed participants to serve as moderators, check one another and ask guiding questions of their peers regarding particular school incidents and available resources (Merriam, 1998).

Reflexive Journaling

From a CRT vantage point, it was my responsibility to realize that power differentials exist within the research process and reign on the side of equity by centering the subject and ensuring that the research is being conducted "...for, rather than on, the subjects in question…" (Hylton, 2012, p. 35; Parker & Lynn, 2002). I attempted to minimize power differentials and potential researcher bias throughout the research process by maintaining a reflexive journal.

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Specifically, the journal included thoughts regarding my experiences as a researcher; biases that I have toward the research topic; ways to adapt interview questions; ways to adapt my interview style, including ways to maintain a standard disposition (including facial expressions, head nodding practices and other nonverbal gestures) during times when information was shared that I perceived as unjust and disheartening (Gilgun, 2012). I typically journaled weekly, in a notebook, during the data collection phase; the notebook was maintained in my research binder.

Peer Review

Dependability within the research process was further accomplished by meeting with two of my doctoral peers, throughout the research process, to ensure that the findings and interpretations of the study aligned with the collected data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Specifically, their feedback assisted me in acknowledging my bias and how such biases may potentially impact the overall meaning of my study. Furthermore, this process helped to confirm the accuracy of the findings and to ensure that the findings were supported by the data collected (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016) and not my prejudice toward the research topic. Throughout our scheduled meetings, I continued to maintain notes in my reflexive journal that would support the authenticity of the research data and findings.

<div align="center">

Data Analysis

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Merriam (1998) defines analysis as "...the process of making sense out of the data. "Making sense out of data involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what people have said and what the researcher has seen and read - it is the process of making meaning…" (p. 178).

From here, qualitative researchers transform what they see and hear into intelligible accounts by presenting written versions of their data in a manner that is clearly understood by the research participants and readers of the study (Leonardo, 2013; Wolcott, 1994). Using the lens

of CRT and CRM, the raw data from this study was critically analyzed and manipulated into narratives (Creswell, 1998; Leonardo, 2013). After reading the specifics below, the reader will notice that while CRT served as the theoretical frame for this study, the data analysis was not constricted by the CRT lens. For example, while the majority of the data codes aligned with CRT based on the interview questions, the process of coding also revealed the following codes which are not CRT specific: "safe spaces", "role of the counselor", "post high school experiences" and "identity". Additionally, the research findings extend the school desegregation literature in the following ways: this study presents the voices of graduates who are better positioned to articulate and critique their schooling experiences from an external perspective; CRT speaks to how suburban school contexts lack cultural representation (see Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2009) and my study accentuates this literature because the research participants shared how they felt while attending what they perceived to be a monocultural school environment and how the experience impacted them, as such the participant's voices further inform the CRT literature.

Interview data (including focus group data) generated an enormous amount of text; thus, data was reduced to illuminate what was most important to the study (Seidman, 1991). For this study:

1. Each individual and focus group interview was recorded via the Voice Memo application on my cell phone, uploaded into my personal Google Docs folder title, "Transcriptions" and transcribed.

2. I listened to each audio file as I reviewed the typed transcript to ensure that all data was captured during the transcription process.

3. Initially, each interview transcript was reviewed multiple times (at least 3-4) and

codes (key concepts) were determined based on recurring patterns identified

throughout each interview and across interviews (Creswell, 1998).

4. I printed the transcriptions and codes were manually written within the margins of

each transcript.

5. I then reviewed the interview transcripts again and manually color-coded the

similar codes within each transcript and across interview transcripts (see

Lichtman, 2012) to search for divergent and convergent qualities. For example,

"student/teacher relationships" was highlighted yellow and "tracking" was

highlighted blue. The color coded technique allowed for a visual of the recurring

themes which led to an easier route for reducing the data into major themes. I

initially began with 59 codes; however, these codes were later reduced to 34

because I consolidated similar codes. For example, I originally included the

following codes: "ID's", "bathroom access" and "cell phones"; however, these

codes were later consolidated into the "discipline" code.

6. The recurring color-coded (highlighted) codes were condensed and designated as

general "themes" based on their convergent qualities (Creswell, 2007). This

process of coding and analyzing was done throughout the data collection phase

(Strauss & Corbin, 1998); for example, the data were reviewed and recoded after I

designed the focus group protocol. My goal was to review previous transcripts to

determine if older codes converged with newly designated codes. Additionally,

the data were reviewed after the data illuminated differentiated schooling

experiences in accordance to academic track affiliation; as such, I went back and

included the "TT" (traditional track) and "AP" (advanced placement) distinctions

where appropriate. This process resulted in 3 major themes and 13 subthemes being illuminated for this study. A summary of the major themes, subthemes and final codes is highlighted in Table 6.

Table 6. *Summary of Final Themes, Subthemes and Codes*

Theme	Subthemes	Codes
Monoculturalism & Systems of Exclusion: Pedagogy and Practice	"Brown Deer is a Really Diverse Place but They Don't Want to Talk About Race"	Lack of Multicultural Curriculum (including textbooks) Cultural Knowledge of Teacher Lesson Plans
	"This is Really a Pipeline System"	Knowledge of AP AP Tracking Role of School Officials
	"They Always Treated You a Little Better"	Preferential Treatment Teacher Expectations Classroom Segregation Positive Teaching Strategies AP Student/Teacher Relationships AP Role of School Officials
	"…And Then You Pray…"	Classroom Segregation TT Positive Teaching Strategies TT Negative Teaching Strategies TT Teacher Expectations TT Student/Adult Relationships TT Response to Teaching Strategies TT Role of School Officials
	"I Didn't Feel Prepared"	Role of the Counselor Lack of Academic Preparation Not Prepared for the AP Exam Post High School Experiences Family Peer Support Role of School Officials
Monoculturalism & Systems of Exclusion: High School Cliques, Race, Identity and Severing Ties	Busing and Peer Networks Assimilation and Peer Networks Those Loud Black Girls "I'm Not One of Them" "I Don't Want to be Black" Extracurricular Cliques, Race and Word of Mouth "Safe Spaces"	Extracurricular Chapter 220 Acting White Peer Relationships The Milwaukee Kids Identity/Self-concept The "N" Word Lack of Community

"Spirit Killers"	"Zero Tolerance" School Zone and Racialized Discipline	Surveillance
		Stereotypes
		Dress Code
	The Intersection of Race, Gender, Residency, Academic Track and School Discipline	Preferential Treatment
		Discipline/African American Girls
		Discipline/African American Boys
		Discipline/Milwaukee Kids
		Lack of Community

7. A Google Sheet was created for data organization and representation. Initially, each tab (identified at the bottom of the sheet) included preliminary recurring data codes. The first column, within each tab, included the preliminary themes which emerged based on the raw data and codes. The second column, within each tab, included the preliminary sub-themes. The third column, within each tab, included the actual statements, phrases and raw data that directly aligned with the identified codes and erected themes. The fourth column included the name of the graduate who expressed such sentiments. The fifth column represented the data alignment with CRT tenets. A diagram of this coding process is illustrated as Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Data Analysis Chart #1*

6. After crafting the "Findings" chapter for this paper, I found it necessary to consolidate previously identified themes and subthemes based on their

similarities. Thus, the original Google Sheet was later copied as a separate file

and condensed to include the following tabs and sections: major themes, sub-

themes, direct quotes from data, research data pseudonym and CRT tenet

alignment. A diagram of this final process is illustrated as Figure 2.

Figure 2. *Final Data Analysis Chart #2*

7. After the "Findings" chapter began to shape and themes were being discussed, I read

each individual and focus group interview transcript several more times and pulled out

any relevant quotes that may have been missed, during the data organization process, but

that I felt would support the thematic arguments presented in the "Findings" chapter.

8. The demographic survey data was used to build a data charts to represent participant's

profile data in a visual format (see Table 3). Also, this data was used to support the

participant's profiles and stories regarding their schooling experiences.

This data analysis and organization process allowed me to gain ongoing familiarity with the

research participants and their recorded data because by the end of the entire process I most

likely thoroughly reviewed each transcript between 12 - 15 times (if not more).

Limitations of This Study

A limitation of this study was that data collection and analysis were restricted to 18 African Americans who graduated from one desegregated high school in Milwaukee, Wisconsin between 2012-2018. Study participants were adult graduates and therefore were not observed in a natural school environment. Additionally, the perspectives of school officials were not considered in this study. Finally, researcher bias cannot be completed omitted from qualitative inquiry (Gilgun, 2010). However, I maintained a reflexive journal, collected data from multiple sources, asked clarifying questions during second round interviews and met with two doctoral peers to reflect on my positionality as an African American female educator, former resident of the Village of Brown Deer and graduate of Brown Deer High School. While the aforementioned strategies were useful in decreasing my researcher bias, qualitative research accounts for the researcher's experience (Gilgun, 2010).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explained my methodological approach for this study. First, I explained how a qualitative research approach was selected fort this study because the research methods allowed me to collect data that would best illuminate the voices of the 18 African American participants highlighted in this study. For this study, I obtained rich data by conducting two individual interviews and two focus groups with research participants. Such methods allowed participants to share stories about their schooling experiences while attending Brown Deer Middle High School in a less structured format. The participant's interviews were supplemented by demographic data that was collected prior to the initial interview to better understand the participant's schooling experience, including their academic accomplishments, extracurricular involvement, family socioeconomic status during high and postsecondary involvement. The interviews and demographic data were further supplemented by data collected from Brown Deer

Middle High School (BDMHS), Brown Deer School District (BDSD) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) websites.

Within this chapter, I also explained ways that I ensured validity and credibility within the research process, including maintaining a reflexive journal, asking clarifying questions during the second round interviews and entering discussions with peers that allowed me to further acknowledge and "check" my personal bias toward the research topic. Finally, the chapter concluded with a presentation of how I coded and analyzed the research data to realize this study's overarching themes of: "Monoculturalism and Systems of Exclusion: Pedagogy and Practice", "Spirit Killers" and "Monoculturalism and Systems of Exclusion: High School Cliques, Race, Identity and Severing Ties". The next chapter will present the research findings that were established based on the research approach that was discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

This chapter illuminates the voices of 18 African American adults who graduated from

Brown Deer Middle High School (BDMHS) between 2012-2018. Their sentiments are presented

in this chapter to address the following research questions which guided this study:

Major Research Questions

1. What were the reported social and academic experiences of a group of African
    American students who attended Brown Deer Middle High School?

2. How might the social and academic experiences in Brown Deer Middle High
    School, as reported by a group of African American graduates, impact their
    postsecondary college and career choices and experiences according to these
    participants?

Sub-Research Questions

6. What are the perceptions of African American graduates regarding the
    development of student/teacher relationships?

7. What are the perceptions of African American graduates regarding the school's
    curriculum, including course options and extracurricular activities?

8. What are the perceptions of African American graduates regarding the school's
    discipline policies?

9. How do African American graduates perceive the school's resources to have
    supported their academic achievement and postsecondary college and career
    choices?

10. What role did school officials, particularly counselors, play in guiding students
    postsecondary college and career choices?

As discussed in the "methods" chapter, interview data in conjunction with school and district informed data, was utilized to better understand the high school experiences of this study's participants. To assist in gaining a deeper understanding of their academic and social high school experiences, during the data analysis phase, I coded and categorized the participant's expressions based on their convergent and divergent qualities. The coding process allowed the following major research themes to be erected from the data: "Monoculturalism and Systems of Exclusion: Pedagogy and Practice"; "Spirit Killers'" and "Monoculturalism and Systems of Exclusion: High School Cliques, Race, Identity and Severing Ties".

As discussed in chapters one and two, the Brown Deer School District is positioned within close proximity to the City of Milwaukee and was one of the first suburban districts to voluntarily racially desegregate its schools in 1976 through the adoption of the Chapter 220 legislation. Chapter 220 utilized a busing program to promote school desegregation across urban and suburban district lines. Since the inception of the Chapter 220 program, Brown Deer Middle High School has also increased its African American student population through other means, including the Open Enrollment program and some African American families gaining residency in the Village of Brown Deer. As such, in 2018, the African American student body at BDMHS increased to 52 percent (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

The primary goal of Chapter 220 was to racially integrate school systems and enhance the academic experiences of African American students; yet, the participants in this study highlight ways in which the overall culture of BDMHS reflected Eurocentrism which perpetuated the social and academic exclusion of the majority of the school's African American students. The stories expressed by this research' participants also exemplify ways in which their high school

experiences differed based on their prescribed academic track (i.e., Advanced Placement, lower or traditional track) and residential demographic (i.e., Brown Deer or Milwaukee). However, regardless of academic track and/or residency, the sentiments expressed by this study's participants converged during discussions with centered around the concepts of race and postsecondary preparedness.

Monoculturalism and Systems of Exclusion: Pedagogy and Practice

As presented in chapters one, two and three, the experiences of African American students who attended desegregated suburban schools are often complicated by the implementation and maintenance of racialized hierarchical systems that afford preferential treatment to White students (Allen, 2010; Carter, 2005; Chapman et. al., 2014; Chapman, 2014; Diamond, 2006; Diamond, Lewis & Gordon, 2007; Huidor & Cooper, 2010; Lewis & Diamond, 2015; Noguera, 2008). Furthermore, Chapter 3 presented a discussion that sheds light on the manner in which students of color are excluded from suburban school environments based on the schools' tolerance of a monocultural curriculum (Chapman, 2007; Gay, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1994, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2017; Warren-Grice, 2017).

A detailed discussion is to follow that demonstrates how the subthemes, presented in this section, are related to the overarching theme of monoculturalism and exclusionary pedagogical practices that this study's participants encountered while attending BDMHS. The participant's reflections suggest that while students understood the privilege of their suburban education, the daily realities of school life failed to meet their social and academic needs.

"Brown Deer is a Diverse Place but They Don't Want to Talk About Race"

As discussed in Chapter 3, offering a culturally relevant curriculum potentially affords all students the opportunity to see themselves represented within the school's curriculum; celebrate

multiple cultures and ethnicities; and heighten their level of empowerment, self-pride and capacity to learn (Henry, 2017; Milner, 2017; Villegas & Irvine, 2017). While BDMHS was more racially diverse, during the timeframe of this study between 2012-2018, the participants expressed concerns about how they perceived the curriculum offered at BDMHS to have failed to reflect a culturally relevant approach. Within this subtheme, study participants reflected on how the school's classroom curriculum and teacher's instructional practices lacked cultural relevance, whereas participants perceived the classroom lesson plans and teacher's instructional strategies to be reflective of a Eurocentric vantage point. For example, Ashanti stated that the classroom lesson plans were primarily reflective of a "...European..." perspective. Participants also complained about the lack of historical figures represented in the curriculum or the limited historical facts related to the African American experience. Other participants expressed that the school's textbooks were "racially biased" (Morocco) and, in most cases, the celebration of historical African American icons was primarily reserved for Black History Month. Collectively, the stories expressed by this study's participants, exemplify the ways in which their academic and individual needs were not met based on the school official's decision to support the maintenance of a monocultural pedagogical approach.

Some participants (Ghana, Morocco, Cleopatra, Nairobi, Sudan, Sheba, Nefertari and Kenya) spoke specifically about how topics of race were either excluded from lesson plans or racially biased to a point that limited meaningful engagement and conversations about historical or current events that could have potentially centered the concept of race and racialized history. For example, Morocco and Ghana shared the following:

Morocco: They went over some [referring topics of race and race relations] but they

didn't get into it where we could have conversations. If they weren't interested in

talking about a certain subject...they will graze past that subject so fast...they definitely wasn't interested in teaching us more about the African-American history.

Ghana: You read a book and then you would talk about it, like stuff from the Jim Crow era...but they kind of limited that, because they didn't want too many different opinions because in high school I guess we didn't know how to talk about it, so they limited the discussions. Black History Month activities I don't recall, but I do recall having a little bit of African-American history in social studies or US History class. What I remember is if we were in the middle of a lesson, they would try and throw some things in there regard African-American history, but I don't remember us being solid on one part of the African-American history....but...I always thought it was important for us to get more knowledge on that kind of topic, regarding other races, I think it's important for them [referring to White students] to hear about it as well.

Cleopatra did attribute Mr. K with covering topics related to "diversity"; however, according to Cleopatra's discussion, Mr. K's lessons lacked depth and were limited to discussions about the typical historical heroes. She stated,

"...wait...Mr. K, I remember him talking about Martin Luther King versus Malcolm X. That's really it and I don't even really remember that much. They didn't really talk about ethnicity, it's like the teachers felt awkward or something".

Even when Niger, Moses, Cleopatra and Kenya acknowledged a level of cultural representation within the school's curriculum, they stated that it was specific to Black History Month. Niger stated,

...it was generally always around Black History Month...there would be a multicultural lesson plan or multicultural themed part of school where they would introduce activities to understand more multicultural parts. It kind of seems like that was pushed to that one part of the year, and even in that part of the year, it wasn't super in depth. Lesson plans [during Black History month] usually included different things, like we had a government class and I know they would say Brown versus the Board of Education, they saved that case for Black History Month. During Black History Month, we would talk about the famous civil rights activists, you'd talk about Martin Luther King or Rosa Parks. It wasn't super in depth, they didn't take you into different events that pushed certain movements. It was proposed to you and if you take interest in this, then you should look more into it, that kind of thing.

While some teachers managed to acknowledge Black History Month and attempted to infuse lessons within their classroom curriculum, Kenya recalled how three White male teachers failed to recall which calendar month was reserved for Black History Month. She shared the following:

...also, with the same teacher with a group of other teachers, all 3 White male teachers, I don't know what we were talking about but Black History Month came up, I'm a black history buff, and one of the teachers said, "oh, it's in January right, because of MLK day?" I said, "no it's February", and he was like "sorry". I said, "don't be sorry, just know". I'm 18 years old, these men have to be in their 30s, I don't know who I thought I was but I thought I was somebody back then. He had nothing to say and I don't remember what happened after that, I don't know if I stayed in the room or walked out, but I was like this is ridiculous to me, half the kids in this school are Black, come on.

Still reflecting on classroom lesson plan topics, Sheba provided an example of when the school's administrators were supportive of infusing race-related topics, such as discussions around police brutality and race relations, within the school's curriculum. Yet she also explained how the curriculum was limited due to push back from some teachers.

My senior year, I was on the Brown Deer Way Team, the summer going into that, that was when the riots happened in Milwaukee in Sherman Park, and administration really wanted us to do a series of lessons, talking about the issues and stuff, so we had those lessons. There were a lot of kids who didn't want to talk about race and one kid was a Trump supporter, so that was something in itself, and when we produced the lessons for the teachers, there were a lot of teachers who didn't want to talk about race inside their class and would rather not do the lessons, didn't think it was necessary. Some teachers didn't opt out of it, but they went through it very quickly and didn't have discussions about it. Brown Deer is a diverse place, but they don't want to talk about race.

In addition to some participants feeling frustrated over the lesson plans' failure to include a diverse array of topics that would allow for in depth classroom discussions, Morocco and Lybia also discussed how they perceived the school's history textbooks to reflect monoculturalism when stating that the textbooks were "racially biased", "outdated" and not reflective of "..our true history…".

Morocco shared the following regarding the school's textbooks and what he would have appreciated from a more diverse perspective being represented within the school's textbook selection:

Those history books have probably changed a little bit, but they got the same watered-down stuff. There were a lot of kids that grew up fast in my class [referring to maturation

level] and they had individuals in their family that pretty much taught them the real history or told them. I can't really explain...but they didn't have what we were interested in.

Researcher: What would you have been interested in?

Morocco: Our real history. The truth. We didn't want to hear no lies or stuff.

While participants expressed frustration over the lack of cultural relevance reflected in lesson plan topics and textbooks, for a period of time, according to Nairobi, Kenya and Malia, the high school's curriculum did include two courses that embodied a culmination of lesson plans that reflected racial diversity. The two courses were titled, "Authors of Color" and "Women's Literature". Both Malia and Nairobi commented on how they were excited over the opportunity to enroll in these courses because the course' content promoted a multicultural viewpoint. In fact, Malia expressed that Women's Literature was one of her favorite classes because of the teachers who she described as "quirky" and the curriculum which covered "...the struggles that women authors faced…".

However, during a focus group interview, Sheba noted that during her senior year in high school (2017) the courses that Nairobi, Malia and Kenya noted in the previous paragraph were eliminated from the school's curriculum. She stated,

> What Kenya was saying about the English classes, my senior year it changed to where, you said all of the different semester classes of women's lit, authors of color and all of that stuff, but my senior year they got rid of all those classes and changed it to English 12 and you either took that or you took AP English.

In response to Sheba's reflection, Kenya replied, "They better rethink that...they have all these Black kids there".

Finally, within the vein of monocultural curriculum, Morocco, Nandi and Cleopatra expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that they perceived their teachers to be insensitive to the variety of cultures and learning styles that African American students possessed. They perceived a disconnect between their interests, their learning styles and the teacher's methodological choice to have had a negative impact on their school experiences. Nandi, a self-professed high achieving student (3.2 GPA) who primarily completed traditional track curriculum, spoke specifically about how the teaching style of some traditional track teachers failed to connect with her on a personal and cultural level and how the cultural incongruence, expressed through the teacher's approach, left her feeling less motivated to excel academically in school.

During an individual interview, Kenya attempted to explain why the school's curriculum was limited in a multicultural approach when discussing how in depth lessons about race and racism in America would require the school's educators to actually discuss the inequitable foundations of our American society and the perpetuation of inequality. She stated,

> ...if you really talk about those things [race related topics] you have to recognize that these are things that are underneath all of the problems that we have now...Then, you open a can of worms that nobody wants to talk about, especially in this really multicultural group of people who all get along... It's just not ideal in this perception of life we want to have, it doesn't foster that...I don't think racial issues were a part of it [referring to the school's curriculum], because for blackness to exist, it's like whiteness. Whiteness is actually made up for power purposes. It just wasn't a conversation...because it also puts a White person in a vulnerable state because if you're really going to teach about things that are non-White you have to talk about ways in

which White people have perpetrated, killed, raped and destroyed folks around them for greed. That's going to make people uncomfortable.

Despite the reflections expressed by the majority of this study's participants who regarded the school's curriculum as limiting a culturally relevant approach, Libya reflected on how she perceived one particular White male teacher, Mr. W, to have incorporated a more racialized perspective within his classroom curriculum:

There are different perspectives. Some teachers don't really go into that, but I know Mr. W, he was a good teacher...he would go more into depth... Not saying that they will come from a White view, but he will also put a black perspective to it and not just go from what the book tells us. He will give us extra information about it. I enjoyed his class...I remember he gave a lot of extra information and not bias information.

Collectively, participants felt that educators at BDMHS implemented classroom lesson plans which allowed teachers and other school officials to brush over topics related to diversity, race relations and major contributions of communities of color. Students such as Cleopatra shared that a limited multicultural approach was potentially more attractive to some White teachers who Cleopatra perceived as appearing "awkward" during discussions which centered race. Additionally, other participants regarded their teacher's instructional approaches as strategies that disregarded the cultural disposition of its minority student body. As such, participants expressed that opportunities were lost for all students to fully engage in discussions which challenge power differentials, highlight the major contributions of communities of color and demonstrate academic excellence.

In this study, participants not only discussed ways in which school officials maintained a curricular standard which excluded the African American experience, history and contributions,

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participants also reflected on how they perceived exclusionary practices to have been embedded within the school's process of racialized tracking.

"This is Really a Pipeline System"

Chapters one, two and three presented a discussion which exemplified the manner in which suburban school environments work to support notions of Eurocentrism through the implementation of racialized tracking policies and procedures (Chapman, 2013; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). As discussed in chapters two and three, racial tracking in racially diverse school settings has the capacity to minimize African American student's opportunities for enrolling in college level preparatory courses (Noguera, 2008; Southworth & Michelson, 2007). At BDMHS, according to this study's participants, the majority of African American students remained in lower and traditional track courses while more White students gained access to AP curriculum.

The participants' stories that illuminate racial academic tracking at BDMHS is also supported by school data retrieved from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI). For example, as previously presented, during the 2015-2016 school year (latest available DPI data), regarding Advanced Placement (AP) enrollment status, 13 percent of students in the BDSD were enrolled in an AP course; the racial break-down includes 23 percent Caucasian, 15 percent Hispanic, 14 percent Asian and 5 percent African American (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019). Specific to AP exam passing rate, the racial breakdown includes 80 percent Asian and 57 percent White students. Although African Americans and Hispanics combined composed the majority of the student body at BDMHS, neither racial group passed an AP exam during the 2015-2016 school year (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

This trend was evident even during an era when the school district served a majority (78 percent) minority student population (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019)

Kenya explained the academic tracking that was implemented at BDMHS as follows:

There were tracks. I didn't understand the whole concept of tracks [referring to when she was in high school] except these are the classes I was going to take and when I got to college, I was like this is really a pipeline system, where once you're in this spot, you kind of know where you're going to end up.

Five other graduates (Nairobi, Kenya, Nefertari, Sheba and Nandi) expressed their sentiments regarding the high school tracking process, at BDMHS, and stated that academic tracking began in middle school based on a "scantron test" (Nairobi) and teacher recommendation (Kenya and Nairobi). Additionally, Nairobi specifically spoke about how some students, during middle school, were given "advanced worksheets" (in math) and were recommended for Pre-Algebra in seventh grade to better prepare them for AP enrollment in high school. Nairobi felt as though this process was the beginning of a "system" that was "already set out" for students. When specifically explaining the math tracking procedure, Nefertari referenced herself as "lucky" and summarized the process which disproportionately favored White students as follows:

I was one of the lucky ones in middle school that actually got to test into taking Algebra my 8th grade year, so because I took Algebra my 8th grade year, there was like 2 Black kids in the class, there were Asian and White and there were 2 of us [again referring to African American students]. Once I got into high school, for math specifically, I was already on track to take AP, because freshman year I took honors Geometry, then I took honors Pre-Calc and then I was into AP for Math. Once you're in that group that is

taking AP, it is like then maybe I should take other AP classes and we're kind of all together.

During individual interviews, Sheba, Morocco and Kenya discussed how school staff were instrumental in tracking students into their prescribed academic tracks; additionally, during a focus group interview, Malia shared how she was unable to enroll in classes that sparked her interest due to the high school's process of designing student's class schedules. These participants shared the following:

Sheba: There was really no explanation of any of the classes you were taking [referring to the process for selecting courses]...your core classes were basically picked for you on like the track that they had.

Kenya: ...teachers kind of tell you what you're going to take. If teachers see you do well, they are like oh, you'd be great for this.

Morocco: I could be honest with you, I don't remember choosing none of my classes in high school.

Malia: … you didn't have no leeway…there were classes that I did want to take but I didn't…It's not because of prerequisites it was like "we're not gonna let y'all".

Based on these participants' discussions, it appears as though the process of tracking students into core classes, that would support college preparation and transition, began in the Brown Deer School District's (BDSD) middle school; according to some graduates (Sheba, Kenya, Nefertari and Nairobi) this middle school tracking process impacted the types of courses that students could access throughout their entire high school tenure. For example, Kenya stated, "...It was intuitive. There were literally sheets of paper that were like if you're taking this class this year, your next step is this or this". According to these participants, the academic tracking

process - inclusive of course sheets, "scantron" tests and teacher recommendations - categorized students and determined their academic destination because lower and traditional track students were unable to veer in a different academic direction.

During the second of two focus groups, Sheba, Nairobi and Kenya (AP track participants) spoke specifically about the implications of the "pipeline system" when articulating how being tracked as "remedial" in one academic area worked against students' ability to participate in higher track courses in a different academic area. Based on their positionality as AP track participants, these women shared their reflections regarding how they perceived the school's curriculum tracks to be structured in a hierarchical fashion which predominantly afforded privilege to the school's White student population. Sheba, Nairobi and Kenya shared the following:

Sheba: ...it depended on where you tested into and when you got choices. If you tested into something lower, then your whole 4 years were already set.

Researcher: In that lower track and you were kind of stuck there?

Sheba: Yeah.

Kenya: Sheba mentioned earlier, talking about how if you were doing poorly in one subject, you didn't get the chance in another, and I just wanted to highlight that again...because I think students could do a lot better overall if they weren't pigeonholed to one thing and then brought down...I feel that is the same way even if you were in an upper level course, because the people in lower courses at the end of their high school career, you can still take certain electives, but as far as the courses you need, like colleges are looking for, whether you're in a high level or

low level, there is a track. The electives are sidebars to all of this. I would say

it's almost indicative of where you end.

Based on the above expressed notions regarding the school's tracking process, Nairobi

perceived African American students as less privy to the AP track curriculum because, according

to her reflections, African American students yielded the majority of the high school's

suspensions and were less visible in her high track courses. Thus, based on Nairobi's

perceptions, the school district's disproportionate suspension of African American students

complicated African American students' eligibility to receive a teacher's letter of

recommendation which partially supported a students' access to the AP curriculum track.

Nairobi shared the following:

There is no reason why the Black students are getting suspended more...if you're

suspended, you're not going to be recommended to be in those [high track] classes by

teachers. Black students are seen as more criminal. That already wipes out teacher

recommendation and stuff like that.

In alignment with the AP track process and sentiments previously articulated by Kenya,

Sheba and Nairobi, many of the traditional track graduates (Ashanti, Cleopatra, Ghana, Chad,

Sudan, Morocco and Niger) stated that they were not encouraged to complete AP courses even

though some of them self-reported as acquiring impressive high school GPAs, over 3.0. For

example, when I asked these traditional track participants if they were encouraged by any school

official during high school to take an AP track course they responded accordingly: Cleopatra,

Chad, Ashanti and Ghana replied "No" and Niger stated that he "...wasn't personally encouraged

to try it". Sudan transitioned to BDMHS and expressed an interest in enrolling in AP level

courses but felt as though he would have lagged behind his high school AP peers academically

because the high school's AP course curriculum began during the summer months prior to his enrollment. Moses' accounts substantiated Sudan's reflections regarding summer AP coursework requirements; during a focus group, Moses shared how he was required to read Moby Dick and complete relevant assignments during the summer months in preparation for his upcoming AP English class.

Despite the structural systems that some participants previously discussed, which they perceived to have created barriers for the majority of BDMHS' African American population to access higher track curriculum, a few traditional track graduates, including Nigeria, Malia and Algeria shared how they were encouraged by Mr. W to complete his AP level courses. Mr. W was the same teacher who Lybia previously described as "…a good teacher…who will also put a black perspective to it…and gave a lot of extra…not bias information…". As a result of Mr. W's encouragement, all three graduates completed one or both of his AP Economics and Government courses and Malia completed and passed the AP exam which allowed her to earn credit on her college transcript.

The above example, regarding Mr. W's support, demonstrate how a few African American traditional track students accessed one or two AP courses, solely based on Mr. W's recommendation. Yet, Mr. W's support failed to drastically increase the overall African American presence within the AP classroom space. For example, participants in this study who completed AP courses (Kenya, Algeria, Lybia, Malia, Mali, Nefertari, Nigeria, Nandi, Nairobi, Moses) reflected on the racial composition of students who were enrolled in their high track classes. Some students were easily able to quantify the number of students of color who were enrolled in their AP track courses, ranging from 1 - 5 or "a few people of color" (Nairobi).

To gauge a better understanding of the racial differentiation represented between traditional and AP tracks in BDMHS, I asked AP and traditional track graduates (I posed this question to AP track participants because some of them stated that they completed one or two traditional track courses during their high school tenure): "In your traditional track courses, what did the racial demographics look like?" In response, participants either reflected on their classroom racial demographics as racially "mixed" or "predominantly Black". Their responses varied depending on their graduation year. For example, recent graduates attended traditional track classes that were more racially mixed than earlier graduates (who attended traditional track courses with more White peers). Their responses reflect the racial demographic trend that was discussed in chapters one and three, which illuminates BDMHS (and its suburban neighborhood) steady transition to a majority minority student population.

Collectively, their responses exemplify the fact that while traditional track courses may have been more racially "mixed" and/or "predominantly Black" depending on their graduation year, the AP courses remained overwhelmingly representative of White students.

Morocco, an African American male participant, further exemplified the high school's racialized tracking process when reflecting on his experience transitioning from a public school in a southern state to BDMHS. Morocco shared how he was tracked into a lower level math course even though he stated that his test scores would have allowed him to be placed in a higher math class. His reflections also support the earlier discussion regarding how school officials were highly responsible for selecting student's high school courses and academic tracks. Morocco shared the following:

> ...when we came up here we both took a test...and then I remember I must have scored
>
> high in the math because I was in some type of math, I don't know what it was when I

was in [southern state], and they offered the same class [at BDMHS]. A [staff of color] was like, "naw, we're not going to put him in that class, they're not as smart in [southern state] as they are in Wisconsin".

Researcher: A [staff] told you that?

Morocco: He said it in front of me...he told the person who was picking my classes.

Researcher: So, you tested high enough to start a higher level?

Morocco: Yes. I tested high enough but they ended up putting me in a lower one because apparently, they were better at math up here [referring to the North] than they were in [his southern state].

Morocco further spoke about how the lower level math class that he was tracked into was a "double block" when stating,

> ...you [referring to students tracked into the "double block" math class]...went to that class more often than you went to any other classes...you'd go to that class, go to lunch and then come right back to that class…

When asked to reflect on the racial demographics of students enrolled in this "double block" (lower level) math course, Morocco echoed Nairobi's earlier sentiments and responded, "Black kids".

During one of two focus groups, Malia and Nigeria also discussed the racial demographics of their classroom environments; during this discussion, Nigeria's reflections further support Morocco's notions regarding African American students being disproportionately tracked into the high school's lower track curriculum. Nigeria shared the following:

Also, the way the classes were set up. You have the advanced classes that were mainly White kids, a few people of color, and the regular classes was a decent mix and the below-average classes the majority Black.

Additionally, during a separate focus group, Sheba further substantiated the notions expressed by Morocco, Malia, Nairobi and Nigeria regarding the disproportionate number of African American students tracked into lower level classes. To add diversity to the participant's responses, Sheba's reflections are based on her positionality as a high achieving (self-reported 4.1 high school GPA) AP track participant. As previously discussed, Sheba was cognizant of the school district's process of racial tracking and shared how this process began during middle school; however, actually witnessing the racial composition of the lower level track courses was enlightening for Sheba. She shared,

I would go to other lower-level classes and like I realized a lot of my friends were in there, all of my Black friends, and it looked it felt weird to me, "why are they all in the same class?". I never realized "oh because you're not in my [AP] class". I didn't realize it until I saw the other classes that they were all moving on the same track, but it wasn't my [AP] track…most lower tracks are like Black...like people of color in general.

Finally, regarding the racial dynamics of classroom spaces and tracking practices implemented at BDMHS, during two focus groups, eight participants (4 AP and 4 traditional track) were asked if they perceived a student's racial demographics to have specifically played a role in how African American students learned about, accessed and were assigned to AP track curriculum. Collectively, all eight respondents perceived race to have played a major role in the AP knowledge and selection process. In response to my inquiry, Nairobi shared the following when explaining the racial classroom differentiation she witnessed while attending advanced

track courses during high school. Nairobi further offered her insight regarding the implications

of racialized tracking. Her reflections further support other participant's perception regarding

lower track courses being primarily housed by students of color, particularly African American.

Nairobi shared:

> 100 percent. I'm not sure of the exact demographics [of Brown Deer], but when I went it
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> was around 50/50, so if everything was represented equally, all of the classes would be
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> 50/50. But, that's not what it was. Like you have what there were maybe almost 30
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> people in my advanced Math class and I would say 5 of them were of color...For me, of
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> course race played a factor, because if it didn't, there is no reason why the demographics
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> of our classes were the way that they were, that it was mostly White kids in the smart
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> class and then there is around 50/50 in the regular class and it's mainly Black kids in the
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> lower class. That's not by chance, like that's systematic....I think it is absolutely
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> disgusting. I have straight up seen it. People that were in my class are in...we're in D1
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> schools doing our best and then you have the other people who are maybe at UW-
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> Milwaukee or community colleges and you have other people who aren't in school.
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> These are the same people I saw in my classes, those are the people that were in the
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> average classes. What if somebody just gave somebody a chance? What if I think they
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> aren't challenged enough and I'm going to write them that letter of recommendation, I'm
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> going to push them to be better, because then we may be at the same school. It is so wild
>
> how much this system can affect your whole life. When that all clicked, I was like wow,
>
> and I feel like I was a part of it. That is why I have very strong feelings toward Brown
>
> Deer High School. Because I feel like they can do so much more to make it a more even
>
> playing field.

This theme titled, "This is Really a Pipeline System" captured the sentiments of this study's participants regarding how they perceived school officials, at BDMHS, to have developed and maintained a racialized hierarchy within their curriculum tracking process. Such exclusionary practices denied the majority of the school's African American student population' access to enhanced classroom opportunities that better support college matriculation and success. Based on the high school's prescribed curriculum track and process for sieving students, participants were able to further describe the differential classroom experiences that were established across academic tracks.

Chapter 2 discussed how students who attend suburban schools and are tracked into lower and traditional track courses become recipients of less engaging classroom environments where teachers hold lower expectations for their student body (Allen, 2010; Chapman, 2014). As discussed in this section, according to this study's participants, school officials at BDMHS were instrumental in developing and maintaining a racialized academic hierarchy which "pigeonholed" (Kenya) the majority of the African American student population in lower and traditional track courses. Once their academic realities were manifested, study participants also discussed the variation of their classroom dynamics that materialized across curriculum tracks, including the differential manner in which teachers implemented instructional strategies, forged relationships with students and expressed their level of expectations for their student body. At times, based on the participant's sentiments, it appeared as though AP and traditional track participants were attending two separate schools, whereas AP track participants expressed a higher level of school satisfaction while the majority of the traditional track participants expressed higher levels of frustration with their classroom experiences; as such, the participant's stories diverged along academic track participation. Yet, the dynamics of the participant's

curriculum track expressions remained constant, regardless of their residency; in other words, similarities in their classroom experiences (across curriculum track) did not alter based on whether they lived in Milwaukee or Brown Deer.

The following two themes incorporate the sentiments expressed by both AP and traditional track participants regarding their differentiated classroom experiences. The following two themes present the stories of participants who actually attended either AP or traditional classes or in some cases both classroom environments. Thus, their sentiments support the participant's experiential knowledge regarding what transpired within the context of AP, lower track and traditional track classroom environments.

"They Always Treated You a Little Bit Better"

This theme includes the voices of seven AP track participants who presented discussions regarding their experiences while primarily completing advanced track curriculum during high school. The AP track participants who were consistently granted access to AP classroom spaces discussed how they perceived the school officials at BDMHS to have privileged them and their AP peers within these classroom spaces.

In this study, AP track participants reflected on how they were able to build positive relationships with the majority of their high school teachers. For example, one graduate held a job during high school babysitting for one of the teachers and continued to work-out (using the school's fitness center) with the same teacher post high school. She described the dynamics of her relationship with this particular teacher as a "family type of thing" and explained how it was easy for her to connect with him because he (the teacher) served as the "outlier" at the school because he would go "above and beyond" for all students, including "...people who were in the below-average classes".

Nefertari also spoke very highly of her established relationship with this same male teacher and other AP graduates (Lybia, Moses, Nairobi and Mali) reflected on how they were able to forge positive relationships with teachers who taught core curriculum courses, including their math, calculus, English and history teachers. They described these teachers as officials who encouraged their academic growth, "motivated" (Moses) them to perform well in class and genuinely cared about them overall.

Finally, the AP track participants shared minimal reflections of negative encounters with their school officials during high school. However, not all of their experiences were positive. For example, three participants reflected on how they received disciplinary referrals (i.e., for demonstrating disrespect toward a teacher, leaving class premature to the ringing of the school bell and violating dress code policy).

Regarding classroom instructional time, AP track participants, in this study, spoke in depth regarding their classroom instructional experiences; within their discussions, they explained how they perceived teachers to have held high academic expectations for them and implemented more rigorous instructional practices. Six of the seven AP students (Nairobi, Nefertari, Kenya, Sheba, Malia and Libya) were able to speak specifically about the differential expectations that some teachers held for their AP and traditional track students because while they primarily completed AP level courses they also reported completing one or two traditional track classes. When reflecting on the rigor associated with the AP curriculum, the instructional strategies positioned by some teachers and teacher expectations, AP track participants shared the following:

Sheba: ...like AP classes every minute had a purpose and in traditional classes there was a lot more flexibility...I preferred the more structured, like the AP classes, where

every minute has a purpose...I guess with the traditional classes, there wasn't as much rigor.

Nairobi: ...I think everybody who take Mrs. B's [AP English] class came out a better writer...she was like "no, you need to analyze things", so she really pushed her students. She was a great teacher who generally cared I felt like and also who was a great motivator.

Libya: The workload was much more, you had to read more [referencing AP courses]. Testing was higher, you had to think more, analyze more, outside the box than general classes. Expectations were different.

Nairobi: We had learning objectives and went over those everyday...The teachers were pretty interactive, hands on and getting involved with the students.

Mali: I would say the traditional courses were pretty easy to me. The AP courses challenged me, especially AP chem, AP calculus…

As previously stated, AP track participants in this study felt a greater sense of satisfaction with their schooling experiences. In fact, Nefertari reflected on her level of content in being associated with what she considered the "golden group" during high school; Nefertari labeled AP students as members of the "golden group" because she perceived school officials to have held a higher regard for this population of students. Nefertari shared the following when explaining why being associated with the "golden group" allowed her to feel "good" about herself:

...those were the same kids that...would have been the valedictorian or salutatorian, in the top 10 percent of the class. It kind of felt good to be with that whole group of kids instead of the other group [referring to those taking traditional track courses].

In conclusion, when discussing the perceived differential treatment and privilege

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associated with AP track students at BDMHS, Nairobi summed up their experiences as follows:

> They always like the people who were in the advanced classes, which were for the most part White people, and they always treated you a little bit better...Anybody in advanced classes. They would expect more of you, give you more responsibility, let you run errands for them...there was a class ranking...all of us [AP students] were the good kids, we played sports and everything, so teachers already had high expectations...These are [AP students] students who the teachers are looking at to make decisions about the school, like the class president. How do you feel about this? They're going to ask you compared to somebody else. They are going to give you the benefit of the doubt, if you need more time on something, they aren't going to get you in trouble if you deserve to be in trouble...

While the AP track participants felt a heightened sense of privilege within their higher track classroom environments, participants who primarily completed a lower or traditional track curriculum failed to share similar reflections regarding their overall classroom experience and satisfaction.

"…And Then You Pray…"

> For the most part, AP track participants were able to describe meaningful ways in which they engaged with some school officials and received classroom instruction that they deemed as satisfactory. To the contrary, traditional track participants shared minimal stories regarding ways in which they were able to forge positive relationships with their school officials; additionally, their sentiments echo the sentiments expressed by some AP track participants who completed one or two traditional track courses when sharing how

their traditional track teachers implemented less rigorous instructional strategies and held lower academic expectations for them.

When asked to describe ways that school officials tried to connect with them, four (Ghana, Ashanti, Sudan and Cleopatra) traditional track participants were unable to recall any student/teacher encounters they perceived as positive. Niger reflected on how he perceived the teachers to be merely "putting up" with "students of color" and the other three traditional track participants shared the following:

Ghana: Not exactly.

Ashanti: No.

Cleopatra: Yeah. I ain't got none of those [referring to examples].

Sudan: ...no....

Other participants shared similar stories regarding their perceptions of how teachers and other school officials forged relationships with them during high school. For example, Malia, a self-reported high achieving student who completed a few high track courses, reflected on how the relationships she formed with adult officials during high school were "superficial" and how she "...don't have a desire to go back…" and Morocco recounted how he developed a positive relationship with "...a couple types of teachers...the teachers that felt sorry for you…".

While the majority of traditional track peers perceived their connections with teachers and other school officials to be minimal, five traditional track participants were able to recollect positive encounters with some high school officials. However, unlike their AP track peers who were able to forge meaningful relationships with their core AP curriculum teachers, these five traditional track participants reflected on how their positive relationships were primarily established with school officials who governed the elective and extracurricular curriculum at the

school. For example, these participants reflected on establishing meaningful relationships with school officials who governed art, theatre, choir, Spanish, and sports as well as the discipline and food staff were mentioned as adults who traditional track participants managed to develop meaningful relationships with.

Cleopatra was the only traditional track participant who reflected on a positive encounter with a core curriculum teacher when discussing how she received a college letter of recommendation from him. Yet, when discussing classroom instructional strategies, Cleopatra was also able to reflect on other classroom encounters that resembled less favorable student/teacher connections. For example, when reflecting on her encounter with one particular classroom teacher, Cleopatra recalled how based on the classroom teacher's request she attempted to provide her opinion on a particular textbook passage. In response, the teacher replied, "that's lame, Cleopatra". Cleopatra summed up her response to the classroom scenario as follows:

> I was like alright, you know what, I'm putting my head down and I'm ready to go. If you can't say anything positive as a teacher, you don't need to say nothing at all...It was silent, nobody laughed at that, everybody was just looking awkwardly, because he never said that to nobody else in that class at least.

Still considering the differential classroom experiences noted between AP and traditional track participants – specifically regarding classroom' instruction - unlike the AP track participants, traditional track participants regarded the majority of their classroom environments as less engaging spaces where most teachers failed to adopt innovative instructional strategies and failed to consistently motivate students to demonstrate academic proficiency. For example, while Ashanti spoke highly of one particular English teacher who he characterized as a teacher

"...who made it easy to want to do good", he also explained that in his experiences at BDMHS this particular English teacher served as the exception. He revealed that...

> ...the other teachers I don't feel like they put as much effort into teaching, I feel like they just came and taught the class and that was just it...But nothing made me want to do good in school, or the teachers didn't influence me to do good in school.

Niger, Cleopatra and Morocco shared stories about how some of their teachers', especially math, inability to thoroughly explain key concepts and address their (student's) questions led them to "...tune things out..." (Niger) or "tune them out" (Cleopatra and Morocco). For example, Niger reflected on how his math teacher failed to "break things down" during her classroom lectures and how he considered the math teacher's strategy as "detrimental" to his "...way of learning…" and Morocco spoke in detail about how some of his traditional track teachers "shut down" his questions instead of providing the necessary feedback that would allow him to excel academically in their classes.

Cleopatra shared the following regarding her math classroom experience:

> ...It may be something where a topic is being covered and maybe I don't understand it all the way and I kind of question it and then they answer it the same way they answered it originally. Well, if you answered it the first time and I didn't really understand it, what is you answering it again the same exact way going to do? Those kinds of things would have me tune them out. It was my learning style in general.

Cleopatra also explained how her math teacher would rush through her explanations: "...They would do here's step 1, here's step 8, and now you do step 10...I wish they would have done it step-by-step".

Realizing that Cleopatra was a self-proclaimed high achieving student, maintaining a 3.4 GPA during high school, I asked how she managed to deem success in some of her classes when she perceived teachers to have failed to explain the content in a manner that she could comprehend. She recalled how she, along with some other students, would try to learn the content on their own or resort to copying from other students who did understand. She shared the following:

> ...go to the other 5 students who did get it and try to learn it from them...Copy everyone else. You tried to have everybody teach you. The other students. You go to other math teachers you had in the past and ask them to show you. You go home, you go on You-Tube and try to figure it out yourself, and then you pray.

> To further substantiate Cleopatra's reflections regarding how students in traditional class environments were at times forced to receive classroom instruction from their peers, Ghana added the following to the discussion when illuminating the instructional limitations of her math teacher:

> It was basically the entire class working together trying to understand it. There were some people in the class who knew a little more than others, so what they would do is go around the class…and explained it to some people who didn't get it and if the teacher didn't know it, then someone in the class did.

> In alignment with Cleopatra, Niger, Ghana and Morocco, Nandi also shared her level of frustration over the instructional methodologies presented by her math teacher and the fact that her math teacher failed to use a textbook; furthermore, Nandi perceived the math instruction as "...something they threw together…".

When describing the level of dis-satisfaction they felt with their traditional track classroom experience, Nandi and Cleopatra discussed the feelings of self-doubt they internalized based on their perceptions that teachers failed to provide them with the appropriate guidance that would motivate them to excel academically. Their sentiments are captured below:

Nandi: Then they are like well these kids got it, you all must be stupid [referring to her and other students who failed to understand the content], you all must be dumb...I feel like they [White students] understood everything much better than a lot of the Black students for some reason. That's just how I felt. I'm like dang, why is it so easy for them and I can't get it? Am I dumb or something? What's going on here? Maybe it's the way they instruct or the curriculum. But I found when they would use worldly, like things that I'm familiar with, then I understand what they're saying. It could be the way they're doing it.

Cleopatra: ...I hated it...but I did think of myself as like dang I don't understand this, I must be dumb...

Supporting Nandi's notion regarding how she perceived her White peers to have "got it" during classroom instruction more so than her African American peers, Cleopatra reflected on how even within the traditional track classroom environment, she perceived her teachers to be giving more attention and privilege to her White peers. She stated,

I feel like they [White students] got more one-on-one time and then when I would try to get help, she would help me in a way that wasn't beneficial to me, it wasn't actually teaching me, so then I would go and ask another kid and then she would get upset.

Morocco extended this discussion by sharing how he perceived many of his traditional track teachers to have held low expectations of him and how his teacher's diminished regard (for

him) negatively impacted his classroom performance. Some scholars (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Ogbu, 2003, 2008; McWhorter, 2001) reason that the racial disparity in academic performance is a reflection of African American students exhibiting a low level of engagement and regard toward school and academic success (Ogbu, 2004). To the contrary, Morocco spoke about how his lack of engagement was related to the lack of rigor enveloped within the classroom expectations. He stated,

> I didn't enjoy the class [referring to the low level math class]...I wasted my time in my opinion and then some of the classes that I know I needed to pass and if the teacher was more engaging or more strict about late assignments and stuff like that, I made sure that I was there on time, I made sure I didn't miss class, I made sure I was writing every single thing down that they said, stuff like that. That class [referring to the more rigorous class] I can say kind of prepared me for some of the classes in college...the workload that she put on you, you didn't want to fall behind, if you fell behind it was pretty much over for you…

Morocco revealed that he earned a "B+" in one of the more rigorous classes that he attended and contrasted the teaching environment to another class where he (Morocco) perceived the teacher to be less engaging and less structured based on the overwhelming representation of African American students present in the class. Morocco's reflections also align with Nandi and Cleopatra's expressions of their racialized classroom experiences when these young women explained how they perceived their White peers to have received more privilege in their traditional track classes. Morocco states,

> ...He knew the stuff and he wanted to teach but he just didn't know how to teach us because we were a bunch of Black kids. Most of the information he was giving us we

already knew. Basically, he would give us the information, tell us what we need to do and then boom, if you do it, you do it, if you don't, you don't, and your grade reflected it. I would do what I had to do, but I would definitely participate and talk in his class. I tried to get my work done but I didn't try to go above and beyond. He wasn't as strict as [referencing a different teacher]. Sometimes he would present some stuff, he would show us some stuff, but it really wasn't a structure.

Finally, while all traditional track participants were able to share stories about how their classroom experiences were less satisfactory; some traditional track participants shared stories about how they deemed some of their traditional track teachers as "good". For example, during a focus group, Nigeria prompted her peers to reflect on the "good" teachers from high school. Collectively, these four participants managed to list three teachers who they perceived as fitting the "good teacher" category. As previously discussed in an earlier findings section, the majority of the teachers that were identified by the focus group participants governed non-core curriculum courses, including the art teachers; however, once again, Mr. W's name was mentioned. Unfortunately, as ascertained by Nigeria, regarding her traditional track curriculum experience, the "…good teachers were few and far between…"

The themes discussed in this section, "They Always Treated You a Little Bit Better" and "…And Then We Pray…", presented stories which illuminate how BDMHS developed and maintained inequitable curriculum tracking policies and practices that favored their White student population. Such systems, according to this study's participants, implicated differential classroom experiences, including the manner in which students were able to develop relationships with their teachers, receive classroom instruction and the manner in which students were regarded by their teachers.   Regardless of their academic track affiliation and the

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differentiation of instruction that participants described in these themes, the majority of the participants in this study reflected on how their classroom, and overall experiences, at BDMHS failed to adequately prepare them for postsecondary academic success and college and career choices.

"I Didn't Feel Prepared"

As discussed in chapters one and two, the suburban school context was favored by many families, regardless of racial background, because these families perceived the suburban school's curriculum and resources to be superior to that available in most urban school contexts (Barndt & McNally, 2001; Bell, 2004; Guinier, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 2007; Nelsen, 2015; Parker & Lynn, 2002). Based on the perceived elite status of suburban schools, some scholars supported the ideology that students of color would gain postsecondary social, academic and economic benefits from sharing school spaces with White students (Guinier, 2004; Wells, 2001). Yet, the findings from this study complicate this tenet because study participants, regardless of academic track affiliation and residential demography, perceived the resources and instruction offered at their suburban school, including support from school officials, to have minimally supported their postsecondary academic preparation, including college and career choices.

The graduate's perceptions regarding how their high school's curriculum and resources prepared them for postsecondary success are highlighted in this section. It is true that school officials at BDMHS were able to assist most students toward successful graduation between the years of 2012-2017 (the graduation years of this study's graduates); for example, on average, the school district achieved a 98 percent graduation rate (Wisconsin School District Performance Report, 2019). However, all graduates (except Sheba) agreed that their schooling experiences at BDMHS failed to adequately prepare them for postsecondary college success.

While AP track participants spoke more highly of their high school experiences (than participants who primarily completed traditional track classes), the majority of them (except Sheba) were also candid about how the AP courses failed to prepare them for successful completion of the AP exams. According to some AP track participants, successful completion of the AP exam (with a score of 3) would have been beneficial because it would have allowed the high school course credits to articulate to their college and university transcripts. When I asked if AP track students completed the AP exams associated with the particular courses they completed, the majority of the responses were "No". When asked "Why not?", the following responses emerged.

Kenya: I didn't feel prepared.

Nefertari: ...Even if we covered the content, I don't feel like I understood it enough to go and do well on the exam...we weren't prepared to take it...we didn't cover all of the topics that would be on the test, especially in depth enough for you to get a good grade.

Libya: It is a lot of information, I don't think we had enough time, and that's what teachers always say, we didn't have enough time to really teach the lesson how everyone else in the county could teach it because we're on an every other day block but everybody else has it every day, so it is easier to learn something every day than you go back to that class every other day. We would probably have to skip some lessons that he didn't think were as important to the board. If we didn't understand it, we would have to go in extra time or try to get a friend to kind of teach you it. But it would get a little frustrating because you know you don't have

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enough time to really fit everything in there, so you're not really prepared for what the test all has to be.

Mali: ...the AP courses weren't taken as seriously [by school officials at BDMHS]…

When discussing how participants perceived their AP class curriculum to have had a limited influence on their college preparation, Moses and Nairobi [D1 university attendees] shared stories about how they failed a few courses in college because they did not feel prepared for the rigor of the university level coursework. Moses continued to explain how he struggled in college because, based on his assertions, he "...didn't know how to study…" or "...prepare for a test…". Moses spoke in further detail about how he perceived his experience in AP classes at BDMHS to have failed to properly prepare him for college. He stated,

...honestly, I didn't know how to study or prepare myself to be ready for an exam, because in high school, they pretty much gave you work that would be on the exam, they didn't try to challenge you or push you mentally to think outside the box, what you needed to do, especially at [his division one school]. So, I would just say the work we got at Brown Deer wasn't challenging enough that I had to study for it, so I never learned how to study, which eventually came over to college which kind of hurt me.

Kenya's reflection aligns with Moses; she also agreed that, even though she excelled in AP courses during high school, she struggled in college. She explained the high school to college experience as follows: "It is one thing to be able to do well in a class, it's another thing to know how to do well in a class. I don't think I learned how to do well in a class".

Even Nairobi, another AP track participant, recalled feeling like "...one of the dumbest people in college…stupid" because she didn't feel "...prepared at all…", especially in the

domains of math and science. This lack of preparation led Nairobi to switch her college major to the area of social sciences.

When I asked traditional track participants to reflect on ways in which they perceived the school's curriculum to have supported their postsecondary academic success, they echoed the sentiments of their AP track peers when suggesting that the school's curriculum failed to adequately prepare them for college transition and success. Some of their expressions are captured below:

> Ashanti: No, I don't think it did. Because I wasn't as challenged as much with the classes in high school...and then when you get to college, it is a shock. I wasn't expecting this...My first semester was pretty good, I did good my first semester...but when you get to your classes outside your general ed, I didn't feel like high school prepared me enough for those type of classes.

> Nandi: I did a lot of self-analysis when I graduated and I was just like dang, I feel like I didn't really learn anything. A lot of the stuff was just memory so I could pass the test and move on.

> Algeria: As far as being prepared for college, I feel like they could have done a little bit better...

While the majority of AP and traditional track participants deemed the school's curriculum as limited when reflecting on their level of college preparedness, two participants expressed a level of satisfaction with the academics they received while attending BDMHS. For example, Nigeria perceived the school's curriculum to have adequately prepared her for college. Nigeria shared the following:

I do have the cognitive ability to read, write, understand and comprehend, which I've

noticed that a lot of my peers in the adult world do not, regardless of where they went to

school, they do not have these skills. I am grateful for Brown Deer and I do feel

somewhat accomplished and somewhat prepared for life...

In alignment with Nigeria, Sheba also perceived her high school education to have

genuinely prepared her for college level academics. She shared the following,

I think the classes I took in Brown Deer prepared me for college. I think I probably took

the most AP classes and I actually wanted to be there. I actually put in the time, even if I

didn't need to study for something, I still studied for it. I feel like I got a work ethic in

high school and that prepared me for college.

Researcher: Was it your own work ethic that prepared your or was it the actual

environment of the school?

Sheba: I think a little bit of both, because my own work ethic and what people expected

from me, so if people expect it from me, now I have to do it. The classes I took, I

made them harder than they had to be, I did more work than was really needed. I

think it prepared me for college.

This theme, "I Didn't Feel Prepared", illuminated the ways in which the majority of this

study's participants perceived their academic experiences, while attending BDMHS, to have

minimally impacted their level of college preparation. In the following subtheme, based on this

study's participants' reflections, a discussion is presented regarding ways in which they

perceived school officials to have guided and/or supported student's college and career options.

"Input output". During individual interviews and focus groups, participants discussed

the types of resources that were offered at BDMHS and whether or not they perceived

these resources to have assisted them in realizing their college and career choices. For example, during individual and focus groups, participants engaged in discussions regarding how they specifically learned about career options during high school. According to Nigeria and other participants (including Lybia, Mali, Malia, Algeria and Sudan) school officials arranged to have professionals from a variety of fields attend the senior meetings to present information about their respective careers. Sudan and Lybia shared the occupational backgrounds of the professionals that they recall presenting during the senior meetings, including military recruiters, ROTC personnel, beauticians and musicians.

When I asked participants to reflect on the resources and support that they received from school officials regarding career choices, outside of the mandatory senior meetings, the majority of the participants stated that they received minimal support from their school officials. Lybia was the only participant who recalled meeting with her high school counselor to discuss her career options; however, she also revealed that the discussion didn't transpire until her senior year in high school.

Some participants reflected on how they perceived their career path to be complicated by the lack of support they received during high school with exploring potential career options. For example, during a focus group, Kenya reflected on how she selected a university major without having a clear understanding of what she genuinely wanted to pursue. Kenya realized that she "...wanted to help the world become a better place…"; yet, she didn't realize the pathway to her passion until she attended college and finally declared a major during her freshman year. Kenya further reflected on the level of disappointment she felt post-high school when she realized that school officials at BDMHS merely operated on an "...input output…" system which pushed

grades and GPA's while very little of her high school experience focused on her individual interests and how she could have nurtured such interests to articulate a postsecondary career pathway. Moses, during the same focus group, echoed Kenya's sentiments regarding how the school officials, at BDMHS, placed a greater level of importance on the acquisition of grades over career choices when stating:

Going off of what Kenya was saying, basically if you got good grades, they didn't care. They just said keep doing what you're doing. They didn't really say, "Oh, you're getting good grades, what are you interested in?"

Moses further reflected on how he perceived the high school's personnel to have provided him with limited guidance with formalizing a postsecondary career pathway; similar to Kenya, he agreed that the school's support would have benefited his postsecondary pathway. Moses reflections are coming from his positionality as a self-proclaimed high achieving AP track participant,

I know I never was asked by anybody at Brown Deer what's my interest, what do you want to do eventually. I feel like if we actually had a present guidance counselor, that should be one of the first questions they ask every student. Cause like sure, people don't like school, they don't like the homework, but there is always something interesting to you that with enough digging the guidance counselor can find that and be like "Oh, try this class…it will prepare you or get you more in tune or knowledgeable of what you might want to do". I feel like a guidance counselor would have been very helpful.

Nairobi echoed Moses and Kenya's sentiments, during the focus group, and shared how additional support from the school's personnel would have allowed her to more efficiently complete her university studies. She contributed the following to the discussion when sharing

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how she would have preferred the school officials to have supported her postsecondary career transition:

> "Tell me what your interests are?" and "Okay, maybe you should try Sociology" or something like that. So, uh, like what Moses was just saying if we were asked what we wanted to do, that could have really helped in college and saved us some time.

In respect to how the participants perceived their high school's resources to have supported their postsecondary college choices, their responses reflected a higher level of satisfaction regarding the support they received during high school. Some participants mentioned how they received information about college during the monthly mandatory senior meetings that were previously discussed. Lybia, Sudan and Malia stated that college representatives would share resources during these senior meetings, representing college and universities such as Concordia, Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) and those affiliated with the UW system (specifically UW-Whitewater, UW-Milwaukee and UW-Madison).

However, during a focus group, Malia expressed her frustration over the limited college options that were shared during these senior meetings; for example, she perceived the school officials to be primarily supportive of UW-Milwaukee and MATC. However, she stated that the school failed to provide resources and support for students who were interested in attending a Historically Black College or University (HBCU). Malia's reflections aligned with a previous discussion presented in this findings chapter which exemplify ways in which, according to study participants, the school officials at BDMHS supported a Eurocentric approach that excluded opportunities for African American students to connect with their culture and racial identity. In this discussion regarding HBCU's, Malia reasoned that she only learned about HBCU's through

her affiliation with a local social organization whose mission is to support the academic and social experiences of African American students, including their college matriculation.

Outside of these mandatory monthly senior meetings, participants shared how they perceived the school's resources, including support from school staff, to have minimally assisted them with positioning both their college and career choices. Furthermore, all participants reflected on their frustration regarding how their high school counselors failed to provide what they perceived as "sufficient" guidance in this area. In fact, participants provided statements which illuminated the limited dynamics of their student/counselor relationship. For example, Nandi and Sheba specified that they met with their counselor toward the end of their junior year while other graduates (Nefertari, Sheba, Niger, Cleopatra, Ashanti) stated that they met with their counselor for the first time during their senior year in high school. Kenya recalled meeting with her school counselor "...maybe once or twice" during high school; Mali recalled never "really meeting with the high school counselor"; Algeria recollected meeting with her school counselor "...pretty often…" during her "...senior or junior year…"; and Sudan met with his counselor twice, during his first two semesters of high school. While their reflections of their student/counselor interactions varied slightly, collectively, the participants agreed that in most cases, they met with their high school counselors typically during the latter part of their junior year or during their senior year in high school. During a focus group, Sheba implicated the schools practice of primarily scheduling student meetings with their high school counselors toward the end of their junior year or during their senior year in high school when sharing the following: "…it feels like it is too late to make any major life decisions on what you want to do and make high school matter to that [referring to the college and career decision]".

Specific to high school counselor support, while collectively this study's participants expressed how high school counselors offered minimal support and shared minimal resources, some students reflected on the college specific information that they received from their high school counselors. For example, Lybia recalled receiving help with applying to colleges and researching school scholarships; Niger and Nigeria stated that they received assistance with completing their FAFSA application; and Ghana received a list of colleges to review "...once she graduated". While a few students reminisced about receiving some support from high school counselors regarding their college choices; once again, all participants reflected on how this form of support was only garnered during their senior year in high school.

Finally, Nairobi and Malia spoke in depth regarding their senior year encounters with their high school counselors when seeking support regarding their postsecondary college decisions. Both participants reflected on the level of disappointment they felt in response to what they perceived as negative feedback garnered from the school counselors. Nairobi, a self-proclaimed high achieving student who primarily completed the school's AP track curriculum, shared the following:

> The one time we met with our guidance counselors, I was like "I want to apply to [division one university]"...and she really discouraged me from applying, she said "just so you know, people who are supposed to get in don't get in, so I wouldn't rely too much on that..". I wouldn't be here if I listened to them…[still referring to the counselor] like "oh, just make sure you're applying to other schools because there is a good chance you essentially won't get in". Oh well I'll see her in the summer with my degree.

> Malia also shared the dynamics of her meeting with a high school counselor when she was seeking support with realizing her university choices. Similar to Nairobi, Malia felt

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discouraged by the counselor's feedback and reflected on the disappointment she felt when a school staff discouraged her from applying to division one out-of-state colleges and universities. She described the experience as follows:

> I was applying to colleges and I had my heart set on going to [top rated out of state university] and I applied and everything, and that was what I was kind of building myself up to...I had bought paraphernalia and everything, I was ready to go...I applied, I had the GPA, I had the SAT score and as I'm applying...it was somebody who worked in the the office [referring to the personnel who delivered the message regarding college]...it was a big meeting, they brought the whole senior class into the gym and was talking to us about going to college and they were like we know that a lot of you have hopes and desires to go out of state, but be realistic, only 10 percent of you are actually going to leave, and only about 50-60 percent of you are actually going to go to college, so you should probably start applying in-state and apply to MATC. That was really discouraging to me and I think that was really hurtful to me. When I was talking to this same person later on. He was like okay, well I hope you don't have your heart set too high on those out of state colleges. I was like, why, and he was like let's be realistic, are you going to leave? Are you really going to go? What is that to say to somebody? Let me dream big and if I don't make it, then you tell me it's okay and tell me I have other options, don't just knock me and chop me down. I got accepted to every single school I applied to except for that one. I literally broke down in the middle of the computer lab when I read the email...all of the other schools were back up schools. This was supposed to be the one.

Regardless of the participants shared reflections regarding receiving minimal support or discouraging feedback from school officials, demographic data collected from this study's

participants along with their sentiments expressed during interviews, reveal that 15/18 participants are currently completing some form of postsecondary education or are recipients of a college degree. When I asked participants how they managed to transition to college with the perceived minimal support that they received from their school officials, the respondents overwhelming identified their friends and family members as serving as agents of support and channels of information sharing.

The "Monoculturalism and Systems of Exclusion: Pedagogy and Practice" theme includes participants' stories that shed light on the manner in which school officials at BDMHS maintained white supremacy through the tolerance of a monocultural curriculum approach that failed to include a multicultural perspective. Additionally, according to this study's participants, school officials at BDMHS supported racialized differentiation through its tracking process and the divergent ways in which school officials responded to students based on their prescribed academic track. Finally, study participants shared stories regarding how the school's curriculum and staff' support failed to adequately prepare them for college and career matriculation. To further support the student's perception regarding ways in which the Eurocentric culture of BDMHS disproportionately excluded some African American students from the school's community, participants also spoke about how their racialized academic tracks in turn perpetuated racialized peer associations.

Monoculturalism and Systems of Exclusion: High School Cliques, Race, Identity and Severing Ties

As previously discussed in chapters one and two, the Chapter 220 busing program was designed to allow African American students who lived in Milwaukee access to suburban school settings and White students who lived in the suburbs access to specialty schools in Milwaukee to

support the true racial integration of urban and suburban schools (Doughtery, 2004; Stolee, 1993). However, due to the maintenance of racial hierarchical school structures many suburban schools were unsuccessful in integrating African American students into the overall community of their suburban schools (see Ladson-Billings, 2006b) to support the proposed goals of the Chapter 220 legislation (Guinier, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2006b; Milner, 2012). To further complicate notions of racial integration, Chapter 3 incorporates a discussion regarding how students of color are forced to develop multidimensional perspectives of identity in response to peer social boundaries and racialized hierarchies of schools (Carter, 2005). For example, based on the school's mainstream culture, students might either adopt the cultural disposition of mainstream society; manage to maintain the cultural practices of their community and dominant society; or completely resist dominant cultural practices and expectations (Carter, 2005).

In regards to racial integration and peer group associations, this study's interview data reveal how high school peer groups that were manifested at BDMHS were essentially formulated along the participant's primary academic track affiliation, whereas AP track participants more so socialized with White peers who they predominantly shared AP classroom environments with while traditional track participants primarily associated with predominantly African American or more racially diverse peer groups. The participant's expressed sentiments regarding ways in which they navigated their suburban school environment and forged peer associations along the lines of race, gender, academic track and residency are highlighted throughout the subthemes presented in this section. Participants highlighted within this theme stated that their peer group affiliations were manifested or problematized in response to the Eurocentric culture of BDMHS; therefore, to better understand the multiplicity of their racial and ethnic identities, their

sentiments are further discussed, throughout this theme, in accordance to Carter (2005) multidimensional perspectives of identity as highlighted in Chapter 3.

Busing and Peer Networks

During her individual interviews, Nigeria a former Chapter 220 participant, shared her reflections regarding the challenges she endured while navigating the suburban terrain as a "Milwaukee kid" (Nigeria). For example, Nigeria shared endearing accounts about the long bus rides from her urban neighborhood to the suburban school and how the distance between her home and school posed dilemmas for her attending academic and extracurricular activities that were held outside of normal school hours and how missing the bus would, in most instances, lead to her also missing school. Yet, Nigeria also recalled how she enjoyed the dynamics of the bus ride, describing the experience as "fun" because she was able to "bond" with "brown" people who lived in her immediate neighborhood who she "...shared common experiences…" with.

Nigeria further reflected on the level of difficulty she perceived the "Milwaukee kids" to have experienced as they struggled to "fit into the community" of Brown Deer Middle High School. For example, Nigeria described the tensions she perceived existed between the "Milwaukee kids" and the "Brown Deer natives",

> There was a little bit of tension or you have to find your place and who you like, and although Brown Deer is diverse...I was also a Milwaukee kid, so I was already kind of classified and grouped up, so it was different. There is a mix and a melting pot at Brown Deer, but there also is, on the same hand, a segregation and a groupie, cliquey thing going on.

Nigeria alluded such tensions to be indicative of the negative perceptions she perceived some of her White peers held toward "Milwaukee kids" who accessed BDMHS via the bus

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service. Nigeria rationed her experiences as reflective of a "double whammy" because first, she carried the identifier of a "Milwaukee kid" and second, she perceived the "Milwaukee kids" to have been regarded through a more negative lens within the context of BDMHS. During a focus group, Nigeria further reflected on the manner in which her White peers would respond to her. She shared: "… it was like "oh you take that bus?", "oh you take the city bus?" or "oh you're from Milwaukee?".

Nigeria continued by expressing her disdain regarding her White peer's negative consideration of her as the "Milwaukee kid". Nigeria shared how she felt unwelcomed and isolated from the school's community and how she felt compelled to act a certain way in order to be somewhat accepted by her White peers in high school. She stated,

> …like Milwaukee was always thought of as this far away dirty place you know and I'm like, "I live up the street from you guys I'm your classmate too", so sometimes I would have to turn on the extra properness just so I could escape the stigma of being the ghetto Black girl from Milwaukee because you know it was hard enough the Black girls from Brown Deer they had a preppier look they had a softer approach you know they were a little less urban a little more pop it was just different so sometimes I had a double whammy where I wouldn't know who to fit with "do I go sit with the Milwaukee Black kids do I go sit with the Brown Deer Black kids"… I wasn't as welcome…a little bit ostracized and observed…and I didn't want to be the Milwaukee kid…

While Nigeria realized the importance of code switching to support her successful navigation of the suburban school terrain, she also proceeded to explain the level of frustration she experienced when having to act different in order to fit into the Eurocentric culture of BDMHS.

It was hard for me, because of course you don't want to identify with something that is

going to have you treated less than, even if that is who you are, you're going to negate

that, you're going to put it down, you're going to want to adopt the ways of the other, and

that is what I was faced with… I was fluid enough to be able to be in a lot of circles, but I

didn't like having to choose or having to adapt to having to speak and having to do

that. It was frustrating…just thoroughly exhausting…

Based on her expressed notions of feeling isolated from White peer groups within the

context of the suburban school, Nigeria further articulated how difficult it was for her to navigate

the suburban school context as a "Milwaukee kid" as she struggled to develop friendships across

racial lines. She spoke about how some students and teachers reacted negatively to her attempts

to forge relationships, including courtships, across racial lines. She shared,

My Milwaukee friends, the Black kids, the down kids, they're like oh, you like White

boys, I would never guess, they were just totally disappointed and then the White kids

and Mike's friends and family and I remember hanging out even with him in his family

home and his mom is like did you do the dishes, did you take your brother something to

eat, did you do your homework, did you do this, did you do that, and he's like, "Yeah

mom", and it was really she wanted to find something on her list that wasn't done so that

he could do it so that his company [referring to herself] could leave. We got that same

treatment at school, so it was like, "Oh, look at you love birds again", we got stuff from

all the angles, and it was just to the point that, that could have been something so

beautiful and so great, but we couldn't even be next to each other and we really, really

liked each other and wanted to hang out with each other, but it was torture. Everybody

was like, "Why would we do this? Why would we subject ourselves to this?" Even

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teachers. I can recall times, Mr. B, he's a really cool, very neutral party, but even him, he

would notice that we would hang out or end up on the same team for a game or

something and he would make little jokes and mention it, and I would get it, it's funny,

but why, is it because we're a black and White couple, why aren't you talking about the

black couple there or the all-White couple there, but the black and White couple can get a

mention.

> Finally, Nigeria reflected on the implications of the "double whammy",
>
> … I was off focus as far as academics. I maybe would have exceled a lot more in
>
> chemistry had I had the time to focus on just chemistry. I was focused on they're
>
> going to say this about me…

While Nigeria experienced a level of difficulty in developing cross racial peer

associations during high school, unlike her Milwaukee dwelling AP track peers who are

highlighted in the following subsection, Nigeria reflected on how she was adamant in

maintaining her racial and cultural identity during high school. She stated,

> I was changing and growing in high school so every day I would discover some new
>
> blackness, I would come into my hair, I stopped straightening my hair by the time I was
>
> done in high school and before I was straightening it out.

Similar to the participants highlighted in Carter (2005) research, Nigeria was aware of the

school's appreciation for the dominant culture yet she also yearned to "keep it real". In this

manner, Nigeria was cognizant of how her ability to codeswitch would benefit her cross racial

peer group associations during high school. For example, in her attempt to minimize the

"Milwaukee" marker and be more accepted by her White peers and teachers, Nigeria would at

times display an "extra properness" disposition. Yet, this seemingly White disposition did not

always serve her well because such attributes of whiteness caused her "down" African American friends to question her loyalty to their racial group. Furthermore, Nigeria's African American and White peers critiqued her cross racial courtship which she reluctantly terminated due to the "torture" she felt from being in an interracial relationship. While Nigeria was "fluid" enough to somewhat successfully straddle the fence between maintaining her racial identity and exerting a dominant disposition, she expressed how "thoroughly exhausting" the process of code switching was for her and how she simply did not want to choose sides. Finally, while *cultural straddlers* identified in Carter (2005) study were more successful in straddling the boundaries across groups and environments, Nigeria's success with codeswitching was minimal because she expressed a greater level of frustration with her social schooling experiences. In some respects, Nigeria's academic experiences may be more reflective of a balance between *cultural straddlers* and *noncompliant believers*. Nigeria's reflections and movement along the identity spectrum further illustrate how students of color develop multilayered identities in response to their schooling environments.

While Nigeria reflected on the barriers she encountered while trying to develop and maintain cross racial peer relationships as the "Milwaukee kid", her Open Enrollment peers (included in this study) who also lived in Milwaukee but primarily completed the school's AP track curriculum, shared how they were better able to forge relationships with their White peers; yet, some of their success with navigating their suburban school terrain came at a cost. Their sentiments regarding their high school peer affiliations are expressed within the following subthemes: "Assimilation and Peer Networks", "Those Loud Black Girls", "I'm Not One of Them", "I Don't Want to be Black", "High School Cliques, Race and Word of Mouth" and "The N Word".

Assimilation and Peer Networks

Three Milwaukee dwelling Open Enrolment participants highlighted in this study shared ways in which they were successful in navigating their suburban school environment; specifically, these participants shared how they were able to develop and maintain positive relationships with their White peers based on their ability to "act white" (Kenya and Nairobi). In this study, three African American female participants, Kenya, Nairobi and Sheba spoke in great depth about how they adopted an "acting white" disposition in order to successfully navigate their suburban school context which they perceived as "Eurocentric". While these participants perceived their "acting white" disposition to have assisted them in the development of "meaningful" relationships with their White peers while attending their suburban school, these young women also shared ways in which they perceived the "Eurocentric culture" of the school to have led them to sever ties with their African American peers in order to gain closer proximity to whites (students and adults) and the academic resources that were maintained within these predominantly White networks.

When further discussing concepts related to "acting white", Kenya shared the following about how she was accepted by her White peers and school officials during high school because she "talk white".

> I was very much considered one of the token Black people at Brown Deer…because I was friends with a lot of White girls...It felt to me, being a token black person, people say I talk white...Teachers like that I wasn't perceived as loud or aggressive, I followed the rules, I got good grades...I use it to my advantage.

> Kenya continued to share how her experiences while attending BDMHS taught her that "...being adjacent to whiteness is very beneficial…" and she explained how "acting white"

during high school advantaged her peer relationships with White students in the suburban school setting.

I don't think it was just talking White but I think it [her overall "acting white" disposition] let White people let their guard down, because the stereotypes don't just pop into their heads. I think that is what it more so does than anything. It allows [white] people to become a little bit more relaxed in their interactions and they see you as a person more so than as a Black person, even though my blackness is a part of who I am and cannot be separated, because whiteness is seen as natural, they see me as neutral...

Similarly, Nairobi shared how her "acting white" behavior also supported her in developing what she considered to be "genuine" relationships with her White peers and how the social connections she established during high school contributed to her overall level of school satisfaction. She described the dynamics of her peer relationships with White students as follows:

I really enjoyed my friendships in high school. Looking back now, I don't know if I really rocked with them, but overall, I genuinely appreciated my friends. I was like "These are going to be my friends forever", I was like "Can we get matching tattoos?" I generally really, really liked my friendships in high school. We would always be at each other's houses, because we played all the same sports. They had been friends since kindergarten, I got here in 4th grade, they had been my friends since I got here essentially. It made me really like high school.

While Kenya admitted that "acting white" came easy to her because she had been reared in "multicultural" and "predominantly white" spaces, similar to Nigeria, she also reflected on the burden associated with having to "code switch" in order to maintain her peer associations with

White communities. During her individual interview, Kenya described her ability to code switch as resemblance of her exercising "...mental gymnastics".

Those Loud Black Girls

During an individual interview, when describing the racial "cliques" established within BDMHS, Kenya referenced a group of classmates as "loud and aggressive". Thus, I asked: "So who were the loud and aggressive people?" Kenya replied,

> The Black girls...It was the Black girls who said what they felt and said what they were
>
> thinking, they didn't sugarcoat for anybody, which I think is also very powerful, being
>
> able to express yourself...

> Other graduates (Nairobi, Sheba and Nigeria), also without a prompt, shared similar

sentiments during their individual interviews. For example, Nairobi shared the following about how some African American girls were perceived through a negative lens during high school:

> Most of the Black girls hung out together I would say, and they were loud, they were this,
>
> they were that...a lot of them also didn't play sports and I was an athlete, so most of the
>
> people that played sports were also white. It was kind of like the group that I associated
>
> myself with, and I'm in this White world and oh yeah, I'm not racist, whatever, but all of
>
> these micro-aggressions and stuff like that had me thinking...

Nigeria attempted to explain the negative connotations that she perceived were attached to the concepts of "loud" and "aggressive" and its direct association to how some of the African American girls who attended BDMHS during her tenure were regarded within their suburban school. She stated,

> Those were looked at as negative traits. Those were looked at as traits that the Black kids
>
> have, or the Milwaukee kids had, if you came off a certain way, like they loud, they

ghetto or certain girls in the hallway, I can remember, "Why is that Black girl always

loud?" Yeah, she was known for being loud, she was rowdy, but just because she was

Black, that made the standard for all of the Black girls.

Next, Nigeria provided an example of when her White male friend during high school

reckoned African American girls in a negative light. Nigeria shared,

> ...he said, why are Black girls always loud? A girl named [insert name] walked by and
>
> she is known to be loud, she's a Black girl, and he said, "Why are black girls always
>
> loud?" I looked at him and I said, "Well why are White girls always sluts?" That moment
>
> was real pivotal, he just grouped us all in and although I wasn't grouping all White
>
> people, I had to use that as an example to show him. He said, "Well they're not", and I
>
> was like, "The same thing applies with Black women".

Finally, Nigeria shared her perception of how easy it was for some students and staff at

BDMHS to perceive some young African American girls as "ghetto" but more difficult for

school officials to perceive these same girls through a more positive lens. She shared,

> Really, it didn't take much to be considered ghetto. One false move, one altercation, no
>
> matter how minor, it didn't take much to be ghetto, to fit into those derogatory terms, but
>
> it was much harder for me to be called smart or my comments in class to be validated by
>
> a teacher. "Yeah, that's an interesting point, thank you for participating in the
>
> discussion".   I'd never get that. You'd hardly ever get those positives.

According to Nairobi and Kenya, such negative connotations that were held toward some

African American girls, during their high school years, led both graduates (Nairobi and Kenya)

to disassociate themselves from the "loud", "aggressive" or "ghetto" African American girls

because Kenya and Nairobi revealed that they were afraid that such peer associations would minimize their status within the suburban school environment.

Still considering the "loud Black girls" discussion, during a focus group, I asked three AP graduates (Nairobi, Sheba and Kenya) to elaborate on why they held these perceptions about other African American girls who exhibited a disposition different from their own "acting white" temperament. Nairobi reckoned that she perceived the school's "curriculum" and overall "culture" to be more reflective and welcoming of White students and African American students who "acted white". She further reflected on her experience attending AP classes that were predominantly representative of White students; she was cognizant of the fact that the White students were the preferred students in her high school, thus, she felt compelled to associate herself with them and not her African American female peers who were regarded in a less positive light. However, similar to Kenya's previous discussion on "code switching", Nairobi also reflected on the negative connotations of carrying this burden as an African American woman. She shared the following:

> ...In general...if you're in the smart class as a Black woman, it's very hard to learn how to love yourself...but "Who are you [referring to school officials] giving more attention to in class? Who are you recommending for special ed? Who are you recommending for the advance classes?" All of these things affect people, so maybe you may actually see a more diverse group of people in these other [AP] classes and then it makes you [African American students] feel more comfortable as White people aren't just the smart people. Something like that would be beneficial, because you internalize all of this stuff, not even realizing what you're actually going through.

Nairobi continued to provide rationale for why she disassociated with her African American female peers,

I feel it came from the notion that we [AP students] were better because we were in the higher class and the way people [referring to school officials] even talked about them, oh, you guys are so smart, all this stuff, I'm better than you...I'm with all of these White people.

Reflecting back, as previously discussed, Nairobi realize that her negative perceptions of the "loud" African American girls who she attended high school with was primarily based on the school's Eurocentric "culture". Interestingly, as an adult, she reflects on how she wasn't too different from her "loud" African American female peers. I asked Nairobi to define "ghetto" and she responded as follows:

I don't even know, because looking back, these girls aren't really ghetto, they're Black and they hang out together and they may be eating hot flamins' for breakfast or something like that. We all dressed the same. Maybe the way that they talked was a little more Ebonics a little bit. They hung out with people outside of Brown Deer, more like Milwaukee people, so that could have been influence...They weren't even mean...I have a lot of respect for them now because they never changed for anybody...I can't say there was anything that made them ghetto. What is ghetto? I don't know. It was just a way to classify I feel like a group of Black people...in hindsight, I think we were all relatively the same...looking back, I don't think they were doing anything that was ghetto, but it was the [school] culture I was around, the people I was around, oh, those Black girls, oh yeah, that's not me.

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Interestingly, post high school, both Nairobi and Kenya admitted to being more accepting of their African American identity and associating with other communities of color, primarily African American. Nairobi stated that after high school she began "embracing" her "blackness", wearing her "hair natural" and "...being okay with being black...". Kenya stated that her perceptions of her African American peers has also changed since high school. For example, during her college years, Kenya would gravitate toward sitting next to other African American students in class, reasoning that it was an easier transition versus attempting to develop friendships with her White college peers. Kenya further reasoned that she is no longer interested in serving as the "...first black encounter..." for whites. Furthermore, Kenya revealed how some of her current African American sorority sisters would fall into the "loud" African American girl category and how, despite her current African American female friend's disposition, they are "...all very good friends...".

"I'm Not One of Them"

At BDMHS, peer associations and inherent systems of exclusions were also present along the lines of residency. In a previous discussion within this theme under the subtheme titled, "The Milwaukee kids", Nigeria shared sentiments about how she perceived the "Milwaukee kids" who utilized the bus to access BDMHS as being disregarded within the school's environment. In alignment with Nigeria's reflections, Kenya, Sheba and Nairobi (Milwaukee dwelling, Open Enrollment participants) also realized, during their high school years, the stigma associated with living in Milwaukee and shared how they tried to disassociate themselves not only from African American peers who failed to "act white" (as previously discussed) but also from their African American Milwaukee peers and local neighborhood. Instead, as previously discussed, these young women opted to develop friendships with White peers who were native to Brown Deer as

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a means to "fit in" (Nairobi) and better navigate the suburban high school. Within this subtheme, the stories shared by Kenya, Sheba and Nairobi illuminate how these participants were persistent at disassociating themselves from the stigma associated with the Milwaukee concept.

Nairobi revealed,

> I didn't want people to know that I lived in Milwaukee". All my friends lived in Brown Deer, so I was always over there. Nobody really came to my house. I was embarrassed.
>
> Researcher: Because of the stereotype of being the Milwaukee kid?
>
> Nairobi: Yeah. You're like oh no, I'm not one of them, we're different. People [at Brown Deer High School] know the other side of Brown Deer, that's Milwaukee. I was scared to be like this is the Black side of me. Look, I actually live by Black people and it was really hard to accept...I spent most of my time in Brown Deer and I would always get there [to school] really fast without people wondering where I came from.
>
> Researcher: Did your friends know that you lived right across the street in Milwaukee?
>
> Nairobi: Yeah, they knew where I lived, but nobody was coming over. You can drop me off...I lived up a little alley, so I would have them drop me off on the side of the road.

Sheba and Kenya agreed with Nairobi's sentiments regarding being a Milwaukee resident and shared the following:

> Sheba: For me, kinda like Nairobi was saying, I didn't want people to know I was from Milwaukee...no I'm from the suburbs. I feel like the Milwaukee kids who were at Brown Deer, I would never associate with them or be considered inside that group.

Kenya: I think that Milwaukee identifier definitely created a label that people were

aware of...because you knew the kids who lived in Milwaukee. They tended to be

louder, even the Black people. They tended to be louder, you knew the Black

people who grew up in Brown Deer. It was a very different experience...knowing

somebody from Milwaukee versus Brown Deer...I don't know how to say it was

different, but it's kind of saying like you're not from around here.

Malia (a Brown Deer resident), similar to Nigeria, Nairobi, Kenya and Sheba also became aware of the negative perceptions that some school officials held about students who lived in Milwaukee and accessed the suburban high school through the Chapter 220 program when she overheard a conversation between a few White teachers during study hall. Her reflection further validate Nigeria, Kenya, Sheba and Nairobi's notion that some of the "Milwaukee kids" were regarded in a negative manner during their high school years. She stated,

I heard our teachers talking one day about the Chapter 220 program and how they were

getting rid of it and there were a lot of teachers that were for it [getting rid of the

program] because they saw the difference in our standardized test scores, the students

who grew up in the Brown Deer School District did better on their standardized testing

than the students who came in from Milwaukee and they were like, "Well now that we

are getting rid of the program, we're not going to get those students anymore and our

scores will go up to better reflect the work that our school district does".

After sharing the story about some school official's sentiments regarding the Chapter 220 program, Malia revealed her uneasiness with overhearing such sentiments: "I didn't like that when I heard it but I didn't look at Milwaukee kids any different".

During the same focus group, Nigeria and Niger added to Malia's discussion and expressed their disappointment with also overhearing school officials making negative comments about students who lived in Milwaukee. They shared the following:

> Nigeria: and we would overhear stuff..."Why do I know that about the attendance?" And you go and you lack couf and you have the conversation in front of us. Brown Deer was rumory or gossipy because of stuff like that...don't say anything you don't mean to...and we would pick it apart.

> Niger: …we definitely heard those conversations a lot

Although Kenya, Sheba and Nairobi felt the tensions associated with living in Milwaukee, Moses (the fourth Milwaukee dwelling Open Enrollment participant) did not share their tensions regarding his Milwaukee residency. He shared the following during the second focus group,

> I was the new kid, but I don't feel like being from Milwaukee instead of Brown Deer made me feel too different. I didn't feel limited or isolated, excluded. The only exclusion I felt was being the new kid. I don't feel like I was limited by being in Milwaukee. I don't think I was ashamed by it. People would say, "Where are you from?", and I would say, "Milwaukee". "Oh, okay".

The discussion presented by Moses is interesting because it adds nuance to the ways in which AP track participants interpreted their suburban schooling experiences along gender lines.

"I Don't Want to be Black"

For Nairobi, the pressure to "act white" led her to question her self-worth and racial identity as she attempted to successfully navigate her suburban school environment. She shared the following:

...For me, I feel like it became damaging because then it's like, "What do I consider okay to be Black? Is it really assimilating to whiteness or what is it?" and then you have this identity crisis, "What am I?" "Who am I?" I think I'm Black but I don't act like those Black people. I feel the way Brown Deer is structured, as a Black person, it had me questioning who I am as a Black person, because I didn't associate with Black people but it's kind of a mind [audio interference]. I'm with all of these White people, I don't want to be Black, because those are bad people.

In further explaining how she perceived the "culture" of BDMHS to have been damaging to her self-concept and racial identity as an African American, Nairobi continued to explain how one of her African American friends (not included in this study) also felt pressured to "act white" while attending BDMHS. She stated,

I was just talking to one of my friends...who also went do Brown Deer and we were like Brown Deer made you want to be white. She is dark skin and was like I hated myself going there because nobody teaches you how to love yourself. I never thought about it, because I'm lighter skinned, so she had a completely different experience as a dark skinned woman going to Brown Deer and I think it is so sad that something that can build you up so much can also tear you down, like your confidence and everything.

Then, Nairobi reflected on the extent to which she was willing to reduce her racial and cultural identity to fit into the Eurocentric culture of BDMHS when sharing the following:

...Going to Brown Deer, all of my friends were white, I wanted to be White to be completely honest. I wanted your hair [referring to White students], the whole idea was such a fantasy almost. I was White on the inside. I want to marry a White guy. I don't think I loved myself as a Black woman.

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Extracurricular Cliques, Race and Word of Mouth

In respect to extracurricular space at BDMHS, it was noted through the graduate's interviews, that student's extracurricular involvement closely mirrored the racial and segregation dynamics reflected in the classroom setting. The AP track graduates more so socialized with White peers because, according to Moses, those were the students who they overwhelmingly attended classes with. He shared the following:

...if you asked people, they would say oh Moses hung around with the White kids...pretty much because they were in the same classes as me, same sports teams...

According to Moses, and other AP participant's sentiments shared in this study, African American AP track participants primarily participated in extracurricular activities that were highly reflective of a majority White student population. While extracurricular activities at BDMHS were available to all students, Nairobi reflected on how she perceived membership to some organizations to have been formalized based on the student's social networks with White peers. She shared the following:

Even being in the National Honor Society. Those were all of my [white] friends, and if somebody else would have applied who still had good grades and everything but they weren't in that friend group, because the advisor was one of my friend's moms they wouldn't have got in.

Extracurricular groups, at BDMHS, where White students were predominantly present in this racialized school system, carried certain connections that allowed for a flow of information to selective student populations which included students who were affiliated with the high track curriculum. For example, Nairobi reflected on how in addition to gaining entry to the National Honors Society, her White peer affiliation also allowed her to gain knowledge about a sports

scholarship because the school's Athletic Director shared the scholarship specifics (4 year scholarship awarding $10,000) with her White female peer who participated on the same sports team. In turn, her White female peer shared the scholarship information with Nairobi. Nairobi further reflected on the dynamics of the closed network of information sharing that transpired during high school:

> This was not a publicized thing to apply to. Meanwhile, how many kids play [the specific sport] at high school? Why did only 5 people know about this scholarship? Because you told one person. I found out about stuff...I'm sure other people may have not gotten...I guess in a way because of word of mouth. It was who you knew.

While Nairobi acknowledged the complexities regarding the manner in which pertinent information was shared within the extracurricular space of BDMHS, she also further reflected on the privilege such networks afforded her. Nairobi shared the following:

> It is such an oxymoron in a way because great, I'm friends with these White people that are making me be better, but how problematic is that? Because I felt like the only reason I got this opportunity was because I was friends with the White people, and it is so unfortunate, why can't I be black and embrace it and still have those same opportunities, because I don't know if that would have happened, if I would have hung out with the black girls. I don't know if teachers would have seen me the same way. It is really unfortunate it happened that way, but I can't be sad because look where I am now.

While the racialized hierarchy employed at BDMHS allowed some African American AP students, in this study, to gain access to particular extracurricular groups and their resources, the participants who primarily completed traditional track curriculum failed to share any accounts

regarding how they became privy to resources through extracurricular groups or peer affiliations that would support their academic excellence.

Furthermore, in the racialized hierarchy of BDMHS, students also shared that even "belonging" to a school organization did not necessarily translate into authentic involvement. For example, Algeria - a traditional track participant - shared how she participated in the Student Council organization; however, she also shared that she wasn't "in" the organization but was allowed to attend competitions and "run errands" for the organizing teacher. Two other traditional track female participants attempted to cross the perceived racial lines to participate on the swim team and Yearbook Committee. However, one graduate quit the swim team because she felt racially isolated and not "part of the team". According to this graduate, the swim coach encouraged her swim progression; yet she explained the racial and economic isolation that she felt as a minority (one of two African American females) team member and its implication on her discontinuing her participation on the swim team. She shared,

> I don't know if it's a high school thing or a suburban high school thing, but that was really expensive, and I couldn't maintain it, buying a specific kind of swimsuit...and for me to upkeep my hair. All the other White girls used to get dressed and go home, but I can't do that. I got to shower, rinse the chlorine out of my hair and then we could go home. Me and my friend would be the only ones still in the shower, washing our hair until we were done. You could clearly see the difference. It was all White people and then the two black girls in the middle or the side of the picture [referring to the yearbook picture]. They were nice but they never really tried to get to know us. There was no team love. I could see the bonds that were being made amongst other [white] people and

I really didn't feel like I was a part of the team. I felt like an outside person to the team who was just kind of on it. That wasn't a motivator for me to want to come back again.

The other graduate's application to become a member of the Yearbook Committee was denied by her photography teacher (who encouraged her to join). According to this graduate, she earned high grades in all of her courses (carried a 3.4 self-reported GPA), was especially gifted in art and design and followed the prescribed protocol for Yearbook Committee membership. She further stated that the teacher's decision to decline her application "hurt" her "soul" and altered her perceptions of him which encouraged her to disconnect from him altogether. She stated,

> ...he already got his clique of students that he wants, so I'll just go over here...I just stopped caring about him and started doing my own thing in his class but I was still doing good…

The subthemes of "Assimilation and Peer Networks", "Those Loud Black Girls", "I'm Not One of Them", "I Don't Want to be Black", "Extracurricular Cliques, Race and Word of Mouth" include stories shared by Nairobi, Sheba and Kenya. While these ladies admitted to "acting white" during high school, contrary to Ogbu' (2003, 2008) assertions, they embraced their assimilationist behavior as a means to gain close proximity to Whites and their resources that would implicate school success; furthermore, they did not share accounts about being teased by their racial peers for adopting a dominant disposition. As assimilationists, all three ladies made conscious decisions to disassociate from their same race peers who failed to exhibit similar attributes of whiteness. Unlike Nigeria, these ladies were willing to relinquish their own racial identity in exchange for the dominant culture in order to forge what they considered to be positive peer relationships and to better navigate their suburban school terrain. These ladies'

schooling experiences resemble the *cultural mainstreamers* who were highlighted in Carter (2005) study. For example, Nairobi, Kenya and Sheba self-reported as high achievers who primarily completed AP track curriculum during high school and, as discussed throughout these subthemes, these ladies mainly associated with White peers who attended their high track courses. Furthermore, similar to Carter (2005), these ladies sought after seats in AP track courses because they genuinely believed that such affiliation would support their matriculation to elite universities. The findings presented in this study diverge from Carter (2005) because, as previously stated, the participants in this study who "acted white" and excelled academically did not share reflections about being teased by their high school peers for adopting a white persona. While Nairobi, Sheba and Kenya primarily embodied *cultural mainstreamer* characteristics, as discussed later in this section, they also traversed along the ideological spectrum offered by Carter (2005).

The "N" Word

Kenya, an AP track graduate from BDMHS, spoke in depth regarding how the "N" word was being casually used throughout her suburban high school by some students and school staff. Eventually, the use of the "N" word led Kenya to "sever" ties with most of her White friends and school officials from high school. Her racialized recollections reflect how race and racism remain as permanent constructs within our American society (Bell, 1992 & 2004; Bonilla-Silva, 1997).

Kenya shared the following regarding how some students would casually used the "N" word during high school:

...I would notice is White people would be okay using the N word. You have it in rap

music, stuff like that, so that's a thing, but also you have White guys and Black guys and

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also other racial groups...and so of course Black folks use it amongst themselves as they

see fit, White people are curious, they want to know, Black people explain to them and

these folks [referring to African American students] I'm assuming don't have proper

analysis to say no, you can't say that, and also the Black folks would say to the White

people, that's my nigger, lah de dah de dah, and them [White students] not understanding

they can't say that back and also the Black people didn't probably know that wasn't the

best idea on their part, so it became this thing where it was regular...but it was

unacceptable. I was never about it, and people would say I would be too mad about it

and it's not that deep, and I'm like it's definitely that deep…

Kenya proceeded to explain her deeply rooted feelings about the use of the "N" word.

She stated,

...because that's a word that White people have always used in their positioning, you

can't use a word that was used to dehumanize my ancestors in a cool way with me, it's

never cool. Black folks have reclaimed that word, it's used amongst themselves and what

they do with it is their business.

Then, within this same discussion, Kenya questions her White high school peer's desire

to use the "N" word and further shared account about how the "N" word was used in a negative

manner by a White student (who was eventually suspended) and the football coach who Kenya

referenced as "racist". She stated,

My question is why do White people want to use the word so bad? I want to ask them,

"Why do you want to use it?" White people tend to feel entitled to Black space, Black

culture, and everything...So, I was just over it. The N word became like the Bible option

for White folks to say and for like Asian folks to say too. I was just like who told you all

this. At the end of the day you have people who don't understand the history of the word and we're all integrated now so now it's okay...I'm going to ask you why do you want to use it?

Kenya proceeded to explain how her best friend's (since 6th grade) use of the "N" word led her to end their close friendship and Kenya's overall association with the high school. She stated,

> ...And being acutely aware of race, like the one friend when I was telling you about...she was White and I was Black, literally I couldn't be friends with her at the end of high school...I remember, she said the N word, and I was like "what?" She had been my friend all this time [since 6th grade] ...so that just really translated far and wide. I was taken aback because I thought we were friends...she said she won't say it around me, and I was like oh that's not good enough and after that I never talked to her the same way again, because I felt like she couldn't be trusted and I'm just like I told you this is so, so important to me that you don't say this and you completely disregard it...To me that was the reason why I couldn't be friends with a lot of White people from Brown Deer because you all thought I'm overreacting when I say this. Even coming back home to Brown Deer is very weird...I had severed so many of those bonds because this is not something I'm going to be a part of and I can't forget about it for the sake of our friendship. High school was really weird and with that being said, it became normalized [the use of the N word]...

In response to the hierarchical systems of exclusion that, according to this study's participants, were perpetuated at BDMHS, some participants shared how they found alternative social spaces to their classroom environments to socialize with their same race peers.

"Safe Spaces"

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Chapter 3 presented a discussion regarding how some African American students who attend suburban school environments intentionally created "counter spaces" (Carter, 2007, p. 543) as a means to affirm their racial identity and to serve as a barrier against racial discrimination. The majority of the participants in this study shared examples related to how they perceived the overall culture of BDMHS to be resemblance of a Eurocentrism and systems of exclusion. In turn, some participants, particularly those who primarily completed the school's traditional track, reflected on how they appreciated opportunities to congregate in out-of-classroom spaces with their same race peers in what Nigeria referenced as "safe spaces".

During an individual interview, Malia provided an in depth explanation of the level of racial segregation that she perceived manifested during out-of-classroom periods at BDMHS; Malia particularly reflected on the racial dynamics of the lunch room. She stated,

> … they [referencing students] started merging into their own groups and the lunchroom was very clear, you got your cool black kids here, you got your Asian friends here, you got the cool White people, the sports people here… and then you got the kind of nerdy, gothic White people over here and the nerdy black people that are kind of both and nobody really talks to them over here, and the Hispanic table over here and then you got the others which are usually like the Indian/Native American people or the people who just don't want nothing to do with the separation and then they take up 2 tables…

During a focus group, Malia also shared her aforementioned sentiments regarding how she recalled the school to be segregated by race. In response, Nigeria discussed the dynamics of what she considered a "...separate but equal…" school environment that was established at BDMHS. Nigeria stated that this form of environment (i.e., "separate but equal") allowed African American students and other students of color an opportunity to "naturally" mix with

others who they felt most comfortable with after being "forced" to congregate in classroom environments with their White peers. Nigeria explained such dynamics as follows:

When you are forced to be in an environment where you're interacting with you know everybody all day you kinda wanna go and separate...it's like when you're...forced to be around White people all day your fun is going to a Mexican restaurant because you've been around White people all day and you kinda wanna get a little culture flavor in your life...so at free time like recess, lunch we was like okay let's just go to our people [referencing their African American peers]. You're over there we're over here..I just need a lunch break with that culture...and then I wanna go back into an integrated classroom...I think that's why we separated at lunch because we just need a dose of who we were so when we went back into those classrooms we could be strong...and we could represent…[referencing representing the African American race and culture].

During the same focus group, Nigeria continued to explain how some students of color formed separate racial groups during out of classroom periods as a means to preserve their racial and cultural identity; yet, she also spoke to the complexities of this experience when referencing the transition from classroom to out-of-classroom space as being "kinda hard". She shared the following:

I would notice that most people would be a lot of times too embarrassed to be too urban or use their Ebonics in the classroom but you would hear it all day at lunch or you would hear it in the gym or people wouldn't….speak Laos in the classroom they would never speak to their friend in Louse next to them in the classroom but at lunch you know they would speak Louse with one another or speak Spanish openly with one another so it was like an understanding that we kinda had I don't know…it was kinda hard.

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During the same focus group, Niger supported Malia and Nigeria's notion of the manner in which out-of-classroom racial segregation transpired during high school; yet, he discussed how the racial segregation was "natural", based on racial group interest and familiarity. He shared,

> …we were in the classroom we were surrounded by everybody but to get out of the classroom you kinda gravitate toward what's natural like people that talk like you people that have the same interest as you…

Ashanti's reflections further supported Niger's notions regarding why he appreciated spending time with his same race peers outside of classroom time. He stated,

> They looked like me so I would have more in common with them and my lifestyle would be more…it was more comfortable for me to talk to them about certain thing because there was nothing during school hours that made you feel like you were a part of the school or anything like that.

Malia further rationed that the school's Eurocentric culture that was exhibited at BDMHS left her feeling a sense of disconnect from the classroom environment which, according to Malia, in turn led her to gravitate to "safe spaces" outside of classroom instructional time. When describing the classroom environment, she stated:

> It hindered my ability to feel like I was involved in the school…I don't think the school really offered an environment to see outside of that [referencing the Eurocentrism of the school] because I don't know if we really had culture exposure like that to really expose ourselves.

Nigeria, Malia and Niger reason that the school's inability to provide all students with a learning environment that promotes "culture exposure" led some African American students to

gravitate to same race peer groups outside of their classroom instructional periods. Similar ideologies of monoculturalism and exclusionary practices have been explored throughout this findings chapter, illuminating participant's stories regarding how they perceived the school's curriculum to be resemblance of a Eurocentric vantage point. Within the current discussion of "safe spaces", some participants also discussed how the Eurocentric culture of BDMHS led some African American students to gravitate to spaces where they could naturally exhibit their cultural disposition in a "nonthreatening" environment (Nigeria).

According to this study's participants, some students found refuge in the cafeteria (Malia, Nigeria, Chad and Algeria); Nefertari, Nigeria and Malia spoke highly of the school's art classrooms and the art teachers' ability to create "safe spaces" for them to "kick back" and "hang out" during lunch or study hall. Finally, study hall was also referenced as a popular space for the majority of traditional track graduates (Morocco, Nigeria, Niger and Algeria). Interestingly, the AP track graduates did not reflect on the concept of "safe spaces" or a need to regroup with a particular racial groups external to classroom instructional time.

The theme of "Monoculturalism and Systems of Exclusion: High School Cliques, Race and Severing Ties" present stories from this study's traditional track participants regarding how African American students' ability to forge meaningful within race and cross racial peer associations were problematized by the high school's Eurocentric structure. Due to the Eurocentric structures that some participants perceived to have existed within their high school, some traditional track participants found refuge in alternative spaces.

In reference to racial ideological categories, peer associations and school structures (see Carter, 2005), it should be noted that this study's participants did not fully embody the characteristics of any particular category as exemplified by Carter (2005) research. In other

words, this study's participant' experiences were so multidimensional that it did not lend them to be neatly categorized into prescribed groupings. Alternatively, this study's participants managed to traverse between the ideology constructs of *cultural mainstreamers* (i.e., students who fully adopted an assimilationist approach), *cultural straddlers* (i.e., students who bridge the gap between assimilation and those who favor their own cultural styles) and *noncompliant believers* (i.e., students who openly critiqued school inequities and preferred to maintain their own cultural presentations).

The AP track participants highlighted in this study who self-proclaimed as high achievers traversed between racial ideological categories in multiple ways. As previously discussed, similar to *cultural mainstreamers* highlighted in Carter (2005) research, four of the seven AP track participants revealed how they "acted white" to better navigate their suburban school environment; however, unlike Carter (2005) participants, they did not report any incidents of being teased by their racial peers for adopting a white disposition. Furthermore, the ideological constructs embodied by the seven AP track participants differed. For example, while four AP track participants "acted white" during high school, the remaining three AP track participants did not share how they adopted a mainstream persona during high school. In fact, Nefertari, Mali and Lybia shared how their peer groups were racially diverse; yet, they also demonstrated academic success similar to Nairobi, Kenya, Sheba and Moses. According to interview data, five of the seven AP track participants attended selective universities, one AP track participant attended a private university and the remaining AP track participant attended a traditional university post high school. Though the AP track participants were high achievers and a few "acted white", similar to the *noncompliant believers* highlighted in Carter (2005), they were all

cognizant of the high school's racialized hierarchies and explicitly critiqued their high school officials for implementing and tolerating such systemic inequalities.

Traditional track participants also traversed across the racial ideological spectrum introduced by Carter (2005). For example, similar to their AP track peers and the *noncompliant believers* presented in Carter (2005) study, traditional track participants in this study were also cognizant of the systemic forces embedded within the structures of BDMHS and how such inequalities impeded the academic success of African American students. Also, similar to Carter (2005) *noncompliant believers*, Ashanti, Morocco, Chad, Sudan, Niger, Cleopatra and Nandi were less optimistic about their high school experiences because they understood how such inequitable forces existed to work against their academic matriculation and, as such, were less willing to adopt a race-less persona to demonstrate mobility within their suburban school. Yet, they were not all considered "low achievers" like the *noncompliant believers* in Carter (2005). For example, while Chad, Niger, Morocco, Sudan and Ashanti shared that their high school GPAs were not impressive, Cleopatra and Nandi self-professed as high achievers, carrying 3.4 and 3.2 high school GPAs respectively. Finally, while Niger, Morocco, Chad, Sudan and Ashanti carried lower high school GPAs, all men transitioned to college post high school. In fact, Niger graduated with his bachelor degree and during this study was currently enrolled in an MBA program; Morocco graduated with a bachelor degree; Chad is completing a nursing certificate; Ashanti is enrolled at a community college and Sudan is completing his bachelor degree.

Other traditional track participants highlighted in this study could somewhat fit into Carter (2005) *cultural straddlers* category. For example, Malia, Nigeria, Ghana and Algeria were more optimistic about their schooling experiences than their previously mentioned

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traditional track peers identified as partial *noncompliant believers;* however, they were less optimistic than their AP track peers. In this study, traditional track participants, similar to their AP track peers, exemplified fluidity on Carter (2005) racial ideological spectrum in other ways. For example, some traditional track participants self-identified as high achievers who were highly involved in extracurricular clubs; other traditional track participants self-identified as high achievers but experienced difficulty in participating in extracurricular clubs; and a few traditional track participants who shared how their high school academic performance was less impressive but they managed to participate on a variety of sport teams.

Finally, unlike Carter (2005), as exemplified throughout this study, including the subtheme of "Safe Spaces", all participants in this study, regardless of ideological perspectives, realized the value of codeswitching and used it to their advantage. For example, Nigeria shared how students of color would refrain from being too cultured during classroom instruction but would exhibit their "racial and cultural identity", including linguistics, outside of the classroom environment.

In conclusion, regardless of academic track affiliation and racial ideological category, all participants in this study expressed an appreciation for school and understood its relevance to postsecondary success. As previously presented in this chapter, the majority of this study's participants (except 3) are either university graduates or currently completing some form of postsecondary education.

The final theme presented in this paper include study participants' sentiments regarding how they perceived the discipline policies and practices at BDMHS to have also been racialized and primarily exclusive to the high school's African American student population.

"Spirit Killers"

Chapter 2 presented a discussion of the research evidencing that white privilege is maintained within suburban school environments based on the school official's tolerance of racialized suspensions, development of behavior policies and the disproportionate surveillance of students of color (Allen, 2010; Chapman, 2013, 2014; Guadalupe Valles & Villalpando, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Noguera, 2008). In this study, all participants regardless of academic track and residency, perceived the school officials at BDMHS to have created a "zero tolerance" discipline culture that disproportionately "policed" (Nairobi and Morocco) and scrutinized its African American student population. In response to some of the inequalities noted within BDMHS's structures, Nandi referenced some school officials as "spirit killers" because, according to Nandi "…they kill your spirit, you're not motivated… because they said something or did something…". In this study, participants shared their reflections regarding the manner in which they perceived school officials at BDMHS to have implemented racialized discipline policies and practices and its negative implication on their schooling experiences.

"Zero Tolerance" School Zone and Racialized Discipline

When discussing the high school's discipline polices, some participants (Morocco and Nairobi) perceived African American students to have been disproportionately "policed" and supervised within the suburban school environment. For example, Nairobi shared the following:

> One thing I did not like is they policed the school so much… They [school officials] were like "if you get into a fight, you are at risk for getting expelled". This was actually ridiculous. They were so quick to always put new rules and things in place to make sure that things didn't start happening, but if nothing is happening, let us live. They didn't even let other people come to our school dances because they were so scared of stuff happening, but we deserved it.

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Researcher: You're talking about the rules and regulations, that's what you're talking

about by meaning "policed"? [participant nods "yes"]. Do you have any ideas or

opinions as to why you think that students were being so policed by the

administrators there?

Nairobi: Brown Deer has had more Black students over the years, so maybe in hindsight

that's what it is, but I really don't know.

Nairobi proceeded to explain how the high school became more "policed" and

"sanctioned" as the school's racial demographics became more reflective of an African

American population. For example, Nairobi shared how the students were granted less

"freedom"; pep rallies "...ended up being during the school day and they used to be at night…"

and how administrators called the police and threatened to have students cited with "truancy

citations" for implementing a senior prank where students were throwing bouncy balls and water

balloons in the school's parking lot.

Other graduates (Kenya, Nairobi and Niger) also reflected on how they perceived the

hyper surveillance of the high school environment to be indicative of the increasing African

American student presence. When reflecting on how African American students are monitored

in the cafeteria, Kenya stated,

...if we're in the cafeteria, to me when I think of Brown Deer, if a group of White

students is in there, there is no reason for a teacher to be there, but if too many Black kids

are in there, they need supervision. That is the vibe that I get from Brown Deer.

Morocco also shared Nairobi's and Kenya sentiments regarding African American

students being disproportionately "policed" and supervised at BDMHS when sharing that the

school's personnel installed cameras in certain classrooms to ensure that students were behaving

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properly. It's important to note that Morocco was specifically referencing the lower level classroom that he and other participants (i.e., Sheba, Nigeria and Nairobi) previously identified as being predominantly housed by African American students (participant's sentiments were shared under the "This is Really a Pipeline System" subtheme).

In alignment with some participants perceiving the school's personnel to be more suspicious of African American students, some participants also discussed how they perceived the school officials at BDMHS as promoting a "zero tolerance" discipline culture. For example, Malia reflected on the disposition held by one of the high school's staff of color when sharing:

> ...Ms. M...had zero tolerance… she said "I'm coming in here and I'm not dealing with any of this".

Brown Deer Middle High School's suspension rates further validate Malia's perception of BDMHS embodying a "zero tolerance" school culture in relation to their discipline policies and practices. For example, between the years of 2012-2017 (the graduation years of this study's participants) the BDSD suspended majority African American students. Based on data gathered from DPI, the high school's suspension data is presented in Table 7 (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019)

Table 7. *Brown Deer Middle High School African American Student Suspension Data, between 2012 – 2016*

School Year	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016
Total Suspensions	81	84	82	93	116
Number of African American Student' Suspensions	63	65	64	78	90
Percentage of African American Student' Suspensions	77%	77%	78%	83%	78%

During this study's interviews, graduates' sentiments supported the district's racialized suspension data; according to all (18) graduates, African American students were disproportionately referred for in-school and out of school suspensions even though, according to interview data, White students also violated the same school policies.

At BDMHS, according to this study's participants, African American students were being suspended and "referred to jail" (Nigeria) for minor infractions; for example, as previously discussed school officials called the police on students for implementing a senior prank which included the throwing of bouncy balls and water balloons; school officials threatened to call the police on Ashanti for refusing to switch seats in class when he perceived the discipline inflicted upon him by his classroom teacher to be inequitable; and for two participants (Nigeria and Chad) high school officials involved the local police because these students participated in a campus fight. Such inequitable discipline practices have the potential to shape student's access to social networks (that embody social capital) and access to postsecondary social and professional opportunities. For example, as previously shared by Sheba, school officials refused to craft letters of recommendation for students who were suspended from school.

Sheba's recollections further authenticate the school's racialized suspension data. For example, as a School Aid, Sheba noticed that the in-school suspension room, at BDMHS, was primarily occupied by "Black" students. She found it interesting because, throughout the school day, she witnessed both African American and White students violating school policies. However, according to Sheba, teachers seemed to "tolerate" the White students and "brushed off their behavior". On the other hand, Sheba further reasoned that teachers easily sent "African American students to the office and referred them to in-school suspension".

Some graduates shared examples of how they were treated in high school and perceived the ill treatment to be based on their racial identity (Cleopatra, Nandi, Ashanti, Niger, Chad, Nigeria, Morocco and Moses). Other graduates (Malia, Kenya, Ghana, Morocco, Nairobi and Kenya) reflected on how African American and White students were granted differential punishment for similar infractions. For example, Ghana recalled how more African American students were "kicked out of class and put in detention" even though "more races" were violating school policies; Cleopatra perceived "...the preppier White kids" to have received preferential treatment in the domain of discipline during high school, she stated "...the kids who were talking in class that were White would get a pass whereas the other kids wouldn't [referring to students of color]; Niger reflected on an incident where an African American student brought a pellet gun to school and was "kicked out", however, when the high school's White quarterback was caught with a pellet gun he was simply made to "...sit out for 3 games".

Morocco also reflected on the volume of his friends who were being suspended and expelled during high school. He summed up the inequitable suspension rate as follows:

Of course, I'm going to say the Black kids...it was a lot of my friends that was getting up out of there fast. You had a couple of White kids that tried to act like Black kids also, but they didn't stick around too long. They either dropped out or they sent them to an alternative school. They [referring to White students] was doing little stuff...If we were [African American students] to do it, we would get into trouble. Those kids [referring to White kids]...they just did whatever they wanted to do.

Researcher: When you say getting up out of there, what do you mean?

Morocco: Expelled or going to the alternative school. I didn't like Ms. M. I get it…she wanted to let everybody know she wasn't playing around, but she did a little bit

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too much. I know her duty was to try to eliminate every kid that was in there that was breaking the rules, and I get it, if you're not abiding by the rules, then you got to do something, but she came there and she wasn't playing. A lot of kids got suspended and she sent boatloads to the alternative schools...

To support the perception that participants in this study viewed their White high school peers as privileged within the suburban school setting because, according to this study's participants and DPI data, White students overwhelmingly escaped school discipline, during a focus group Nigeria asked her peers to share last names of the White students who they considered privileged. Nigeria began articulating the list while her focus group peers nodded in agreement. She stated,

Let's go down the list...the [insert last name of White student], the [insert last name of White student], the [insert last name of White student], the [insert last name of White student] brothers…[insert last name of White student]…and these were kids...they got a little like we're gonna ride you around on the magic carpet type of treatment.

Malia validated Nigeria's sentiments regarding how she reckoned particular White students to have disproportionately been able to escape school punishment during high school by stating: "It is true there was preferential treatment…to those people who had a certain last name". Malia further contributed the following to the focus group discussion:

…Because it could be the same behavior that a Black student does like talking out in class or eating in class or you know talking to your friends in class and they [referencing school officials] would be like you know oh you know "Jake hush it up over there Jake"[referencing Jake as a White student]. Okay it's cute [referencing teacher's perceptions of Jake's talking in class] and then you know Tyler [referencing Tyler as an

African American student] over here and "Tyler get out my class Tyler I'll see you in detention". The discipline was different.

Finally, Kenya reflected on how she perceived the school employing leaders of color as problematizing the concept of racialized discipline practices because, according to Kenya's sentiments, it becomes more difficult for people to consider the school as "racist" if one of the staff of color is governing the discipline policies and infractions. She shared the following:

> ... These Black people have assumed these roles where they were regulating Black students. It was interesting, because you can't be racist now...that puts the person in power as someone who presumably really cares about education and the students in a very awkward position, because I assume they like their job and I know they're invested in students but what does it mean when those two things are conflicting between doing your job and being invested in students at the same time?

The sentiments expressed by this study's participants within this theme illuminate the ways in which a disproportionate number of African American students, in accordance with the school district's racialized suspension data, were hyper scrutinized and excluded from hours of pertinent classroom instructional time. As expressed by this study's participants accounts, White students were preferred within the suburban context of BDMHS. During discussions which centered on their racialized experiences with the school's discipline practices, some participants described how they perceived the school's discipline policies to have also been inflicted along the intersection of race, academic track, gender and residency.

The Intersection of Race, Gender, Residency, Academic Track and School Discipline

Specific to African American males, Chapter 1 discussed how this racial demographic of students who attended suburban schools were more likely to be referred for disciplinary action

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than their White counterparts (Allen, 2010; Noguera, 2008). Yet, no research has been explored in this paper that speaks specifically to the African American female experience regarding disciplinary actions or that examine the relationship between school discipline practices and its correlation to a student's place of residency and/or prescribed academic track. This subsection will shed light on the ways in which participants, in this study, perceived the disciplinary policies at BDMHS to have coalesced across the intersection of race, gender, academic track and residency.

African American males. Some graduates (Nairobi, Sheba, Nigeria, Ashanti, Niger), in this study, reflected on how inequitable discipline during high school was primarily bestowed upon African American male students. Reflecting on the suspension rate of African American male students, Sheba - the School Aid - stated that school officials simply had "...less patience for them".

Additionally, Nairobi recalls how "...all of the bad kids were the Black boys...unless you were a great athlete". Nairobi proceeded to provide a classroom example when her African American male peer was the recipient of what she perceived as inequitable discipline:

You would feel it. You would hear them [referring to African American male students] talk one time and then go to the principal's office. I remember in anatomy class, the Black boys were definitely targeted in this instance, because my teacher let us girls do whatever we wanted but I will never forget, everybody is on their phone, none of us are supposed to be on our phones, one of my friends Nick, he's a Black guy, he was on his phone and the teacher goes, Nick, why are you on your phone? He was like, I'm actually trying to find out who's picking me up from school today, and he was like but it's against the rules, and Nick was like but everybody is on their phone and I'm actually doing

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something that I need to figure out what I'm doing. The teacher was like well, would you

kill somebody because you wanted to even though it's against the rules? It was some wild

comparison. My friend, he was like I'm actually operating on a higher level of Kohlberg's

theory than you because I elevate about the rules. It was the funniest thing ever, but it

stuck out to me because you are targeting him. There is no other reason why you are

pointing him out, getting him in trouble for being on his phone, and literally I'm on my

phone right now.

During an individual interview, Algeria shared a story about how three African American

boys were expelled from school for having a BB gun on school property; yet, her White male

peers who had a "real" gun and a "hunting knife" on the school's property was merely suspended

for their policy violation. She shared,

there was an incident where these 3 Black boys...they were passing around a BB gun,

which you cannot have a BB gun on campus, and then there was a boy...It was high

school when this happened...there was a White boy who had an actual gun, showing

everybody in school...You can't have a gun on campus, whether it's a BB gun or a

regular gun. The boys that had the BB gun got expelled without further notice...It was a

real gun, it wasn't a BB gun, and he only got suspended, and they let him come back, but

the boys that had the BB gun they were all Black and they were like you guys can't come

back. I complained to [the district's superintendent] and I told her straight up. She

understood how I felt and she was like she can't tolerate guns on her premises, but then

the White boy came back. There was another boy who was White and he had a hunting

knife in his backpack and they let him come back but then the other boys only had a BB

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gun, that you can't commit a fatality with a BB gun, but they didn't let them come back but they let people who have actual weapons come back.

Deriving from an African American male perspective, Niger shared a story about how he felt targeted as a "Black" man because he "confronted" his regular classroom teacher about being written up by the classroom's substitute teacher; as such, his regular teacher, according to Niger, perceived him as a threat and issued him an "...in-school suspension…" He stated,

There were times when teachers would have certain situations and not really know how to deal with it, so they'd just kick the kid out of class. I was definitely on the end of those situations at times. I do recall one time when we had a substitute teacher and the substitute teacher had marked down a bunch of names of people that had been messing around while she was there. I ended up on the list and I went to go consult with the actual teacher when she got back into the school, I went to go ask her about the situation and kind of try to explain myself about what was actually going on, and me going to talk to her about it resulted in me getting an in-school suspension for the day...she alleged that she felt threatened that I asked her about it. That kind of thing was more geared towards race than anything. She alleged that she felt threatened by me questioning the reason behind me being written up for a Saturday detention or something and I basically wanted to clarify why I was and try to explain why my name had even been put on the list, because the reason my name was put on the list because I laughed because somebody else was getting written on the list and they gave a fake name, so I laughed about the incident and got myself put on the list and I went to go explain that to her and try to get my name taken off of it, and it resulted in an in-school suspension.

African American girls. According to this study's participants, inequitable distribution of discipline was not solely reserved for African American males. For example, according to some graduates, some African American girls were also disciplined in an inequitable manner for being perceived by peers and school officials as "loud", "ghetto" and "aggressive"; wearing clothing that "sexualized" their bodies; and needing bathroom breaks to handle "feminine issues". Kenya stated that school staff "...had less patience for them [African American girls]..." which led to " ...a lot sooner in-school suspension...".

During individual interviews, Nairobi, Kenya and Malia revealed how they felt "sexualized" by what they perceived as racial undertones embedded within BDMHS's dress code policy and recall being unfairly disciplined for dress code violations. They (Nairobi, Kenya and Malia) shared their perceptions about how the high school's dress policy was inequitable toward women of color, especially those whose bodies were shaped different than their White female peers. Their sentiments are reflected below:

> Nairobi: The dress codes were so strict. It was very degrading as a woman to feel like your body was sexualized. Your shorts have to come to the bottom of your fingertips, but at the same time, that was only if you had a body. Some girls that were very thin, they could wear short shorts and nobody said anything to them, but in high school I was 40 pounds heavier, so if I wore shorts like that, we couldn't even wear leggings at one point, so it felt as if my body was the focus of everything...this is very problematic that I can't wear comfortable things because of a male's education. What about mine?

Kenya: ...it makes me kind of sad that girls, not grown women, are conceptualized by

school that apparently their bodies are too distracting for people to learn and that

they have to change for it to be a suitable learning environment. It also depended

on your shape...and the thing is if I were thinner and white, it was a twofold thing,

some things if you were thicker you couldn't wear those shorts but if you were

thinner, and some people just have really long arms, so the whole fingertip rule

doesn't really apply...I just know that it was unfair and I think there is a better

way to go about a dress code. You know, not having to resorting to tell girls their

bodies are unacceptable...I think Black women's thighs are hypersexualized, so I

think being White there definitely was a difference too, because I remember some

of the thinner Black girls they still got called on dress code.

Malia: We had a very strict clothing policy, which I think was very restrictive to curvier

women. Your skirt had to be such and such a height and you do it but your skirt

rises up while you're walking because you have a big butt so you have to go home

and change or we had a two-finger policy and some people's fingers are bigger

than other people's fingers so they could get away with smaller straps. Shorts had

to be a certain length, but if they were sporty-type shorts, which usually only the

White girls wear, then you could wear those...those were usually higher than the

regulation...

Morocco, a male participant, further reflected on the manner in which African American

females were disproportionately surveyed for their attire when sharing how his prom date as well

as other young girls of color were scrutinized based on their prom attire. He stated,

I remember, when we went to prom, I was going to prom with my date and Ms. M was at the door with Ms. R. When we came to the door, my date she had on nothing too revealing, but Ms. M had to embarrass my date in front of everybody because she said like her cleavage was showing too much or her dress was too tight. Also, they was walking around with rulers and stuff.

Researcher: What were the rulers for?

Morocco: To measure the girl's skirts and how close you were to the girls.

Researcher: You were dancing and they would come with rulers?

Morocco: Yeah. I seen it a couple of times. They just didn't let us enjoy ourselves. She [referring to one of the school's administrators] was basically turning girls away, if they looked like they had some curves or whatever, she was turning them away. Either they couldn't come to the dance or they had to change.

In alignment with the perceived inequitable distribution of school policies that were enforced upon African American girls; three female graduates shared their frustrations with the hallway pass policy, contending that school officials were insensitive to the fact that female students had "feminine issues"; furthermore, Nigeria perceived school officials to have privileged White female students with greater access to bathroom breaks.

Kenya and Cleopatra shared stories about how teachers were insensitive to the fact that female students needed immediate access to the bathroom due to "feminine issues".

Kenya: I remember the principal, Mr. J, at the time said there was enough time to go to the bathroom, and Mr. J was a man. He does not have to worry about things I have to worry about when I go to the bathroom, and I remember we had an assembly for some reason and it was an issue. People were like this is an issue I

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really have to go to the bathroom and people couldn't go and had to wait. This

one girl, this black girl, raised her hand and said, Mr. Prior, what if I got feminine

issues to deal with? He had no answer, because that is assuming we have all of

the proper supplies at that given moment, and now I have to go back to my locker,

or worse, I don't have anything in my locker and I have to go the office and see if

they have any supplies.

Cleopatra: He was one of those teachers though that wouldn't let you go to the bathroom

and I remember one time, I had to go to the bathroom, and he was like you're

going to get wrote up, and I was like I need to go to the bathroom, this is serious,

and he wouldn't let me go, so I walked out. I needed to go, because I'm a girl, I

needed to go.

The Milwaukee kids. Finally, Nigeria a Chapter 220 participant shared her sentiments

regarding how she perceived the "Milwaukee kids" (herself included) to have received

differential discipline. During the second interview, when I asked Nigeria to discuss

whether or not she perceived school officials to have implemented racialized discipline

tactics, Nigeria highlighted the differential experiences that she perceived transpired

between some of the African American students who lived in Milwaukee and the Brown

Deer residents.

I definitely would say we [referring to the Milwaukee kids] were the scapegoats. I would

say that you could tell, there is a clear distinction between a Black Brown Deer student

and a Milwaukee Black Brown Deer student. The Blacks are even different, and I feel

like you would know and you would be treated and sorted, and that's why it was how it

was.

While Nigeria detected a distinction between the manner in which African American Brown Deer and Milwaukee residents were disciplined, the four Milwaukee bound Open Enrollment study participants explained how their AP status more so protected them from being disciplined by school officials even when they deserved it. For example, Kenya reflected on how they could, at times, they could arrive to their AP classes late without penalty. Kenya stated,

> ...A lot of my peers who were in accelerated classes got treated differently. We could skip class, and I didn't skip class because I was afraid to get in trouble, but I could show up late and I didn't need a pass, because wherever I was, it was okay.

Nairobi also shared similar sentiments regarding the ways in which AP students were able to escape disciplinary infliction. When reflecting on the advantage she earned based on her AP status, Nairobi stated,

> I couldn't say anybody got in trouble ever [referring to AP students]. But that's not to say that we weren't doing the same things everybody else was doing, even as simple as being loud. We aren't going to be told to be quiet compared [to non-AP students]."

While Kenya agreed with the sentiments expressed by Nairobi because she shared similar stories, she also shared a story about how AP track affiliation failed to shield her and her AP peers from racialized discipline. First, Kenya's reflections further substantiate the findings earlier discussed regarding the disproportionate number of White students who were present in AP classes at BDMHS. For example, at the onset of Kenya's story she explained the racial dynamics of her AP class when stating: "I remember…four…two guys, me and then one other black kid in this group". Then, Kenya proceeded to share a story about how the "obnoxious"

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White students in her AP classroom escaped punishment while the African American students were reprimanded because they "…laughed for less than 30 seconds". Kenya continued,

The White side of the classroom is being obnoxious and I'm minding my own business, but the teacher doesn't' say anything but they are consistently loud and this day the teacher seemed really upset. What I remember, one of the black guys, he was telling some joke and we laughed for less than 30 seconds, where they [referring to the White students] were being loud over 10 minutes, and the teacher gets on the people over here [African American students], and I wasn't really included in that, and I was livid. These guys saw the look that went across my face, like you have got to be kidding me, because I'm over here hearing these White kids being super loud, and I was like "Kenya just let it go. It's not that deep, it happens, just don't cause a scene". I waited the rest of the class, I know this was not right [referring to the teacher's response], I hear them being loud and you're all going to get in trouble? Class ends and I leave the class to calm down, and I go back inside and say [to the teacher] "hey, do you have a second, I just want to talk to you. In class, I just noticed something and I just want to bring it to your attention. I don't know if you meant it this way, but I'm just telling you how it was perceived. In the class, you had a silent study time, this side of the classroom, which is predominantly White was loud the whole time". "Yeah", he acknowledged it. "Then this side of the classroom with a few black people made a few loud parts and then we were reprimanded over here and I don't think that's fair and it looks like you're giving them a pass and not them and it comes off as racist". You don't call it racist, to White people it's like being black people being called the N word. [the teacher replies] "Of course, that wasn't the case, thank you for pointing it out to me". Who knows if he ever took it to heart but that is just

one moment I always remembered, because being in this [AP] class doesn't matter, I could be at the top of my class studying probably one of the hardest subjects that is offered in this school, and it doesn't matter, people who look like me are still going to be treated differently. I knew this, intellectually, looking at it historically, but just to see it up front and happen within an advanced class.

This theme of "Spirit Killers" illuminates this study's participants' expressions regarding how they perceived school officials at BDMHS to have developed and maintained a "zero tolerance" school environment, including racialized discipline policies and practices that disproportionately targeted African American students.

Conclusion

Through the overarching themes of "Monoculturalism and Systems of Exclusion: Pedagogy and Practices", "Spirit Killers" and "Monoculturalism and Systems of Exclusion: High School Cliques, Race, Identity and Severing Ties", this chapter illuminate the voices of this study's African American participants to better understand their racialized experiences while attending Brown Deer Middle High School (BDMHS). Collectively, their voices express ways in which BDMHS developed and perpetuated racialized systems which worked to exclude the majority of their African American student population from the overall community of the school. According to this study's participants, these structures were manifested and made evident through the school's tolerance of a monocultural curriculum, racialized tracking which promoted racialized peer associations, implementation of racialized and inequitable discipline policies and practices and the ways in which African American participants felt ill prepared for their postsecondary college and career experiences. Finally, similar to other studies (see Chapman, 2013), the suburban school officials at BDMHS reserved its curriculum for the predominant "use

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and enjoyment" of its White student body (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995, p. 59; see also Chapman, 2013). In response to the racialized hierarchical systems of exclusion that, according to this study's participants, were perpetuated at BDMHS, some participants shared how they found alternative social spaces to their classroom environments to socialize with their same race peers.

This study's findings add nuance to what is already known about the school desegregation movement. Specific to the school district of Brown Deer, this district voluntarily joined the school desegregation movement in 1976 and was mandated to increase its' participation in 1984 by accepting a higher number of city-dwelling African American students into its's school system. Yet, sixty-four years post *Brown* and forty-two years post Chapter 220's implementation, the academic and social experiences of African American students who attended BDMHS (between 2012-2018) remained complicated by the high school's tolerance of systemic inequalities which perpetuated racialized inequalities and thus access to opportunities. Furthermore, this study's participants' ability to navigate their "suburban" school terrain was complicated along the lines race, gender and social status. As such, their high school experiences suggest that the legislations reflected within *Brown* and Chapter 220 were not powerful enough to dismantle the racialized structures embedded within BDMHS' structures, policies and practices. Furthermore, revealing that school desegregation, in the context of the BDSD, guaranteed African American students access to the preferred space but not equality of educational experiences.

Future research on majority-minority suburban school contexts is necessary for educators to gain a complete understanding of the ways in which African American students' schooling experiences are problematized by concepts of race and racism. No longer should we support the

narrative that highlight suburban school environments as "bastions" (see Diamond, 2009) of equality. Instead, through a critical lens, educators should continue to analyze such preferred spaces to not only expose inequalities but to offer solutions that align with the improved schooling experiences for African American students.

Based on this study's findings, the next chapter will further articulate the negative implications associated with the suburban schools' maintenance of racialized hierarchies. Within this discussion, I provide a set of policy recommendations for suburban school districts that serve African American student populations and parents of color who choose suburban schools as their children's educational choice.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

Using the theoretical framework of Critical Race Theory and Critical Race Theory in Education allowed me to better understand the racialized high school experiences of 18 African Americans who graduated from Brown Deer Middle High School (BDMHS) between 2012 – 2018. While the Brown Deer School Districts' involvement in the school desegregation movement began in 1976, the stories expressed by this study's participants shed light on the manner in which school officials at BDMHS developed and perpetuated racialized hierarchies that circumscribed the schooling experiences of its African American students. For example, the voices lifted by this study's participants illuminate ways in which school officials at BDMHS tolerated a Eurocentric school culture that disregarded the majority of their African American students, which currently includes 52 percent of the high school's population. According to this study's participants, Eurocentrism was woven within the overall fabric of the culture and curriculum preserved at BDMHS. These within school disparities serve as a reminder that, although desegregated by law, BDMHS failed to promote true racial integration of their African American student population (Bell, 1980; Ladson-Billings, 2004; Ladson-Billings, 2006b; Lewis, 2003; Wells et al., 2016).

The Hidden Curriculum of School

Traditional school curriculum moves beyond classroom instruction to incorporate the structures, processes, policies and discourses of school systems which Yosso (2002) references as the "hidden" curriculum (p. 97). Essentially a student's academic experiences are concomitant to the type of curriculum upheld within their school establishment. Even during the 21st century, the "hidden" curriculum of schools continue to grant inequitable advantage and disadvantage based on race, class and gender status. For middle-class White students, the

"hidden" curriculum is designed to provide them with educational experiences that will transfer into social, economic and political capital. To the contrary, low-income and students of color are disproportionately tracked into less engaging classroom environments that prevent them from acquiring the necessary skills and resources to support mobility similar to that experienced by their middle-class, White peers. Such differential schooling experiences perfectly align with the school's hidden agenda that exist to prepare students for their differential societal roles. For example, middle-class White students are disproportionately presented with more rigorous instruction that prepare them to assume leadership roles while low-income and students of color are inequitably tracked into lower curriculum courses and trained to follow the lead of their well-off White counterparts. While school curriculum professes to be neutral and meritocratic, it actually grants inequitable educational opportunities that maintain a white supremacist master narrative (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Particular to suburban school systems, this dichotomy of opportunity represents a "double edge sword" (see Chapman et al., 2014, p. 88) because while students of color may gain access to these preferred spaces, racial hierarchies interrupt their access to the more rigorous curriculum and resources that support school success and college readiness.

According to discussions presented by this study's participants, the aforementioned school based structural inequalities were manifested within the curriculum structure, processes and policies presented within the suburban context of BDMHS. The school's officials attempted to veil the manner in which BDMHS instituted racialized processes and policies that excluded the majority of its African American students from accessing the elite resources offered at the suburban school. For example, the school district boasts as one of the most diverse settings in Wisconsin that service families representing a variety of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic

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backgrounds (Brown Deer School District, 2018). Yet, the voices of this study's participants illuminate the "hidden" agenda of the Brown Deer School District by reflecting on ways in which the school system implemented structures, processes and policies that barred the full inclusion of its African American student population. Critical race scholars call upon researchers and educators to expose such curriculum inequalities in order to grant students of color with more equitable educational opportunities (Yosso, 2002). Thus, the remainder of this chapter is reserved to discuss the implications of these findings for education policy to ensure that African American students who attend majority minority suburban schools are granted with equitable and culturally relevant opportunities to access school curriculum that support postsecondary success. Finally, some of this study's participants shared recommendations along the lines of culturally relevant pedagogy and career and college planning. Their voices are captured in Appendix H.

Discussion and Implications

Exclusion from the School's Curriculum

Critical Race Theory purports that school curriculum serves as a cultural artifact designed to maintain white supremacy (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Within this vein, to identify a school's curriculum as non-Eurocentric diminishes its reputation and status (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). Thus, in order to remain socially acceptable, a school's curriculum must maintain an ideology of whiteness and white privilege. Yet, in school settings, especially suburban environments which serve a majority minority population like BDMHS, the representation of multiple viewpoints is essential to decentering whiteness as the norm (see Yosso, 2002).

Furthermore, a critical race curriculum alternatively centers the experiences of students of color (see Irvine, 210) and establishes an appreciation for student's individual interests (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Offering a culturally relevant curriculum affords all students the opportunity to

see themselves represented within the school's curriculum, celebrate multiple cultures and ethnicities, and heighten their level of empowerment, self-pride and capacity to learn (Henry, 2017; Milner, 2017; Villegas & Irvine, 2017).

However, when school officials are uncomfortable with or unsure of how to meet the academic needs of a diverse student body, they often engage in colorblind practices by either avoiding discussions of race altogether or engaging in deficit oriented beliefs and practices that limit opportunities for African American students to excel academically (Pollock, 2001). Furthermore, the disconnect found between some White teachers and students of color may potentially lead teachers to view their minority student populations as "other people's children" (see Delpit, 1995); as such, the teacher's prescribed curriculum inherently hinders the success of students of color. In the classroom environment, this is noted when teachers erase the history of marginalized communities and fail to incorporate lessons that center the social and economic realities of such communities (Chapman, 2014; Delpit, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2002; Yosso, 2002).

For example, in this study, when discussing BDMHS' classroom curriculum, Cleopatra perceived the school to have omitted a culturally relevant perspective because White teachers appeared "awkward" when discussing topics related to race and racism. Thus, at BDMHS, it appears as though some White teachers' level of perceived awkwardness perpetuated the high school's adoption and maintenance of a Eurocentric curriculum which, in turn, supported the marginalization of BDMHS's African American graduates while serving the interest of its White students through the acceptance of a dominant foci.

This was plausible, because as explained by Ladson-Billings (2009), school officials' social constructions about race shape school policies and practices that can, in turn, create

disparate opportunity structures for students of color. Furthermore, in suburban schools, like BDMHS, even when school personnel engage in strategic efforts to foster inclusivity such efforts are often met with resistance from school officials and parents who aim to preserve the inequitable status quo. For example, in this study, Sheba shared how, during the era of Milwaukee's Sherman Park riots (with administration's consent), she and her "Brown Deer Way" peers developed classroom lesson plans to allow students to reflect upon current events and initiate meaningful racialized discussions about such events. However, Sheba also stated that the lesson plans were minimally implemented because she received backlash from some White teachers and White students. During a focus group, Sheba presented another example of when she attempted to infuse cultural relevancy within BDMHS' curriculum by volunteering to organize an after-school Black Student Club. Sheba's goal for the Black Student Club aligns with a culturally relevant approach, however her idea was denied by one of the school's administrators of color. During this same focus group, Nairobi stated that the particular personnel responded to Sheba's Black Student Club initiative by stating that she "…don't want to create that tension".

As exemplified in the previous examples, participants in this study were cognizant of the ways in which the school's curriculum excluded their culture, viewpoints and history which illuminates major contributions of African American communities. Thus, once again relegating school officials as being colorblind to the student diversity represented within BDMHS because teachers overwhelmingly implemented lesson plans that disregarded the African American experience.

Classroom lesson plans do not exist in a vacuum; in fact, many school systems adopt textbooks to supplement classroom instruction. However, it should be noted that history

textbooks are also responsible for providing monolithic viewpoints that privilege whites over students of color by excluding the history and experiences of communities of color (Yosso, 2002). In this manner, students of color are not presented with opportunities to decenter the master narrative which positions whiteness as normative (see Ladson-Billings, 1998) and communities of color as "other" (Decuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 29; Decuir-Gunby, 2006).

The school based inequities discussed throughout this paper, including tracking, low teacher expectations for students of color, monoculturalism and racially biased curriculum, lead many students of color to encounter "subtractive schooling" (see Valenzuela, 1999) experiences. Critical race scholars note such racial inequities embedded within educational systems, processes and policies as the "hidden curriculum" of schools (see Yosso, 2002, p. 94) that marginalize students of color while catering to White students.

The continued denial and absence of a culturally and ethnically-infused curriculum have the capacity to allow students, regardless of racial identification, to adopt a "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" mentality toward students of color when discussing inequalities noted between the races because some students do not fully understand our American history which explains the social positioning, including subordination of people of color. The inclusion of a culturally relevant approach, at BDMHS, would have allowed all students to better engage in critical learning opportunities to analyze systems of racial stratification in an effort to suggest changes to combat racial and social inequities (Gay, 2004; Irvine, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2005). Critical race theory challenges monolithic textbook materials and discourses that discount communities of color as creators of knowledge (see Ladson-Billings, 2002; Yosso, 2002); as such, educators and policymakers are encouraged to include a more robust curriculum that centers the experiential knowledge and experiences of communities of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2002).

Instructional Strategies. Critical Race Theory purports that instructional strategies are designed with the assumption that African American students are deficient (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Yosso, 2002). When teachers hold low regard for their African American students they tend to incorporate less engaging instructional strategies that implicate menial academic progress of minority students. For example, in this study, participants who overwhelmingly completed lower or traditional track curriculum revealed how the majority of their teachers who taught these core courses implemented remedial instructional strategies that failed to encourage their learning.

A few years ago, while flipping through television stations, a CNN special hosted by Don Lemon caught my attention. I sat in disbelief as I listened to his special guest, John McWhorter - an African American academic and linguist - explain how African American students are performing poorly in schools because they fail to appreciate the value of a "good education". While sentiments expressed by this study's participants easily debunk McWhorter's notions about African American students and their schooling aspirations, many school officials are also quick to blame African American students for the racial achievement gap. Yet, school personnel are less prone to conduct an in depth evaluation of the ways in which the school's curriculum and teacher's instructional strategies may implicate the academic achievement of students of color (Ladson-Billings, 1998). Yosso (2002) explains the importance of evaluating the school's structures before blaming students of color for the racial achievement gap:

> ...one of the first mistakes most often made by many educators and policymakers is to look at the inequalities for student outcomes and blame students without looking at the conditions, such as curricular structures, processes, and discourse that create unequal outcomes (p. 94).

Thus, in accordance with Ladson-Billings (1998) and Yosso (2002), a detailed analysis of a teacher's instructional methodologies is essential, especially in Eurocentric school contexts like BDMHS because teachers are more likely to adopt a Eurocentric teaching approach in alignment with the Eurocentric culture of their home life and school. In all school contexts, but especially those that serve predominantly African American students, a more culturally relevant instructional approach is necessary because it will allow students of color to gain a deeper connection with the school's environment and personnel (Irvine, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995; Milner, 2012).

The stories highlighted in this study support the current literature (see Chapman 2013; Diamond, 2006;) and illustrate the continued prevalence of white privilege and colorblindness. In this manner, the intellectual property status of curriculum at BDMHS allowed school materials and instructional strategies to support enactment of white privilege (Chapman, 2013; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Reserving high quality instructional opportunities for White students ensures a more viable pipeline for college access that leads to social and economic stability while excluding minority students from similar advantages.

Exclusion from Advanced Placement Curriculum Track

Due to the prevalence of racism embedded within our American society, whiteness can be realized as property interest. The whiteness as property construct posits four tenets, including the right to disposition, the right to use and enjoyment, the right to status and property and the right to exclude (Harris, 1993; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). Historically, the ideology of whiteness as property has been reserved as an asset for whites' possession (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995). Based on the reflections shared by this study's participants and school specific data,

all of the aforementioned tenets of whiteness as property were salient within the tracking process maintained at BDMHS.

Within the domain of education, Critical Race Theory (CRT) argues that suburban schools, and their curriculum and resources, have historically been relegated as intellectual property preserved for White students (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995). In alignment with this body of research, the ways in which the majority of the African American students at BDMHS were denied access to the school's AP curriculum reflects Harris' (1993) "use of enjoyment" and exclusion tenets because the more rigorous curriculum was primarily reserved for the school's White students. As previously discussed in chapters one and four, only five percent of African American students in the entire Brown Deer School District (BDSD) accessed an AP course during the 2015-2016 and none of these students passed the AP exam (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

Such structures of racialized tracking support the differentiated types of knowledge that are presented across curriculum tracks and the processes that sort and sieve students into courses that are elite (Yosso, 2002). As such, racialized tracking practices situate the school's officials as being colorblind to the academic needs of their African American students and further illuminate the interest convergence tenet of Critical Race Theory (CRT) because once again the rigorous curriculum, at BDMHS, was predominantly reserved for the disproportionate benefit of the school's White students. At BDMHS, AP curriculum afforded a dismal number of African American students' access to a more rigorous curriculum that could have potentially better prepared them for college matriculation and success.

Such exclusionary practices, expressed through racialized tracking, are problematic because, as ascertained by Noguera (2008), the academic success of students of color is

undermined by the school's process of sorting and selecting students by race. While BDMHS was desegregated by law, the school officials exercised their absolute right to exclude by re-segregating classroom environments based on tracking. Such inequitable sorting mechanisms have the potential to reverse the expected benefits of school desegregation (see Noguera, 2001) and reproduce social and class inequalities (Bourdieu, 1977; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Weber, 1946; Yosso, 2002).

Traditional discourse attempts to explain why particular students gain access to higher track courses while others are omitted. While knowledge, resources and instruction offered within these elite spaces serve as valuable for all students, critical race theory exposes the white privilege that is supported by the inequalities of a traditional curriculum and challenge schools to abolish such systems (Yosso, 2002). Furthermore, critical race scholars challenge educators to recognize deficit based policies and practices that deny students of color from accessing college bound knowledge (Chapman et al., 2014; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2002).

Meritocracy. Critical Race Theory rejects the traditions of liberalism and meritocracy (Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller & Thomas, 1995; Crenshaw, 1995 & 2011; Dixson & Rousseau, 2006; Gotanda, 1991). While legal discourse purports the law as neutral and colorblind, CRT challenges this majoritarian viewpoint by analyzing liberalism and meritocracy as vehicles for whites to maintain their white power and privilege (Dixson & Rousseau, 2006). Specific to school settings, such majoritarian stories provide a false ideology of meritocracy, suggesting that all students who work hard will exemplify school success. Yet, meritocracy ignores the school based systemic inequalities that complicate school success for students of color. For example, at BDMHS, one would assume that Advanced Placement (AP) courses would be available to all students who

displayed the appropriate academic interest and merit. Yet, this assumption is complicated by the school district's actual tracking process.

For example, according to this study, BDMHS' academic tracking process began in middle school based on student's scantron test results and their ability to obtain teacher recommendations. Additionally, some participants shared how some middle school students were presented with more rigorous math work to better prepare them for AP enrollment in high school. Thus, access to the high school's more rigorous curriculum is not solely based on a student's academic talent. In actuality, AP access is also based on the student's ability to develop positive social connections with teachers, the student's test taking ability and their early exposure to advanced curriculum during middle school. The notion of early exposure was also noted in Sudan's expressions when he discussed how he was interested in enrolling in AP courses but was unable to gain access. Sudan further explained that he transferred to Brown Deer Middle High School and preparation for some AP courses transpired during the summer months leading to his enrollment. As such, Sudan was unable to access the AP track curriculum. Additionally, the concept of early exposure was expressed through Morocco's reflections; he stated that he was tracked into a lower level math class at Brown Deer Middle High School because a particular teacher did not perceive the education he acquired in his previous southern state to be comparable to a northern education.

Finally, regarding barriers to AP access, African American students at BDMHS access was further complicated because they were the disproportionate recipients of the high school's suspension; as such, they were ineligible for receiving a teacher's letter of recommendation even if they acquired the appropriate level of interest and competence to excel in higher track courses.

Based on the high school's (approximately 98 percent) graduation rate, one would assume that a higher number of their students were possessors of the relevant knowledge, skills and dispositions that would support their matriculation into these elite classroom environments. Yet, as previously presented, based on school data only five percent of African American students, during the 2015-2016 school year gained access to the district's AP curriculum (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019).

As previously discussed, critical race scholars challenge traditional discourses that attempt to rationalize the inequitable distribution of knowledge (see Ladson-Billings, 2003; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2002) when determining who gets what and why. In the manner of BDMHS, the majority of its' African American students appeared to have been undeserving of seats in AP classrooms because school officials perceived them as failing to exhibit hard work and as primary violators of school's discipline policies. However, as expressed by all participants highlighted in this study, White students also violated school policies; yet, they were not disciplined in the same manner as students of color. Thus, White students disproportionately earned seats in AP classrooms primarily because they were favored by the school officials. This form of preferential treatment leads critical race scholars to encourage educators to create school spaces where all students are recipients of a quality education (see Yosso, 2002) and empowered to demonstrate academic excellence (Ladson-Billings, 1998).

Exclusionary Discipline Policies and Practices

The covert manner in which exclusion is manifested in school systems through racialized suspensions illuminate the manner in which structures of inequality prevail to disadvantage African American students and permeate the racial achievement gap (Noguera, 2008). As

discussed in Chapter 3, regarding racially diverse school environments, Chapman (2013), Diamond (2006) and Lewis and Diamond (2015) found that school officials regularly inflicted inequitable discipline on students of color. In alignment with this research (see Chapman, 2013; Diamond, 2006; Lewis & Diamond, 2015), the participants highlighted in this study provided numerous accounts of how African American students were disproportionately referred for suspension while their White peers received mild sanctions or escaped punishment all together. This study's participant's stories suggest that school officials, at BDMHS, were responsible for demonstrating racialized student control during an era of colorblindness. The participant's voices, in conjunction with the high school's suspension data, exemplify how the school personnel's inequitable discipline tactics challenged notions of colorblindness.

From a CRT lens, since race is a social construct and ideological tool used to privilege whites (see Bell, 1980), racialized suspensions are manifested within school systems because in most instances school officials consider the student's racial category prior to establishing the prescribed discipline. As a result of this white supremacy principle, one can better understand the racialized discipline illuminated through the BDMHS system. For example, during the 2015-2016 school year, 78% of the district's suspensions were bestowed upon African American students while less than one percent of the high school's suspensions was reserved for its White students (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019). This data is substantiated by this study's participants' sentiments regarding ways in which they perceived the Brown Deer school system to have inflicted disproportionate discipline upon students of color even when White peers were violating the same or similar policies. To add nuance to the perceptions, it should be noted that even study participants who severed ties from their African American peers during high school, primarily completed the school's AP track curriculum and felt "privileged" within

the school system still realized the inequitable discipline that was bestowed upon their African American peers.

In the future, school officials at BDMHS could manifest a more culturally relevant school environment by fully embracing and implementing a culturally, racially and ethnically relevant schoolwide approach that resist school discipline practices that are incongruent to caring relationships and alternatively display respectful engagement with all students, including African American. Furthermore, BDMHS' school officials need to remove their color blinders in a manner that will allow them to actually see color and the negative implications that inequitable discipline policies and practices bear on its' African American students. For example, African American students who are suspended miss classroom instructional time, may potentially feel removed from the school's community and, according to some of this study's participants, are ineligible to receive a teacher's recommendation for AP class access. Such negative and inequitable schooling experiences also implicate the African American student's level of preparedness for postsecondary college and career exploration and success.

Exclusion from Extracurricular Activities

Chapman et al., (2014) explored the academic and social experiences of minority students who attended a racially diverse suburban high school. In regards to students of color' participation in extracurricular offerings, these scholars (Chapman et al., 2014) found that, due to preferential treatment, many students felt a sense of isolation being the only student of color present, which led to disengagement. Similar to participants in their (see Chapman et al., 2014) study, Malia and Cleopatra, two female participants highlighted in this study, shared how they attempted to cross the perceived racial boundaries to participate in extracurricular activities that

they stated were predominantly representative of White students. However, both graduates experienced difficulty in feeling "a part of the team".

Chapman (2013) speaks to the importance of student's full participation in extracurricular activities since such participation may potentially support students' access to college. Finally, Malia and Cleopatra's experience with trying to participate in extracurricular activities during high school illustrates BDMHS' need to orchestrate extracurricular activities based on inclusivity of all student groups (Chapman, 2013; O'Connor, et al., 2011). When determining such policies and means for access, school officials should consider their students' racial, gender and class status.

Exclusion of African American Staff

In racially diverse school settings where minority students served as the majority, Siegel-Hawley and Frankenberg (2012) found that White teacher's held lower perceptions of minority students and were less likely to address the social and academic needs of their students of color. These findings are problematic since suburban school settings, like BDMHS, are becoming more racially diverse (Orfield, 2009); yet the majority of the staff at BDMHS are White (Department of Public Instruction, 2019). As discussed in Chapter 3, in majority-minority school contexts like BDMHS, some scholars (see Henry, 2017; Irvine Villegas & Irvine, 2010; Warren-Grice, 2017) through the framework of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP) suggest that an increased presence of teachers of color could potentially counteract the negative impact that some White teachers have on the academic success of African American students. In their research, Henry (2017) and Warren-Grice (2017) found that educators of color play important roles in guiding the academic success of African American students. For example, teachers of color in their studies (see Henry, 2017; Warren, 2017) served as role models; cultural connectors,

bridging the gap between the student's home and school life; student advocates; and more so (than White teachers) used teaching time to illuminate and confront racism (Warren-Grice, 2017). Warren-Grice (2017) study expand the CRP literature by specifically linking CRP to the suburban school context.

In respect to BDMHS, this high school serves a 78 percent minority student population, with 53 percent representing African American students (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2019). Despite the culturally relevant research findings which advocate for African American students to be taught by African American teachers, the Brown Deer School District currently employs a racial homogeneous school staff reflective of 68 percent White personnel (Department of Public Instruction, 2019). This racial incongruence, noted between school staff and students, is problematic because the racial and ethnic composition of a school's staff sends a message to all students about the distribution of power in our American society (Villegas & Irvine, 2010). The absence of an appropriate number of educators of color lead all students to believe that whites are better suited to hold professional positions of power (Villegas & Irvine, 2010).

The racial composition of school staff, at BDMHS, was discussed during this study's interviews. When reflecting on the school's curriculum, some graduates stated that the school's staff was primarily White and further discussed the impact that the racial incongruence, between staff and students, had on some students' inability to develop meaningful social connections with school officials that would support their academic progression. Other graduates remarked on how the school's staff racial composition was not reflective of the student community and shared how they would have appreciated interacting with school officials who shared their racial and ethnic identity. For example, in alignment with Villegas & Irvine (2010) research, Lybia shared:

"If you see a low percentage of African American teachers, then you're going to think, oh, this must be hard, so I must not want to do it…".

Other participants shared how they would have been more motivated to excel academically if they saw more school staff who "looks like them". From a CRT perspective, school officials at BDMHS's decision to maintain a majority White school staff in a majority minority student environment also aligns with the school's preference to maintain a school environment that predominantly resembles the Eurocentric viewpoint and ideologies expressed by its predominantly White staff.

Employing a more diverse school staff will inevitably require time, resources and commitment. Additionally, critical race scholars have not called for a school's staff to solely reflect one racial group. Therefore, another recommendation for suburban schools is to train their White and staff of color to serve as "multicultural navigators" (Carter, 2005, p. 171). As previously discussed in Chapter 3, many students of color express a genuine appreciation for education but lack the cultural capital that will allow them to demonstrate success in a dominant school environment (Carter, 2005, 2006), including suburban contexts. Carter (2005) define "multicultural navigators" as adults who possess the skills and knowledge, of the dominant culture, that are linked to upward mobility. Similar to the Warren-Grice (2017) and Henry (2017) research, the adult navigators suggested by Carter (2005) are multidimensional and understand the balance between "keeping it real" and assimilation. In other words, these adults are proficient in code switching and, thus, are able to transfer such skills to their students.

Recommendations

Despite the research findings which illuminate the prevalent racialized structures that exist within some suburban schools (see Carter, 2007; Chapman, 2014; Chapman et al., 2014;

Diamond, 2006; Diamond, Lewis and Gordon, 2007; Huidor and Cooper, 2010; Lewis and Diamond, 2015; O'Connor et al., 2011), more families of color are selecting these institutions for their children's schooling experience (Frankenberg, 2008; Fry, 2009; Siegel-Hawley and Frankenberg, 2012). This racial transition implicates the necessity for teacher professional development opportunities to be framed within a culturally relevant lens. In alignment with the theoretical constructs of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP), I offer recommendations for teacher professional development opportunities specific to suburban school districts. Additionally, through a CRP lens, I offer recommendations for families of color who select suburban school districts as their children's schooling option.

Policy Recommendations for Teacher Professional Development

The ideology of infusing a culturally relevant approach within teacher professional development may potentially foster improved student academic outcomes through the implementation of what Ladson-Billings (1995) references as "…just good teaching….". As discussed in Chapter 3, culture is central to the process of learning (see Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995); it plays a role in shaping the educational outcomes of all students and culturally responsive teaching serves as a pedagogy that recognizes the importance of including students' cultural, gendered and class-based constructs in all aspects of learning (see Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995). A culturally responsive teacher acknowledges, responds to, and celebrates all cultures and offers equitable access to education and learning for students from all cultures. In this respect "good teaching" (see Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 159) incorporates culturally responsive opportunities for students to see themselves and their culture represented within the school's curriculum. Cultural inclusivity presents all students with an opportunity to demonstrate academic success through improved school engagement (Ladson-billings, 2006a).

This section will offer recommendations for suburban school leaders who are interested in creating teacher professional development opportunities that support "…good teaching…" (see Ladson-Billings, 1995, p. 159). Through teacher's exemplifying a cultural shift in their thinking and practice, they will be better positioned to lessen the promotion of racism, inequality and social injustice and may potentially support the improved academic outcomes for all students.

Teacher self-reflection. Teachers should be granted with in-service opportunities to analyze their own identity and biases to better understand how their actions may potentially mirror the larger society and perpetuate biases and deficit thinking (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Yosso, 2002). Thus, preventing teachers from teaching in a culturally relevant manner. For example, a critical examination of the philosophical underpinnings of their practice may potentially allow teachers to realize how their identity and social standing implicates their impression of their students (and their families) and how they structure social relations inside and outside of the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1995). The continued adoption and perpetuation of majoritarian behaviors and attitudes lessens the impact of racism instead of positioning teachers as social justice activists. This type of intentional self-reflection allows teachers to better understand how they are central to the structures of inequality and help them to devise meaningful ways to promote racial and ethnic equality and serve as agents of change (see, for example, Hynds, et al., 2016). **Culturally responsive instructional methodologies.** Teachers should engage in professional development opportunities that educate them on the importance of implementing a variety of culturally appropriate teaching methodologies. Culturally relevant methodologies ensure that students' insights and experiences are included in the

classroom community building process; teach students about the significance of race, gender and class hierarchies that are manifested within society to disrupt opportunities for communities of color; and develop a learning community that is supported through teambuilding and respect. This type of constructivist approach, as highlighted in Hynds, Hindle, Savage, Meyer, Penetto & Sleeter (2016) research, is only plausible when teachers are willing to reduce their inherent power and privilege status and allow students to exhibit a higher level of control of their learning environments. Teachers should be taught how to reposition themselves as learners from their minoritized students in order to learn more about their student's lives, backgrounds and interests from the positionality as learner. These strategies may potentially lead teachers to exhibit success in bridging the cultural divide between them and their students and achieving what Irvine (1999) reference as cultural synchronization.

Community Engagement. As presented in Chapter 3, teaching extends beyond the classroom to incorporate an aspect of community engagement (Dixson & Ladson-Billings, 2017). I recommend that teacher in-service opportunities situate family members as guest presenters at in-service trainings. Their presentations can focus on sharing their family's cultural background, including language, race, religion, cultural celebrations and home dynamics and explaining how they perceive their families' positionality within the strata of society and the associated opportunities or challenges that their family members experience based on such positionality. This type of discourse may potentially lead teachers and other school officials to reconsider the negative perceptions that are commonly held regarding minoritized communities. Similar to the previously mentioned teacher reflection recommendation, I believe this type of forum

may potentially lead teachers to engage in meaningful discussions about their identity and biases in a manner that may ultimately allow them to more easily center the racialized experiences of their students of color.

Suburban school teachers may potentially benefit from learning about and being exposed to their family's cultural attributes in a more intimate manner. Thus, I recommend that teachers be paired with a family mentor; the family mentor (consisting of a student and their family members) could further educate their teacher mentee on their race, ethnicity and culture in a myriad of ways. One such way would be to invite their teacher mentee to attend cultural exhibitions that transpire within and beyond their local community. These opportunities are intended to expand the teacher's cultural understanding of the students and families they serve. Teachers and family mentors should be encouraged to capture their reflections in a journal. The journal reflections could capture the teachers' reflections regarding being cultivated in a non-dominant culture, its implication on their teaching practice and ways that their teaching practice could be modified to reflect a more culturally responsive disposition.

Caring Discipline Approach. Participants in this study expressed frustration over the fact that they perceived their school officials to have disproportionately referred African American students for in-school and out-of-school suspension. I employ suburban school leaders to provide in-service opportunities where teachers can collectively adopt a CRT lens to examine the impact of race and racism on educational policies, practices, opportunities, and outcomes (see Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Yosso, 2002; Yosso, Parker, Solorzano & Lynn, 2003). A critical analysis should scrutinize the manner in which school discipline policies and Advanced Placement (AP) track promotion implicate the educational experiences and outcomes for students of color. Not only do I

encourage teachers to be granted with in-service opportunities to review school district

data to critically analyze the structures of such policies and practices, I also encourage

administrators to grant teachers with the freedom to dismantle racialized structures and

implement more racially just policies that aim to educate all students in rigorous learning

environments and retain students in the classroom environment verses out-of-class

suspension and expulsion.

These in-service training outcomes should lead the suburban school district to examine

how to best reduce their use of exclusionary discipline practices that are incongruent to student

learning and opportunities. I recommend that suburban school districts use the feedback from the

aforementioned professional development activities to explicitly consider concepts of race,

gender, class, and privilege in the development and implementation of discipline policies (Gay,

2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009). Ultimately, it would require school district leaders to be more

intentional about better understanding the social and emotional experiences of their students of

color and implementing discipline policies that shift their practice to limit in-school and out-of-

school suspensions to retain students in class; collect and analyze disaggregated discipline data

and reduce exclusionary discipline; and implement alternatives to suspension and expulsion.

Classroom-based coaching. Peer coaching opportunities can be designed to improve

teaching pedagogy, teacher growth and classroom organization in classrooms serving

culturally diverse students (Hinds, et al., 2016). I recommend that suburban school

leaders implement a professional development model that allow teachers to engage in

extensive trainings that cover a culturally relevant pedagogical model; partner with and

learn from peers who are trained as a cultural and pedagogical expert; coordinate

classroom observations, with these peers, that focus on the teacher's implementation of a

CRP to improve their culturally relevant practices; and coordinate ongoing meetings that will allow the teacher and peer facilitator to review classroom observations and student outcome data to problem solve and develop plans for improvement.

In conclusion, teachers who are employed by suburban school districts must be equipped to advocate for education equity; thus, teacher professional development opportunities must commit to fostering learning that examines and adheres to the social and academic needs of a diverse student population. Teachers must develop a knowledge and appreciation of diverse cultures, explore how equitable and inclusive methodologies can be implemented in school systems to advance the academics of all students, and implement strategies and policies for challenging systemic barriers. In other words, culturally responsive teaching methodologies must extend beyond theory and be implemented into daily practices as a classroom framework.

Recommendations for Parents Who Choose Suburban School Districts for Their Families

Since academic equity may potentially manifest through a joint responsibility between administrators, teachers, parents and students, I offer the following recommendations for families of color who select desegregated suburban school districts as their children's learning environment. I recommend that families of color be more critical when selecting suburban school establishments for their children to determine whether or not a suburban school setting will appropriately serve the social and academic needs of their children. For example, prior to selecting a school environment, these families should research and analyze the school's racialized, gendered and class-based policies which determine academic performance and opportunities, including its tracking process; discipline policies, practices and outcomes; the teacher/student racial composition and the school's curriculum choice.

After a thorough investigation has been conducted, if families of color are persistent in selecting the suburban school environment for their children, I offer the following recommendations: First, I encourage families to be actively involved in their child's academic life to ensure that their children are provided with equitable learning opportunities and outcomes. Involvement can be materialized by attending conferences to remain abreast of their children's academic progress and to realize opportunities for improvement; checking the online grading portal on a regular basis; conducting classroom observations to become familiar with the classroom dynamics, including teacher practices, and how students respond to such methodologies; offering to supplement classroom instruction with their own cultural, professional and academic knowledge; inviting teachers to their home and to attend community-based events to support the teacher in better understanding the family's cultural background and practices; developing and maintaining professional relationships with all school officials to ensure that their children are recognized and their children's voices are validated within the school system; attending school board meetings to better understand the processes in which school district changes transpire and their implication on their students; and committing to review textbook selections and offering suggestions for resources that include all racial, ethnic and cultural groups.

Next, specific to policy development and implementation, I encourage families of color to partner with school officials to construct policies and procedures that consider the concepts of gender, race and class. Once implemented, I employ families of color to continuously review these polices and suggest modifications when appropriate. Additionally, these families should continuously collect and analyze school district data related to discipline referrals and

suspensions and the racial demographics of students present in Advanced Placement (AP) courses. Such information should guide their future policy suggestions.

Future Research

The findings presented in this study offers a snapshot of the experiences of 18 African American adults who attended a majority minority suburban school system that was desegregated in 1976 through federal legislation. Many inner-ring suburban areas are experiencing racial transition and becoming more reflective of minority families (see Frankenberg, 2008; Fry, 2009; Siegel-Hawley and Frankenberg, 2012); this body of research which explores the racial demographic composition of suburban schools is important because it illustrates that an increased number of students of color navigate through suburban schools. Thus, continued research should be conducted to explore the racialized experiences of African American students who attend majority minority suburban schools.

Additional research could extend the findings presented in this study by examining the experiences of multiple racial groups of students and graduates (including White students), along the lines of class and gender, in multiple suburban contexts to deepen the data source related to the academic experiences of students who attend majority minority suburban school systems.

Future research could also incorporate a mixed methods approach to better understand how prescribed academic tracks implicate students of color' postsecondary college choices. For example, how does academic track placement available in majority minority suburban schools implicate postsecondary university options and success? This question is worth investigating because, in this study, participants who were primarily affiliated with the school's AP track curriculum immediately gained access to selective or elite universities. However, participants

who completed the school's lower or traditional track curriculum accessed a combination of technical college and traditional university education post high school.

Some participants in this study reflected on the manner in which the mainstream culture of BDMHS pressured them to adopt a variety of racial identities in order to navigate their suburban school environment. In some respects, this study attempted to extend Carter (2005) research by illuminating how middle-class, African American graduates' multidimensional perspectives of racial and ethnic identity formulated as a means for navigating their racially-mixed suburban school context. Moreover, future research could substantiate my examination of middle-class graduates of majority minority suburban schools to move us beyond referencing educational inequalities as solely experienced by low income students who attend urban schools. Thus, future research can potentially provide an enhanced understanding regarding how race, class and culture are infused within the schooling process.

Concluding Thoughts

Similar to this study's participants, my family also sought after desegregated suburban school contexts as a means for accessing a quality education. Yet, throughout this paper, I have presented discussions regarding the ways in which public school systems, including desegregated suburban contexts, have historically perpetuated racial inequalities through the development and maintenance of racialized hierarchies. Such systems of stratification are made evident through the school's adoption of policies and practices that support racialized tracking which influence peer group affiliations, racialized suspensions and the institution of a monocultural curriculum. In this respect, the institutionalized structures of schools reserve its elite curriculum for the predominant enjoyment of its White students, including its materials, programs, policies, structures and instructional strategies (Chapman, 2013; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Ladson-

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Billings, 2009). Such exclusionary practices reinforce the achievement gap discourse (see Ladson-Billings, 1998, 2004, 2008; Noguera, 2008) and deny many African American students from reaping the full benefit of the educational experience. Furthermore, such structural inequalities have the capacity to problematize African American students' preparation for college and career opportunities (see Chapman, 2013) because reserving high quality curricular offerings for White students ensures a more viable pipeline for college access that leads to social and economic stability while excluding minority students from similar advantage.

The institutionalization of such educational inequities shed light on the manner in which school officials have historically been colorblind to the social and academic needs of African American student populations while primarily serving the interest of White students (Bell, 1980; Bell, 2004; Chapman, 2013; Dixson & Rousseau, 2005; Guadalupe Valles & Villalpando, 2013; Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Ladson-Billings, 2004). The prevalence of race and racism in education suggests that educators and researchers need to critically examine school structures, processes and policies, including teacher practices and student relations in schools to unveil the multiple layers hidden within such curriculum approaches (Yosso, 2002).

As a result of such exclusionary systems of stratifications, Ladson-Billings (2006a) purports that our American society have accumulated an education debt that must be repaid to its' students of color. This "debt" may potentially be repaid if educators begin to unveil the "hidden" curriculum of schools that implicate the "hidden" outcomes for students of color (Yosso, 2002). Critical race scholars challenge educators to expose the "hidden" agenda of curriculum by challenging racism, sexism, classism and other forms of subordination; recognizing how deficit discourses aim to deny students of color from accessing college bound curriculum and knowledge; recognizing and focusing on the strengths and knowledge of

communities of color and infuse such knowledge into the school curriculum; creating learning environments that encourage experiential learning and student engagement; and implementing fair and equitable discipline policies that decenter the notion of colorblindness.

Based on the literature presented in this paper and the current research findings, it has become evident that society is no longer in a position to accept suburban school spaces as the primary response to school integration reform. I am not suggesting that racial integration is not a necessary or plausible goal. However, I am further recommending educators, researchers and policy makers to make a more concerted effort to better understand how suburban school' structures, processes, policies and discourses continue to marginalize students of color. I further urge education professionals to use the lens of critical race theory to expose, highlight and challenge academic disparities in order to dismantle and reestablish more racially just school systems.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Social Media Message

Hello! My name is Toshiba Adams; I am currently completing my studies in the Urban Education doctoral program at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The goal of my research is to examine the experience and perspective of African Americans who graduated from Brown Deer High School, between 2012-2018.

Please contact me if you, or anyone you know, is interested in sharing personal experiences related to attending Brown Deer High School.

I would love to hear from you! The outcome of my study depends on your voice! Feel free to inbox me or contact me through the following methods: 414-708-4642 or toiadams73@gmail.com

Thank you!!!

Appendix B: Research Study Recruitment Flyer

IMPORTANT RESEARCH STUDY...
Are You A Brown Deer High School Graduate?
Are You African American?
Did You Graduate Between 2012-2018?
Are You Interested in Sharing Stories Regarding Your High School Experience?

IF SO, I WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!!!

MY NAME IS **TOSHIBA ADAMS,**
I AM CURRENTLY A DOCTORAL STUDENT
COMPLETING RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE.

* ONE GOAL OF MY RESEARCH IS TO UNDERSTAND THE EXPERIENCES OF AFRICAN AMERICAN
GRADUATES OF BROWN DEER HIGH SCHOOL.

* ANOTHER GOAL OF MY RESEARCH IS TO SUPPORT THE BROWN DEER SCHOOL DISTRICT IN DEVELOPING
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT SUPPORT THE
ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT OF ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.

YOUR VOICE IS VERY IMPORTANT TO THIS PROCESS!!!

PLEASE CONTACT ME IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN A SERIES OF INTERVIEWS
THAT WILL ALLOW YOU TO SHARE YOUR STORIES.

I MAY BE REACHED AT: 414-708-4642 OR toiadams73@gmail.com

THANK YOU...

Appendix C: Individual Interview Protocol

Interview #1 Questions
Interview #2 Questions

Major Research Questions:

1. What were the reported social and academic experiences of a group of African American students who attended Brown Deer High School?
2. How might the social and academic experiences in Brown Deer High School, as reported by a group of African American graduates, impact their postsecondary college and career choices and experiences according to these participants?

Sub-Research Questions:

- What are the perceptions of African American graduates regarding the development of student/teacher relationships?
- What are the perceptions of African American graduates regarding the school's curriculum, including course options and extracurricular activities?
- What are the perceptions of African American graduates regarding the school's discipline policies?
- How do African American graduates perceive the school's resources to have supported their academic achievement and postsecondary college and career choices?
- What role did school officials, particularly counselors, play in guiding students postsecondary college and career choices?

Literature Review	Interview Question	CRT Tenet(s)
	How long did you live in Brown Deer (if applicable)?	
	How long were you enrolled in the Brown Deer School District (if applicable)?	
	Can you talk about your experience as a Brown Deer resident? Do you feel as though being a Brown Deer resident impacted your experience as a Brown Deer High School student? Please explain.	

	Can you talk about your transition into the Brown Deer School District (if applicable)? How do you feel as though transitioning into the Brown Deer School District impacted your high school experience (if applicable)?	
Chapman (2014) Chapman et al., (2014)	Walk me through a typical day of instruction at Brown Deer High School?	Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011)
Chapman (2014) Chapman et al., (2014) Milner (2010) Wells et al., (2009)	Can you describe some of your classroom lessons? What topics were discussed? Were the topics of "race" or "race relations" explored? If so, please give examples of the lesson/assignments. Describe the ways your teacher interacted with students and instructed the class.	Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011)
Archbald, Glutting and Qian (2009) Carter (2007) Chapman (2013) Chapman (2014) Chapman et al., (2014) O'Connor et al., (2011) Diamond (2006) Lewis and Diamond (2015) Wells et al., (2009)	What type of classes did you take in high school?	Tracking Whiteness as Property Intellectual Property (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) Permanence of Race Desegregation v. Integration (Ladson-Billings, 2006b)

Archbald, Glutting and Qian (2009) Noguera (2008)	How would you describe your academic performance at Brown Deer High School?	Tracking Whiteness as Property
Archbald, Glutting and Qian (2009) Carter (2007) Chapman (2013) Diamond (2006) O'Connor et al., (2011) Lewis and Diamond (2015) Wells et al., (2009)	Were you encouraged to complete Advanced Placement (AP) level courses? If so, by whom? Please explain. Were you encouraged to complete Honor level courses? If so, by whom? Please explain. Were you encouraged to take lower level courses during your high school years? If so, by whom? Please explain.	Tracking Whiteness as Property Intellectual Property (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) Permanence of Race
Archbald, Glutting and Qian (2009) O'Connor et al., (2011) Carter (2007) Diamond (2006) Lewis and Diamond (2015)	What was the racial background of students who attended traditional classes with you (and AP, if relevant)?	Colorblind Tracking Permanence of Race Desegregation v. Integration (Ladson-Billings, 2006b) Whiteness as Property Intellectual Property (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995)
Chapman (2014) Siegel-Hawley and Frankenberg (2012)	Tell me about any interactions with your school teachers that were particularly important to you. Tell me about a time when you had a positive interaction with a school teacher, administrator or staff. Tell me about a time when you had a negative interaction with a teacher, administrator or staff.	Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011)
Diamond (2006) Siegel-Hawley and Frankenberg	How did your teachers try to connect with you? To learn about	Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011)

(2012)	you as an individual? To learn about your culture and background? Please explain (give examples).	
Siegel-Hawley and Frankenberg (2012)	Was there a particular teacher that you connected with? If so, please explain the dynamics of this relationship? If not, why do you think this was the case?	Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011)
Siegel-Hawley and Frankenberg (2012)	Did interactions with teachers motivate you to do well in school? Please explain.	Permanence of Race Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011)
Chapman (2014) Diamond (2006)	What expectations did your teachers have for you? Please explain.	Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995 & 2011) Permanence of Race
Chapman (2014) Diamond (2006)	In the first interview, you spoke about the expectations that teachers have for you. Did you feel that teachers had different expectations for different students? How so?	Permanence of Race Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011)
Chapman (2014) Chapman et al., (2014)	Did you get involved in extracurricular activities and athletics? If so, which activities. If not, please explain. (why or why not?)	Whiteness as Property Intellectual Property (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995)
Chapman (2014) Wells et al., (2009)	What type of support services were offered at your high school? (for example, tutoring, clubs, etc). What were your experiences with these services? Please explain.	Whiteness as Property Intellectual Property (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995)
Carter (2008) Huidor & Cooper (2010) O'Connor et al., (2011)	Who were your closest friends in high school? Why? Did these friendships affect your progress in school? How so, or why not? What was the race, gender and socioeconomic background of these friends?	Desegregation v. Integration (Ladson-Billings, 2006b)

Carter (2008) Huidor & Cooper (2010) O'Connor et al., (2011)	Where did you and your friends socialize during the school day? (Where did you hang out?) Were these spaces important to you and your friends? If so, why?	Desegregation v. Integration (Ladson-Billings, 2006b)
Allen (2012) Chapman (2014) Diamond (2006) Lewis and Diamond (2015)	Can you please explain some of the discipline policies at your school? Do you think these policies were fair? Please explain.	Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011) Permanence of Race
Allen (2012) Chapman (2014) Diamond (2006) Lewis and Diamond (2015)	Do you think the school's discipline policies were implemented according to how they were written in the Student Handbook? Please explain or give examples.	Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011) Permanence of Race
Allen (2012) Chapman (2014) Diamond (2006) Lewis and Diamond (2015)	In the previous interview we discussed Brown Deer High School's discipline policy. Were you ever suspended from school? If so, please explain the situation and its outcome. Did you think this specific discipline policy (practice) was fair? Please explain.	Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011) Permanence of Race
Allen (2012) Chapman (2014) Diamond (2006) Lewis and Diamond (2015)	Did you notice whether African American and White students were disciplined in similar ways? If not, can you please describe a specific situation.	Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011) Permanence of Race
	How would you describe the school community at Brown Deer High School? Were there experiences that made you feel part of the school community or not part of the school community? Please give examples.	Desegregation v. Integration (Ladson-Billings, 2006b)

Farmer Hinton & Adams (2006) Farmer-Hinton (2002, 2008) McDonough (2004, 2005) McDonough & Calderone (2006)	Was there an adult in the high school that was particularly influential for you? Was your high school counselor important to your high school experiences? Why or why not? Describe your interaction with your high school counselor. How often did you meet? What type of information was shared?	Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011)
Farmer-Hinton (2002, 2008) McDonough (2004, 2005)	What type of courses did your high school counselor suggest for you?	Colorblindness (Crenshaw 1995, 2011) Whiteness as Property
Farmer-Hinton (2002, 2008) McDonough (2004, 2005)	Did you feel academically challenged by the courses that your high school counselor suggested? Please explain.	
Farmer Hinton & Adams (2006) Farmer-Hinton (2002, 2008) McDonough (2004, 2005) McDonough & Calderone (2006)	How did your high school counselor help you prepare for your post-high school college or career/employment decisions?	Colorblindness
Farmer-Hinton (2002, 2008) McDonough (2004, 2005) McDonough & Calderone (2006)	What type(s) of colleges did your counselor encourage you to apply to? How did they support your preparation for college?	
Farmer-Hinton (2002, 2008) McDonough & Calderone (2006) Wells et al., (2009)	In the first interview, you discussed the types of support services that were shared by your high school's school counselor. Did you notice any differences between the type of support and resources that your counselor shared with you and your White peers?	Permanence of Race
	Tell me about your life after high school? Are you working? If so, where do you work? Are you attending college? If so, where	

and what type of degree program are you completing?

Reflecting back, what is your impression of the college and career guidance from your high school counselor. Please explain. [Probe: do you think you would have benefited (or not) from more specific college and career consultation from your high school counselor? Please explain.]

Thinking back from where you are now to who you were then, what type of resources or support would have better prepared you for life after high school? Feel free to describe how the resources and support you received was delivered/shared or not delivered/shared. Please also feel free to describe how it should be delivered/shared to students (Probes: face to face meetings, pamphlets, websites, group meetings)?

When did you first meet your counselor in high school? And, what information was shared at that point? Was that same information shared consistently or not? Do you think you would have benefited from earlier connections with your high school counselor? Or not? Please explain.

Eaton (2001)	Do you think attending Brown
Wells et al., (2005)	Deer High School has helped to

Wells & Duran (2008)	foster your post-high school experiences as a young adult? Please explain.

Appendix D: Individual Interview Participant Consent Form

Study title	African American Students Experience in a Racially Mixed Suburban School District
Researcher[s]	Toshiba L. Adams/UWM Dissertator/Urban Education Doctoral Program/Social Foundations of Education

We're inviting you to participate in a research study. Participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate now, you can always change your mind later. There are no negative consequences, whatever you decide.

What is the purpose of this study?
The purpose of this study is to examine and understand the high school experiences of African American graduates of Brown Deer Middle High School and to explore the potential relationship of these experiences with your post-high school college and career choices. Specifically, this study will aim to better understand the BDHS's curriculum, extracurricular activities, student/adult relationships, and discipline policies amongst other experiences and how these collectively impact the experience of African American students.

This research is important because the findings have the potential to support the Brown Deer School District to develop policies and practices that align with the academic advancement of its African American student body.

What will I do?
I will be conducting 2 interviews with you that should last approximately 60-90 minutes in length. You'll discuss and share your experiences related to attending Brown Deer Middle High School. The interview will ask questions about your overall daily experience at Brown Deer Middle High School, including a typical school day; the courses you took and the role of your

teachers and counselors in assisting with these selections; your peer relationships; and extracurricular engagement.

Risks

Possible risks	How we're minimizing these risks
Some questions may be race-based	You can skip any questions you don't want to answer.
Breach of confidentiality (your data being seen by someone who shouldn't have access to it)	● Data is anonymous. ● I will remove all identifiers after coding and analyzing data. ● I will store all electronic data on a password-protected, encrypted computer. ● I will store all paper data in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office. ● I will keep your identifying information separate from your research data, but I will be able to link data to you by using your initials. I will destroy this link after we finish collecting and analyzing the data.

There may be risks we don't know about yet. Throughout the study, I will tell you if I learn anything that might affect your decision to participate.

Other Study Information

Possible benefits	● Your responses might assist Brown Deer School District in developing policies and practices to assist the academic progression of African American students. ● Your responses will help the larger society understand the experience of African American students who attend suburban schools. As such, policymakers may be also better able to apply policies that will support the academic progression of African American students.
Estimated number of participants	15-20 Brown Deer Middle High School graduates.
How long will it take?	2 interviews, lasting approximately 60-90 minutes each.
Costs	None

Compensation	$20 gift card for second round interviews (i.e., Starbucks or gas cards).
Future research	De-identified (all identifying information removed) data may be shared with other researchers, potentially published in academic journals or shared at academic conferences. You won't be told specific details about these future research studies.
Recordings	I will record you. The recordings will be used so we can include your perceptions in the final write-up of my dissertation report. However, your name will not be included in the final write up of my dissertation report.
	The recording is necessary to this research. If you do not want to be recorded, you should not participate in this study.

Confidentiality and Data Security

I will collect the following identifying information for the research: your name, email address, home address and phone number. This information is necessary so that I am able to contact you and to verify your area of residence.

Where will data be stored?	In a password protected Google Drive, separate from my UWM account.
How long will it be kept?	Seven years.

Who can see my data?	Why?	Type of data
The researcher	To analyze the data and conduct the study	Coded (names removed and labeled with your initials)
Anyone (public)	If I share my findings in publications or presentations	● De-identified (no names, birthdate, address, etc.)

		● If we quote you, we'll use a pseudonym (fake name)

Contact information:

For questions about the research	Toshiba Adams	414-708-4642/toiadams73@gmail.com
For questions about your rights as a research participant	IRB (Institutional Review Board; provides ethics oversight)	414-229-3173 / irbinfo@uwm.edu
For complaints or problems	Toshiba Adams	414-708-4642/toiadams73@gmail.com
	IRB	414-229-3173 / irbinfo@uwm.edu

Signatures

In order to participate in this study, you must be 18 years of age or older. If you have had all your questions answered and would like to participate in this study, sign on the lines below. Remember, your participation is completely voluntary, and you're free to withdraw from the study at any time.

_____

Name of Participant (print)

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

Appendix E: Focus Group Protocol

1. Tell me about the course selection process at Brown Deer High School [Probe for availability and advising]
2. In high school, did you take the type of classes that would support the college and career choices you intended to pursue? If no, why or why not? If yes, how have those courses affected your opportunities today?
3. In retrospect, would you have taken the same or different courses in high school? If you would have taken different courses, what courses would you have taken? Why?
4. As a Brown Deer High School student, do you think you had information about course offerings? Please explain.
5. Did you select your courses or were they selected for you? If courses were selected for you, who made the selections? Did that particular person collaborate with you? If so, please explain the process and dialogue exchange?
6. If you were to mentor a student - similar to you - who is currently attending Brown Deer High School, what would you tell them about how to graduate from Brown Deer High School?
   - What would you tell them about choosing courses?
   - What would you tell them about how to use high school to determine their college and career opportunities?
   - What personal experiences, of yours, makes this advice important?
   - [Probe: Retrospective analysis of high school experience; about how students were treated]
7. In terms of information sharing (advice/support) about course offerings, do you think the racial background of students mattered when it came to learning about Advanced Placement (AP) courses or not? [Probe: Did you notice students being treated differently or not; memories about teacher/staff expectations]
8. Do you think it mattered whether students lived in Brown Deer or outside of Brown Deer when it came to learning about Advanced Placement (AP) courses?
9. In terms of placement in advanced courses, do you think race mattered or not? Please explain.
10. In terms of placement in advanced courses, do you think it mattered whether students lived in Brown Deer or outside of Brown Deer? Please explain.

Appendix F: Focus Group Participant Consent Form

UNIVERSITY of WISCONSIN
UW MILWAUKEE

Study title	African American Students Experience in a Racially Mixed Suburban Desegregated School District
Researcher[s]	Toshiba L. Adams/UWM Dissertator/Urban Education Doctoral Program/Social Foundations of Education

We're inviting you to participate in a research study. Participation is completely voluntary. If you agree to participate now, you can always change your mind later. There are no negative consequences, whatever you decide.

What is the purpose of this study?

The purpose of this study is to examine and understand the high school experience of African American graduates of Brown Deer High School and to explore the potential relationship of these experiences with their post-high school college and career choices. Specifically, this study will aim to better understand Brown Deer High School's curriculum, extracurricular activities, student/adult relationships, and discipline policies amongst other experiences and how these collectively impact the experience of African American students.

This research is important because the findings have the potential to support the Brown Deer School District to develop policies and practices that align with the academic advancement of its African American student body.

What will I do?

You'll be in a focus group with about 4-5 other people. A focus group is a discussion with a group of people about a certain topic. You'll discuss and share your experiences attending Brown Deer High School. The focus group may last approximately 90-120 minutes in length. The interviewer will ask questions about your overall daily experience at Brown Deer High School, including a typical school day; the courses you took and the role of your teachers and counselors in assisting with these selections; your peer relationships; and extracurricular engagement.

Risks

Possible risks	How we're minimizing these risks

Some questions may be race-based	You can skip any questions you don't want to answer.
Others in the focus group sharing your responses	We ask all participants to keep everything said during the focus group confidential. However, we can't control what others say, so it is best not to share anything you don't want others to know.
Breach of confidentiality (your data being seen by someone who shouldn't have access to it)	● Data is anonymous. ● I will remove all identifiers after coding and analyzing data. ● I will store all electronic data on a password-protected, encrypted computer. ● I will store all paper data in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office. ● I will keep your identifying information separate from your research data, but I will be able to link data to you by using your initials. I will destroy this link after we finish collecting and analyzing the data.

There may be risks we don't know about yet. Throughout the study, I will tell you if I learn anything that might affect your decision to participate.

Other Study Information

Possible benefits	● Your responses might assist Brown Deer School District in developing policies and practices to assist the academic progression of African American students. ● Your responses will help the larger society understand the experience of African American students who attend suburban schools. As such, policymakers may be able to apply policies that will support the academic progression of African American students.
Estimated number of participants	4-5 Brown Deer High School graduates.
How long will it take?	1 focus group, lasting approximately 90-120 minutes each.
Costs	None

Compensation	None
Future research	De-identified (all identifying information removed) data may be shared with other researchers, potentially published in academic journals or shared at academic conferences. You won't be told specific details about these future research studies.
Recordings	I will record you. The recordings will be used so we can include your perceptions in the final write-up of my dissertation report. However, your name will not be included in the final write up of my dissertation report. The recording is necessary to this research. If you do not want to be recorded, you should not participate in this study.

Confidentiality and Data Security

I will collect the following identifying information for the research: your name, email address, home address and phone number. This information is necessary so that I am able to contact you and to verify your area of residence.

Where will data be stored?	In a password protected Google Drive, separate from my UWM account.
How long will it be kept?	Seven years.

Who can see my data?	Why?	Type of data
The researcher	To analyze the data and conduct the study	Coded (names removed and labeled with your initials)
Anyone (public)	If I share my findings in publications or presentations	● De-identified (no names, birthdate, address, etc.) ● If we quote you, we'll use a pseudonym (fake name)

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The IRB (Institutional Review Board) at UWM	To ensure we're following laws and ethical guidelines	Coded (names removed and labeled with your initials)
The Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) or other federal agencies		

Contact information:

For questions about the research	Toshiba Adams	414-708-4642/toiadams73@gmail.com
For questions about your rights as a research participant	IRB (Institutional Review Board; provides ethics oversight)	414-229-3173 / irbinfo@uwm.edu
For complaints or problems	Toshiba Adams	414-708-4642/toiadams73@gmail.com
	IRB	414-229-3173 / irbinfo@uwm.edu

Signatures

In order to participate in this study, you must be 18 years of age or older. If you have had all your questions answered and would like to participate in this study, sign on the lines below. Remember, your participation is completely voluntary, and you're free to withdraw from the study at any time.

_____

Name of Participant (print)

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

Appendix G: Demographic Data Survey

<u>Introduction Questions:</u>
1. What is your first name?

2. What is your last name?

3. What is your desired method of contact:
    - ❏ Email *(please provide email address):*
    - ❏ Phone Number *(please provide desired phone number):*

4. Are you a graduate of Brown Deer Middle High School?
    - ❏ Yes
    - ❏ No

5. If you answered "yes" to question #3, which high school years did you complete at Brown Deer Middle High School *(select all that apply)*l?
    - ❏ Freshman
    - ❏ Sophomore
    - ❏ Junior
    - ❏ Senior

6. If you answered "no" to question #3, did you attend high school at Brown Deer and transfer to a different school district?
    - ❏ Yes
    - ❏ No

7. If you answered "yes" to question #5, which years did you attend at Brown Deer Middle High School *(select all that apply)*?
    - ❏ Freshman
    - ❏ Sophomore
    - ❏ Junior
    - ❏ Senior

<u>NOTE</u>: If you answered "no" to questions #3 and #5, you can discontinue completing this survey. If you answered "yes" to question #3 or question #5, please continue to question #7. Thank you!

8. What year did you graduate from Brown Deer Middle High School?
    - ❏ 2012
    - ❏ 2013
    - ❏ 2014
    - ❏ 2015

❏ 2016
❏ 2017
❏ 2018

9. How do you access Brown Deer Middle High School?
   ❏ Lived in Brown Deer
   ❏ Lived with a friend or relative
   ❏ Chapter 220 Program (i.e., live in the city of Milwaukee but attend Brown Deer Middle High School through the busing program)
   ❏ Open Enrollment Program (i.e., live in a different school district but attend Brown Deer Middle High School)
   ❏ Other *(please explain):*

10. What is your age?
   ❏ 18   ❏ 21   ❏ 24
   ❏ 19   ❏ 22   ❏ 25
   ❏ 20   ❏ 23   ❏ Other:

11. How do you describe yourself?
   ❏ Male
   ❏ Female
   ❏ Transgender
   ❏ Do not identify as male, female or transgender
   ❏ Other *(please specify)*

12. Which racial group do you identify with? *(select all that apply)*
   ❏ African American
   ❏ Hispanic
   ❏ Asian
   ❏ White
   ❏ Native American
   ❏ Pacific Islander
   ❏ Multiracial
   ❏ Other *(please explain)*

High School Experience:
13. What was your high school cumulative GPA?
   ❏ 3.0 - 4.0
   ❏ 2.0 - 3.0
   ❏ 1.0 - 2.0
   ❏ Below 1.0

14. What type of extracurricular activities did you participate in during high school? *(select all that apply)*

- ❏ Sports (including cheerleading)
- ❏ DECA Business Club
- ❏ Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA)
- ❏ Drama/Theatre Club
- ❏ Language Club
- ❏ National Honor Society
- ❏ Band/Orchestra
- ❏ Student Council
- ❏ Yearbook
- ❏ Chess Club
- ❏ School Newspaper
- ❏ Varsity Club
- ❏ Other *(please specify)*:
- ❏ None (N/A)

15. Did you complete any Advanced Placement (AP) courses in high school? If so, please list the courses below:
- ❏ Yes
- ❏ No
- ❏ AP courses completed:

16. Were you encouraged to complete AP courses?
- ❏ Yes
- ❏ No

17. What is the highest math class that you completed in high school?

18. What is the highest science class that you completed in high school?

19. Did you take a World Language class in high school?
- ❏ Yes
- ❏ No
- ❏ If yes, how many years:
  - ❏ 1
  - ❏ 2
  - ❏ 3
  - ❏ 4
- ❏ If yes, which class type and level:

20. Were you ever suspended during high school? If so, specify the number of times.
- ❏ 0
- ❏ 1
- ❏ 2
- ❏ 3
- ❏ 4
- ❏ More than 4

<u>Household Data:</u>
21. What was your household status during high school?
- ❏ Lived with both parents who are married
- ❏ Lived with both parents who are unmarried
- ❏ Lived with mother
- ❏ Lived with father
- ❏ Lived with a different family member
- ❏ Lived on your own
- ❏ Other *(please specify):*

22. What was the highest level of education of your father during your high school years?
- ❏ Some schooling
- ❏ High School Diploma
- ❏ Associate Degree (2-year technical degree)
- ❏ Bachelor Degree (4-year university)
- ❏ Master Degree or higher

23. What was the highest level of education of your mother during your high school years?
- ❏ Some schooling
- ❏ High School Diploma
- ❏ Associate Degree
- ❏ Bachelor Degree
- ❏ Master Degree or higher

24. Do you receive free or reduced lunch during high school?
- ❏ Yes
- ❏ No

<u>Post-High School Questions:</u>

1. Where do you currently live?
- ❏ Brown Deer
- ❏ Milwaukee
- ❏ Out of state
- ❏ Other *(please check below):*

❏ Appleton	❏ Milwaukee
❏ Eau Claire	❏ Oak Creek
❏ Green Bay	❏ Oshkosh
❏ Kenosha	❏ Pewaukee
❏ Madison	❏ Racine

❏ Menomonee Falls   ❏ Waukesha

❏ Mequon   ❏ Wauwatosa

                         ❏ West Allis

2. What are you currently doing *(select all that apply)*?
   ❏ Attending college full time
   ❏ Attending college part time
   ❏ Working full time
   ❏ Working part time
   ❏ Unemployed
   ❏ None of the above *(please explain)*

2. If you're currently attending college, what type of degree are you seeking *(select all that apply)*?
   ❏ Certificate
   ❏ Diploma
   ❏ Associate (2-year technical college)
   ❏ Bachelor (4 year university)
   ❏ Other *(please explain)*
   ❏ None of the above

3. If you're currently attending college, what is your major *(you can also specify "undecided")*?
   ❏ List major:
   ❏ Not applicable

4. Have you completed a college degree? If so, please select all that apply.
   ❏ Certificate
   ❏ Diploma
   ❏ Associate Degree (2-year technical college)
   ❏ Bachelor Degree (4 year university)
   ❏ Master Degree
   ❏ Doctorate (i.e., Phd, EdD)
   ❏ None/Not applicable

5. If you have completed a college degree, what was the major(s) of the awarded degrees?

Appendix H: Recommendations from the Voices of This Study's Participants

	Racial Composition of School Staff
Libya	...if you see a low percentage of African-American teachers, then you're going to think oh, this must be hard, so I must not want to do that. You kind of get discouraged, and I feel like when you get taught by an African-American and you're an African-American yourself, it is more of a connection. Not really saying that you don't get the same from a Caucasian, but after I passed and everything, I feel like it is kind of a good thing to get taught by an African-American...there wasn't a lot of African-American teachers, probably 2, so I would like to see more African-American teachers in there.
Kenya	...from what I know...if student see themselves, they tend to better themselves, whether that means Black male teachers, whatever that means, it allows folks to see themselves what it can look like versus if all of my teachers are white… Also, why shouldn't we have more diverse staff if we have such a diverse school, shouldn't that reflect across the board? Also, asking why are folks so insistent on keeping it White when we see that our students come from all different types of backgrounds? In my personal opinion, Brown Deer needs more teachers of color and like Black teachers at that. I feel like the school district is aware of the changing demographics and I think teachers need to reflect that too. I feel that may...what is the word I'm thinking of...may help some of these interactions so students aren't utilized in remedial courses, or just because they're acting out doesn't mean they can't understand the material, because the students and the teachers reflect each other in that way. I don't think it's malicious, but I feel like race...racial stereotypes definitely play a role in how teachers interact with students and how they end up doing in school...It may take like having Black teachers to teach Black students how to play the game...like should we have to know...but I also want students to succeed because after Brown Deer we're still going to have to face issues. I think that relationship between black students and black teachers could benefit the entire district.
Sheba	I think it would have benefitted me to see someone who looks like me doing amazing things, that really helps.
Moses	A big recommendation would be to get a lot more teachers of color, because I have this thought of let's say a kid is kind of acting out or kind of making jokes, I feel like a teacher of color could relate more, crack a joke back, the whole class might start laughing, instead of a teacher being like this is inappropriate, go to the principal's office for a simple joke or something. It would definitely make the atmosphere way more calm and relaxed and more like a family vibe.
Niger	Because it seemed like you were isolated to these teachers [referring to White teachers] that were putting up with us rather than helping us. They were more so just dealing with us rather than teaching us it seemed like at times, and him being African-American himself, or even my 4th grade teacher was African-American and I had a kindergarten teacher that was African-American, but 4th grade and then having him my sophomore year of high school, they understand certain things they understand how you may feel about certain topics, that whole kind of mindset, I felt like we weren't getting that same kind of respect from all of the other [White]

	teachers and not that every single other teacher was on the awkward side when it came to teaching Black students, but there were definitely some and that had experiences and there were some stories along with some of those experiences that kind of attest to that.
	College and Career Preparation
Sheba	Talking to people like in like freshman year like what they want to do, what they're interested in would be really helpful…would be really helpful for the guidance counselor seeing people as freshman to get them on some sort of path, instead of at the end of their junior year when it feels like it is too late to make any major life decisions on what you want to do and make high school matter to that.
Niger	I think that you should meet your high school counselor at 8th grade graduation. It can be almost to the point where before they leave the middle school, a counselor day or when you enroll for your new classes for high school, your counselor should be talking to your mom and with that student, like I got you fresh, we can literally customize your education…You start off that plan so people know they have something to look at, they have a little guideline and see if they're making milestones.
Chad	I know there are a couple of people in my class that went straight to a career instead of college. Getting students in touch with different companies around the area that would be good starting places for them in a career after high school for those who choose not to go to college or inviting people from the companies in to talk to students during mini assemblies for them…and opportunities for internships.
Malia	I think it would be even nice if they had an after-school program where they helped you fill out the college applications, because my sister right now is trying to fill out her college application and it's a long process and to have a counselor or something to go through it with them would be great. I don't know if that's asking a lot.
Sheba	Then also in those meetings, do surveys or quizzes you would take to find out their interests. No one is asking them questions about what are your skill sets, what do you enjoy doing. I think questions like that really help guide you with what you're good at. Then outside of that, take college visits, I know they started doing more since I did it when I was a senior, take college visits but also going to the skill training lab and see how people work inside that.
Nandi	If they really get to know the students…going into jobs and stuff. Tours of businesses and places. If people wanted to start their own business, what they need to do to do that.
Moses	I'm thinking that to prepare me for college, which the majority of people are going to go to college, I'm not the only one, but the majority are probably going to go to college from Brown Deer. I'm thinking that they should structure and all of that like you're in college. From the time I was freshman year in college to senior year in college, I had an advisor the entire time that I could email if there was a problem, I could go see if there was a problem with my schedule or there was a class that really wasn't working out or whatever the fact was or see just to talk or vent about what is going on in my life. They should structure it more like that and have the advisor and counselors be more of a focal point in helping the kids get

	through high school. If they gave them somebody like that, I think it would be like a safe zone to help them talk about what's going on in their life.
	Culturally Relevant School Approach
Sudan	..it would be cool to bring it to light and make me more aware of the names of the people who really put forward the Civil Rights Movement, all they had to do to get where we are today. I feel like some of them [referring to African American students] would be more interested and might want to participate in more things...It helps you as a person [knowing about history that includes African American contributions], it gives you good people skills, dealing with different cultures and learning about different cultures.
Morocco	If they touched on stuff that I'm sure would interest other people as well as interested me, it would change the way we carried ourselves or felt about studying, because if we knew the truth. We knew that we were slaves, blah, blah and everybody don't object, but they don't really know the facts behind it, the situation that took place. If we would have knew the real about what's going on, I definitely feel like the Black population at Brown Deer, there would have been some stragglers, but the people who did receive the information would act a little bit different.
Kenya	…because I feel like you get to read more than one story. Textbooks come out of some city in Texas and they tried to put slavery through as voluntary or something like that, we were like immigrants or something. No, I was forced here, let's not forget. This country is not made completely of immigrants. It just provides a better understanding to move through the world. Yes, there are certain things you need to know, but at the same time, you're doing your students a disservice in bringing them up in this multicultural situation but not knowing what it actually means and if it's as beautiful as we like to think it is.
Nefertari	I think we would have benefitted from having more discussions about that topic, to be honest. Especially with what is going on now, learning that back then, especially for White people that went to our school, it would have gave them some insight on why people act a certain way that they act or why certain thing happen and that type of thing, even for us.
Mali	I definitely wish that I was exposed to it, because I kind of came in blind like I had to have this discussion with my mom when I got back from college my first couple of weekends. I was like I didn't know any of this, why didn't anyone tell me? I was definitely thrown a curveball...I didn't find out much about race and race relations in the US until my first semester in college when I took a race relations course and I was kind of like, wow, I wish they would have taught me this in high school because I'm actually blind to everything that is going on right now.
Nairobi	Even if your placement in 7th or 8th grade doesn't literally determine essentially where you may end up in college. I don't know if people could take another test when they get to high school, whether that messes up their classes, but in a dream

	world I guess something to the effect of that not being so reflective of where you're going to end up, like a test you take in middle school.
Kenya	…talking about how if you were doing poorly in one subject, you didn't get the chance in another, and I just wanted to highlight that again for a recommendation, because I think students could do a lot better overall if they weren't pigeonholed to like one thing and then brought down. I don't know how that would work but maybe actually evaluating each individual subject compared to letting one effect everything else.

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Wilson, W. J. (1978). *The declining significance of race: Blacks and changing American institutions.* Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, W. J. (1987). *The truly disadvantaged: The inner city, the underclass, and public policy.* Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago Press.

Wilson, W. J. (1996). *When work disappears: The world of the new urban poor.* New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Woodward, J. R, (2011). How Busing Burdened Blacks: Critical Race Theory and Busing for Desegregation in Nashville-Davidson County

Yosso, T. (2002). Toward a Critical Race Curriculum. *Eric, 35*(2), 93-107.

Yosso, T. (2005). Whose Culture Has Capital? A crucial race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race, Ethnicity and Education 8*(1), 69-91.

CURRICULUM VITAE

TOSHIBA L. ADAMS

EDUCATION

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI
Ph.D. in Urban Education   2019
Dissertation: Access Versus Equality of Educational Experiences: Race, Social Status and Navigating the "Suburban" Terrain
Advisor: Dr. Raquel Farmer-Hinton
Area of Concentration: social stratification; structural inequality, intersectionality of race, class and gender; school integration; Critical Race Theory (CRT)

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI
M.A. in Cultural Foundations of Education   2003

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI
B.A. in Educational Policy and Community Studies   2001

AWARDS

Teaching in Excellence Award, Black Child Development Institute   **2010**
T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Educator's Awards, WECA   **2008**
Profile in Excellence, Wisconsin Early Childhood Association   **2006**
Partners Acting on the Commitment of Early Success, MPS   **2004**

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
Adjunct Faculty: Teacher Education   **2018-present**

Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee, WI
Faculty: Early Childhood Education   **2006-present**
Develop competency-based curriculum; facilitate courses via a variety of methods, including traditional, blended and online learning formats; serve as academic advisor to program students.

Milwaukee Area Technical College, Milwaukee, WI
Instructional Chair: Early Childhood Education   **2011-present**
Provide leadership to the child development associate degree program; develop course schedules; order textbooks; facilitate staff and advisory meetings; utilize grant writing skills to secure funding to support the ECE program and its students; collaborate with community members in an effort to build relationships to service our ECE program and its students; manage grant activity; recruit and hire full-time and adjunct faculty

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI
Adjunct Faculty: Early Childhood Education   **2003-2006**

Developed and facilitated early childhood education business management curriculum using the D2L system.

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Milwaukee Area Technical College
Professional Development Instructor   **2012-present**
Develop and facilitate online professional development courses to faculty and administrators.
Course: Preparation for Online Teaching (online course design)

Milwaukee Area Technical College
Curriculum Coordinator   **2012–2017**
Developed, implemented and facilitated professional development offerings to faculty and administrators; developed strategic plans for professional development offerings that align with the college's goal; worked collaboratively with faculty, staff and administrators to survey the college and build opportunities for growth and development; led team meetings; developed and facilitated relevant workshops; recruited external guest speakers based on the institution's annual strategic plan.

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Research Assistant
Research focus: To explore the role of school guidance counselors and their impact on assisting minority students to college attendance.
Research focus: Investigating small school curriculum and its' reflection on urban student populations.

Joyful Love Child Care Center
Owner/Administrator   **1997-2006**
Managed the daily operations of the business, including staff supervision, financial planning, staff recruitment and retention, and business marketing.

PUBLICATIONS AND PAPERS

Farmer-Hinton, R. & Adams, T. (2006). Social Capital and College Preparation: Exploring the Role of Counselors in a College Prep School for Students of Color. *Negro Educational Review.*

Adams, T. (2005). Class and Schools: Using Social, Economic, and Educational Reform to Close the Black-White Achievement Gap. *Urban Education. Book Review.*

PRESENTATIONS

Adams, T. (2017, March). *What Matters Most: Your Child's First Five Years.* Public Broadcast System (PBS) Professional Expert Panel. Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) - Milwaukee, WI

Adams, T. (2005, September). *The Impact of Community Learning Centers in Closing the Academic Achievement Gap.* LASER (Linking Academic Scholars to Educational Resources) Urban Education Research Conference. Tampa, FL.

Adams, T., Harris, I., Stroobants, N. (2004, March). *Community Learning Centers: Academics and Beyond.* Educational Policy and Community Studies Colloquium. University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.

Adams, T., Harris, I., Rosenberg, L., Stingley, D., Stroobants, N., Syam, D. (2004, March). *Revisiting the Legacy of Dorothy Enderis: Are Community Learning Centers Helping to Close the Achievement Gap?*   School of Education 2005 Research Conference. University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.

MEMBERSHIPS
National Association for Multicultural Education
American Educational Research Association
National Black Child Development Institute
National Association for the Education of Young Children