DECIPHERING RACISM: A DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH TO RACIAL LITERACY BY EXAMINING THE RACIAL BELIEFS OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SCHOOL LEADERS

By

Lawrence Louis

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

K-12 Educational Administration – Doctor of Philosophy

2024

ABSTRACT

Leveraging racial sensemaking and constructive-developmental frameworks, this study investigates how school leaders implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education make sense of racism, and how their racial beliefs change over time. Given New York State's mandate that educators implement culturally responsive-sustaining education, it made for an ideal site from which to recruit participants.

Using survey, photo-elicitation, and narrative methods, I conducted a three-phase, qualitatively driven mixed-methods approach to my study. During Phase 1, 54 school leaders completed an online survey that gave insights into their culturally responsive school leadership practices and their racial beliefs. Quantitatively, the study leveraged the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) to measure school leaders' racial attitudes. Anchored in theories of racial colorblind ideology, the CoBRAS is a validated and widely used survey instrument to measure racial attitudes as a function of racial colorblindness through three subscales: denial of White racial privilege, denial of institutional discrimination, and denial of blatant racial issues. Descriptive statistics and independent sample t-tests were used to analyze CoBRAS data.

During Phase 2, at the close of the online survey, four principals were invited and agreed to participate in 1-on-1, in-depth interviews to gain deeper understanding of their racial beliefs; how they drive culturally responsive-sustaining education at their schools; and who they are as people and as leaders. A total of 11 principal interviews were conducted with the four principals.

During Phase 3, focus group interviews with principals' school leadership teams (SLTs) added texture to how culturally responsive-sustaining education shows (or does not show) up at their schools. Three focus group interviews were conducted with two of the four principals' SLTs. In total, the qualitative portion of this study draws on 14 interviews (11 principal-facing

and 3 SLT-facing). All qualitative data was analyzed inductively through open coding, theme formation, constant comparison, and iteration.

Findings highlight that school leaders mandated to implement culturally responsive-sustaining education can hold both race-conscious and race-evasive attitudes. Quantitative results show that some school leaders hold positions that both recognize structural racism *and* fail to recognize institutional discrimination and White racial privilege. Photo-elicited qualitative data reveal that race-evasive leaders often exhibit White nativist and cultural imperialist ideologies when they perceive that racial equity efforts are racist toward White people, or that the United States is being mischaracterized as structurally racist. Findings from in-depth interviews with the four principals identify racial learning change processes that animate racial literacy: what I term *developmental racial learning streams*. Further, despite their high racial awareness, these four school leaders struggled to operationalize racial equity efforts central to culturally responsive-sustaining education due to district and local community constraints.

This emergent research underscores the necessity of designing social learning interventions that enable school leaders to align their racial beliefs with the goals of culturally responsive-sustaining education. This suggests that leadership preparation programs and professional development efforts should address school leaders' feelings about institutional discrimination and White racial privilege early and often. This study advocates framing racial literacy as a racial learning process that changes over time, similar to social-emotional learning (SEL); all to better understand and support school leaders' racial sensemaking, critical self-reflection, and implementation of culturally responsive-sustaining education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to take the time to acknowledge and give deep gratitude to the mentors who have supported me throughout these formative years of my doctoral life.

To Dr. Chris Torres, thank you for believing in my work and your patience in getting me to refine my big ideas. I couldn't have asked for a better advisor and thought partner.

To Dr. Kristy Cooper-Stein, thank you for making me a better communicator through writing. It is hard to translate big and unwieldy concepts, and you always made sure that I don't lose sight of the reader. Also, thank you for introducing me to the learning sciences, and by extension to constructive-developmental theory. That knowledge base has been invaluable.

To Dr. Terah Chambers, thank you for being the first to respond to my inquiries about doctoral programs. You are the blueprint when it comes to being a mentor and an other-mother. You're one of one.

To Dr. Gerardo López, thank you for always being faithful to criticality: always pushing me to interrogate presuppositions, assumptions, and presumptions about status quos. And thank you for showing aspiring scholars, particularly aspiring scholars of color, the ins and outs of academe. You are service personified.

To Dr. John Yun, thank you for making me a better writer and deeper thinker. Your course on political economy expanded my systems thinking. It was transformative in the best of ways.

To Dr. Maribel Santiago, thank you for introducing me to Lani Guinier's work. Your course on relational schooling was the catalyst for my racial literacy work.

To Dr. Chezare Warren, thank you for modeling what it means to be a scholar-practitioner. Your dedication to your craft and your students don't go unnoticed. Keep shining!

To Dr. Dorinda Carter Andrews, thank you for making me a deeper, more critical thinker and writer. Thank you for motivating me to theorize. There is liberation in theory-making. Let it be known that your teaching let our minds fly. Can't thank you enough.

To Dr. Alex Allweiss, thank you for making me a better teaching artist, and a better educator. I will always cherish our time teaching together.

To Dr. John H. McClendon III, thank you for opening me up to the world of analytic philosophy through an exploration of African philosophy. "Philosophy is a critical mode of inquiry at the particular level". Wise words from a wise man.

To Dr. Mónica Byrne-Jiménez, thank you for the trust in leading graduate student programming for UCEA (University Council for Educational Administration), and always being supportive of my research agenda.

To my K-12 fam: Alounso, Briana, Courtney, Taeyeon, Yujin, Talgat, Zhamilya, Dasmen, Yi-Chih, Emma, Soon-young, and Ruth — each of you have made this experience even more valuable. Thank you for leaving indelible marks on my doctoral journey.

To the participants in this study, particularly Principals CeCe, Kay, Jay, and DiDi, thank you for your trust, transparency, and candor.

To all of my family and friends who have invested in making me the person that comes before you: immense gratitude and profound thanks.

To Shera – my wife and partner in imagination: I love you. I will never forget what you sacrificed for me to be on this journey. Together, our future stays bright. We did it!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I | DECIPHERING RACISM

As a complex social process that uses the social category of race to oppress racialized groups for dominant group advantage (Byng, 2013; Leonardo, 2013; McClendon, 2002), racism frustrates the goals of deep learning that are central to culturally responsive-sustaining education (Banks, 2002; Howard, 2010; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Paris & Alim, 2014; Sleeter, 2012). Because school leadership must be learning-focused to be effective (Grissom et al., 2021; Murphy et al., 2007), racism runs counter to the central learning goals of culturally responsive-sustaining education, and is therefore a complex social process that school leaders must actively redress (AERA, 2020; Brooks & Watson, 2019; Carter, 2016; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Theoharis, 2007).

To redress racism's deleterious impacts on student learning and marginalized communities (Brooks & Watson, 2019; Carter et al., 2017; Green, 2017a, 2017b; Ladson-Billings, 2006), school leaders have been encouraged, as part of their leadership practice, to critically self-reflect about how racism operates in schools, their personal lives, and society (Irby, 2018; Khalifa, 2018; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011). For example, within the paradigm of culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL), one of its central tenets asserts that school leaders must critically self-reflect upon their leadership behaviors to positively impact student learning (Khalifa et al., 2016; Khalifa, 2018). Khalifa (2018) expounded on the skills that school leaders need to develop to animate critical self-reflection for effective CRSL implementation. These skills include:

- the ability to identify and understand the oppressive contexts that students and their communities face;
- the willingness and humility to identify and vocalize one's own personal background and privilege, which allows leaders to see how they are directly involved or complicit in oppressive contexts; and

- the courage to push colleagues and staff to critically self-reflect upon their personal and professional role in oppression and anti-oppressive works, and to eventually develop responsive school structures (p. 61)

Within a CRSL framework, school leaders who critically self-reflect about racism both deconstruct and interrogate their racial beliefs – that is, their racial attitudes, perceptions, and ideologies (Bobo et al., 2012; Quinn & Stewart, 2019; Neville et al., 2005). As school leaders engage in making sense of racism through the examination of their core racial beliefs, they expand their perspectives on how racism operates at micro, meso, and macro levels of society (e.g., individual, interpersonal, local/contextual, institutional, societal; see Brooks & Watson, 2019). This examination of racial beliefs to catalyze more complex understandings of racism animates racial literacy: a form of racial sensemaking where school leaders critically self-reflect about their racial beliefs (Douglass Horsford, 2010; Evans, 2007b; Guinier, 2004; Irby et al., 2019; Radd & Grosland, 2018; Turner, 2015).

From the standpoint of effective CRSL implementation, school leaders' examination of their racial beliefs connotes two assumptions: (1) that the process of examining racial beliefs will catalyze the necessary epistemological shifts that render school leaders' perspectives of social reality more elastic, and thus more accommodating of ambiguity and complexity – two features of racism (Irby & Clark, 2018; Irby et al., 2019; Solomon, 2002; Theoharis, 2008); (2) that these more accommodative perspectives will render racism's social operations legible to school leaders in ways that inform leadership behaviors and organizational routines that counter racism's negative impacts on student learning and culturally responsive-sustaining education (Davis et al., 2022; Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2019, 2021; Irby, 2021; Mahfouz & Anthony-Stevens, 2020; Lash & Sanchez, 2022; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011).

Yet, research has found that school leaders' efforts to redress racism are both highly variable in their effectiveness and tightly tethered to school leaders' racial sensemaking at two levels: core racial belief (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Evans, 2007b; Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2019; Henze et al., 2000; Ryan, 2003) and racial learning (Irby, 2018; Kose, 2009; Palmer & Louis, 2017; Swanson & Welton, 2019).

At the level of core racial belief, school leaders' beliefs about racism encompass their racial attitudes, perceptions, and ideologies, thus shaping their responses to redressing racial disparities; either effectively (Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; Theoharis, 2008, 2010; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011) or ineffectively (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Henze et al., 2000; Ryan, 2003; Swanson & Welton, 2019). Henze and colleagues (2000) found that school leaders who viewed racism as a complex sociocultural system operating at multiple societal levels enacted efforts that responded proactively to racial inequities at their schools; whereas school leaders who viewed racism uniformly as isolated acts of individual prejudice employed actions that did little to reduce racial conflict and marginalization at their schools.

At the level of racial learning, school leaders engage in structured deliberative and metacognitive activities on how racism operates both personally and structurally in society; fostering discursive challenges – that is, challenges to how school leaders think about, communicate about, and respond to racism (Capper et al. 2006; Delpit, 1992; Giroux, 1992; Gooden, 2012; Jean-Marie & Mansfield, 2013). School leaders' responses to these discursive challenges express themselves in varied ways: from resistance (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Henze et al., 2000; Kegan & Lahey, 2010; Theoharis, 2007); to neutrality (Diem et al., 2016; Evans, 2007a, 2007b; Solomon, 2002; Welton et al., 2015; Young & Laible, 2000); to complex analysis

(Brooks et al., 2013; DeMatthews, & Izquierdo, 2020; Irby et al., 2019; Kose, 2009; Mansfield & Jean-Marie, 2015; Theoharis, 2010; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011).

According to numerous educational leadership scholars, responses of resistance and neutrality signal two insights: (1) school leaders have acquiesced to elementary racial conceptions whereby racism is viewed largely as insignificant or overemphasized in explicating racial inequities (Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2019; Lewis, 2001; Welton et al., 2015); (2) school leaders lack reflective depth when analyzing their core racial beliefs (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Ryan, 2003; Theoharis, 2008; see also Buehler, 2013).

In contrast, research suggests that school leaders' with complex analytical responses to racism are dynamic in nature, and are heavily implicated in redressing racial disproportionality and marginalization in schools: from normalizing reflective practice about racism through ongoing public race talk and guided racial journaling (Gooden et al., 2018; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Kose, 2009; Palmer & Louis, 2017); to examining school discipline data disaggregated by race (Irby, 2018); to working with teachers on instructional core elements to respond to the learning needs of racially minoritized student groups (DeMatthews & Izquierdo, 2020); to organizing neighborhood outings with staff to deepen their awareness of the local context within which racialized student groups and their families are situated (Green, 2017a, 2017b; Ishimaru, 2013; Khalifa, 2018; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016; see also Alston, 2005).

Additionally, constructive-developmental theory reminds us that how we reflect about our social reality grows more complex and changes over time (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017, 2019; Kegan, 1980; Kegan & Lahey, 2010; McCauley et al., 2006). Therefore, it is reasonable to infer that school leaders' racial beliefs are also developmental: changing and growing more complex over time (Chávez-Moreno, 2022).

While there has been robust empirical research examining how school leaders' racial sensemaking informs their leadership practice (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Evans, 2007a, 2007b; Henze et al., 2000; Galloway et al., 2019; Irby, 2018; Irby et al., 2019; Ryan, 2003; Turner, 2015), few research studies have explored this relationship while framing racial sensemaking both as racial literacy and a developmental process rooted in constructive-developmental theory (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017, 2019; Douglass Horsford, 2011, 2014; Irby et al., 2019).

Consequently, an inquiry seeking to investigate how culturally responsive school leaders make sense of racism and how their racial beliefs change over time presents itself as both urgent and a promising area of research (Chávez-Moreno, 2022; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017, 2019; Irby et al., 2019; Khalifa, 2018).

1. Significance

A number of scholars have identified racism as a complex social process that frustrates the goal of equitable deep learning for racialized student groups (Dumas, 2016; Gooden, 2012; Theoharis & Haddix, 2012; Young & Laible, 2000). In response, a growing area of research has been focused on investigating the processes and practices that school leaders need to leverage in order to redress racism: from antiracist school leadership (Brooks & Witherspoon, 2013; Diem & Welton, 2021); to social justice leadership (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014; Ishimaru & Galloway, 2021; Theoharis, 2007); to culturally responsive school leadership (Khalifa, 2018).

Research suggests that school leaders implement a number of practices to redress racism's negative impacts to deep learning; some include: ongoing professional learning about race and racism (Kose, 2009; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011); collaborative analysis of school data disaggregated by race in order to reduce racial disproportionality (Bal, 2018; K. M. Brown,

2010; DeMatthews, 2016; Irby, 2018; Skrla et al., 2004); negotiating strong relational partnerships between school staff, students, parents, and local community members to foster trust and belonging (Gray et al., 2018; Green, 2017a, 2017b; Ishimaru, 2014).

Throughout this equity-focused corpus of scholarship, a common theme is that school leaders' racial literacies—or the ways in which they make sense of racism—lack analytical depth and avoid engaging racism's complexity; thus leading to ineffective responses to redress racism in schools (Brooks & Watson, 2019; Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2019; Henze et al., 2000; Ryan, 2003). This non-analytical mode of racial sensemaking has implications whereby school leaders with elementary racial beliefs can reproduce racialized inequities in their school contexts (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Douglass Horsford, 2010; McKenzie & Phillips, 2016; Pollock & Briscoe, 2019; Ryan, 2003; see also J. E. King, 1991). Conversely, school leaders who maintain more complex racial beliefs can generate more dynamic responses that foster equitable learning contexts for racialized student groups (DeMatthews, 2016; Henze et al., 2000; Douglass Horsford & Clark, 2015; Khalifa, 2018; Shields, 2010; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011).

In their 5-year qualitative study of racial-ethnic conflict among students in primarily urban schools, Henze and colleagues (2000) found that the way that school leaders responded to racial-ethnic conflict in their schools largely depended on how school leaders "defined the problem" (p. 197). If school leaders understood racial-ethnic conflict only as overt conflicts – such as physical violence based on race or ethnicity; or racial-ethnic name calling—then they were more likely to respond as reacting agents treating incidents as singular, disconnected acts. On the other hand, school leaders who viewed racial-ethnic conflict in more complex and nuanced ways, responded proactively "to address the more subtle or underlying tensions that

may be related to race or ethnicity, or going further to address the root causes of conflicts" (p. 198).

Furthermore, critical educational policy scholars remind us that the interplay between racial literacy and practice is not delimited to school-based leadership: it also operates concomitantly at the district level vis à vis district policy (Diem & Welton, 2021; Douglass Horsford et al., 2019). Turner (2015) investigated this very dynamic in her study of racial sensemaking among district leaders responding to demographic change. Her research contributed two major findings: (1) district leaders' interpretations of race were shaped by their districts' nested political economies; (2) district leaders had varying interpretations of race which informed *how they made* and *implemented* policy.

Despite evidence highlighting how school leaders' racial literacies are critical to fostering both racially equitable and culturally responsive learning contexts (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2019; Khalifa, 2018; Shields, 2010), much of this scholarship is anchored in teacher education focused on pre-service teachers (L. J. King, 2016; Kohli et al., 2018; Rogers & Mosley, 2008; Sealey-Ruiz & Greene, 2015) and practicing teachers (Brown & Kraehe, 2010; Epstein & Gist, 2015; Skerrett, 2011). While it is true that educational leadership scholars have been explicit about intensifying efforts to develop racial literacy at the leadership preparation level (Capper et al., 2006; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Young & Laible, 2000), less research has been explored in the field of school leadership (Douglass Horsford, 2010, 2014; Laughter et al., 2021).

With increased acceptance that equity and cultural responsiveness are precepts for effective school leadership (Ishimaru & Galloway, 2021), educational leadership scholars have

highlighted that "the principal's critical consciousness of culture and race really serves as a foundation to establish beliefs that undergird her practice" (Khalifa et al., 2016, p. 1281).

Within sensemaking literature focused on school leaders' racial beliefs, scholars have advanced four primary findings: (a) school leaders' racial attitudes, perceptions, and ideologies inform both how they make sense of racism and implement school leadership actions (Evans, 2007a, 2007b; Henze et al., 2000; Ryan, 2003); (b) school leaders' default understandings of racism are underdeveloped and oversimplified – particularly for White school leaders, yet not exclusively (Henze et al., 2000; Khalifa, 2014, 2015; Swanson & Welton, 2019; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011); (c) elementary understandings of racism can animate a state of dysconsciousness among school leaders meaning that their ability to reflect on racism's complexity is constricted (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2019; McMahon, 2007; Solomon, 2002; see also J. E. King, 1991); (d) the ways in which school leaders' critically self-reflect about racism can grow more complex and change over time (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2019; Irby et al., 2019; Theoharis, 2007).

In her study of Black superintendents reflecting on their experience living through desegregation policies, Douglass Horsford (2010) wrote poignantly that:

> Without a racially literate understanding of why educational inequities and injustices exist in the first place, education leaders and scholars alike will be hard pressed in their efforts to resist and transform the educational structures and systems that reproduce and maintain the unequal inputs and outcomes they seek to disrupt (p. 312)

My study seeks to respond to Douglass Horsford's claim by exploring the developmental racial literacy of K-12 school leaders implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education.

With racism consistently presenting itself as a recurring node in the matrix of educational inequity and exclusion (AERA, 2020; Carter et al., 2017; Leonardo, 2013; Love, 2019; Melamed, 2015), it is incumbent upon the field of educational leadership to investigate how

school leaders' developmental racial literacies influence their leadership practice. To this end, my study's purpose is two-fold: (a) to identify the racial beliefs that culturally responsive school leaders hold; (b) to clarify how culturally responsive school leaders' racial beliefs change over time.

2. Research Questions

The following questions will guide my inquiry:

1. What are the racial beliefs of school leaders implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education?
2. In what ways do culturally responsive school leaders' racial beliefs change over time?

CHAPTER II | THEORETICAL LITERATURE

1. Constructive-Developmental Theory

Building upon Piaget's cognitive stage theory of human development among children, constructive-developmental theory asserts that the quality of how we reflect when making sense of social reality both changes and grows over time; where change and growth are ongoing throughout adulthood (Kegan, 2009; McCauley et al., 2006; Piaget, 2000). Because constructive-developmental theory includes the interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions of human development, in addition to cognition, it proffers a more robust understanding of how adult beliefs grow and change over time (Bridwell, 2012; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017; Kegan, 2009; P. M. King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; Perez et al., 2015).

Consequently, we construct our beliefs in qualitatively different ways, resulting in variable yet distinct developmental sensemaking systems that organize how adults both understand and manage the complexities of social reality (Drago-Severson, 2008; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano 2017; Harris & Kuhnert 2008; Kegan, 2009; McCauley et al., 2006).

At the center of the distinctions between our sensemaking systems is the quality of our ability to deconstruct the premises undergirding our core beliefs; what is referred to as *the subject-object balance*: "the distinction between that which we can regulate and reflect upon (object) and that with which we are so identified and caught up we cannot see it, and are run by it (subject)" (Kegan & Lahey, 2010, p. 434). When our interpretations of social reality violate our core beliefs, goals, or sense of purpose, the violation catalyzes *optimal conflict* to the subject-object balance being maintained by our developmental sensemaking systems (Kegan & Lahey, 2010).

This optimal conflict operationalizes shifts in how we reflect at two levels: structure and mode. At the level of structure, *what* we can handle reflecting upon grows both cognitively and affectively. At the level of mode, the specific dynamics that govern *how* we reflect grow more complex and analytically robust (Kegan & Lahey, 2010). In other words, that which we could not once see (subject) now becomes discernible and primed for analysis (object) due to a more expansive, more developmentally mature sensemaking system. As a result, optimal conflict is understood as optimal because it prompts developmental growth through the deconstruction of our core beliefs: resulting in more expansive sensemaking systems to manage social reality's complexities (Kegan & Lahey, 2010; Mezirow, 1998, 2009).

These different sensemaking systems are: (1) qualitatively distinct; (2) follow an invariant sequence of progressive maturation where each successive sensemaking system transcends and includes the previous sensemaking system; and (3) inform how people manage social reality's complexities (e.g., racism in schools; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017, 2019; Harris & Kuhnert 2008; Kegan, 2009; McCauley et al., 2006; Piaget, 2000).

Among adults, constructive-developmental theory identifies four sensemaking systems[1]: *instrumental*; *socializing*; *self-authoring*; and *self-transforming* (Drago-Severson, 2009; Kegan, 2009). What follows is a description of each one:

- *Stage 2: Instrumental – Rule-oriented self:* Adults at the instrumental stage are generally motivated by self-interest, purpose, wants, and concrete needs. Instrumental knowers are subject to their desires, unable to think abstractly, and make generalizations from one context to another. They have dualistic (or binary) thinking; focusing on "right" and "wrong" answers –"right" ways to think and "right" ways to act.

[1] There are two other developmental sensemaking systems generally associated with infants (Stage 0: Impulsive) and young children (Stage 1: Imperial).

- *Stage 3: Socializing – Other-focused self:* Adults at the socializing stage value others' (external authority) expectations and opinions. They are shaped by the definitions and expectations of their interpersonal environment. Unlike instrumental knowers, socializing knowers have developed the capacity to think abstractly—to think about thinking—to make rationalizations, and to reflect on their actions and the actions of others.
- *Stage 4: Self-Authoring – Reflective self:* Adults at the self-authoring stage value the self and internal authority. Self-authoring knowers have grown to take perspective on the interpersonal context and society's expectations of them. In other words, they can hold, prioritize, and reflect on different perspectives and relationships. They can control their feelings and emotions and are able to discuss their internal states. They also have the capacity to hold opposing feelings simultaneously and not be torn apart by them;
- *Stage 5: Self-Transforming self – Interconnecting self*: Adults at the self-transforming stage have the capacity to stand back from both their sociocultural frame and personal value system to appraise the context more fully. Self-transforming knowers engage a sense of self that is flexible to the relational context, making judgments and acting with best interests for the given situation even though it may be partial or incomplete. They hold contradictions and opposites because they recognize multiple systems existing and are capable of evaluating their own assumptions, reframing their perspectives as needed when data indicates that their existing mindset is inadequate for the changing circumstances. Self-transforming knowers are able to handle adaptive challenges and higher levels of complexity (Bochman & Kroth, 2010; Bridwell, 2013; Drago-Severson, 2009; Kegan & Lahey, 2010; Stewart & Wolodko, 2016).

Furthermore, developmental growth is tethered to shifts in our *subject-object balance*—that is, changes around what people can reflect upon (object) and what they cannot fully discern (subject); changes that are prompted by the analysis of our core beliefs (Kegan & Lahey, 2010). From a developmental perspective, the deconstruction of our core beliefs—also known as premise reflection (Mezirow, 1978)— disrupts the reflective subject-object balance we maintain to make sense of the world (Kegan & Lahey, 2010). This disruption[2] to our subject-object balance catalyzes developmental growth and change whereby what we previously could not reflect upon (subject) can now be discerned and analyzed (object); thus evincing a new, more capacious sensemaking system able to reflect in more complex ways (Drago-Severson, 2016; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017, 2019; Kegan & Lahey, 2010).

Epistemologically, this means that the dynamics that govern *how* school leaders reflect about racism are disrupted via the analysis of their core racial beliefs such that school leaders undergo developmental growth (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017, 2019; Irby et al., 2019; Kegan & Lahey, 2010). By deconstructing their core racial beliefs—also known as premise reflection (Mezirow, 1998) –school leaders experience perspective transformation whereby the frames of reference that undergird their racial assumptions are made visible and scrutinized; thus catalyzing a new, more capacious, and elastic way of racial sensemaking (Delpit, 1992; Gooden & O'Doherty, 2015; Gooden et al., 2018; Shields, 2009, 2010; Solomon, 2002; see also Mezirow, 1978).

Referred to as *racial literacy* (Douglass Horsford, 2010, 2014; Guinier, 2004; Radd & Grosland, 2018; Touré & Thompson Dorsey, 2018), this form of racial sensemaking translates to school leaders operationalizing the capacity to maintain pluralized racial meanings whereby they

[2] Throughout meaning-making literature, disruption to subject-object balance has also been called a disorienting dilemma (Mezirow, 1978); discrepancy/violation (Park, 2010); optimal conflict (Kegan & Lahey, 2010).

can reflect upon racism in conceptually complex ways as opposed to elementary ways – that is, ways that view racism as a social process of multiple forms operating at various sociocultural levels (Byng, 2013; Leonardo, 2013; J. Warren & Sue, 2011) in contrast to ways that view racism uniformly and lack analytical depth (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2006; Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2019; Guinier, 2004; J. E. King, 1991; López, 2003).

And although education scholars have described racial literacy in different terms—*critical consciousness* (Apple, 2003; Capper et al., 2006; Radd & Kramer, 2016); *sociopolitical consciousness* (Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014); *critical sociocultural knowledge of race* (K. D. Brown, 2017); *race-consciousness* (Gunzenhauser et al., 2021; Khalifa, 2018)— I use racial literacy because its conceptualization "offers a more dynamic framework for understanding American racism" (Guinier, 2004, p. 114; see also Brooks & Watson, 2019; Douglass Horsford, 2011, 2014). In other words, racial literacy provides a processual view of racism that both accounts for and engages its ability to change meaning and structure over time (Byng, 2013; Chávez-Moreno, 2022; McClendon, 2002).

2. Guinier's (2004) Racial Literacy Conceptualization

Legal scholar and civil rights activist Lani Guinier (2004) argued that racial liberalism as an organizing principle post-*Brown v Board* was fundamentally fragile due to its reliance on oversimplified understandings of racism's social operations. Consequently, Guinier urged for a more robust process of racial sensemaking that revealed both racism's complexity and its dynamism. Calling this methodology—*racial literacy*—Guinier conceptualized what it is, how it works both as a process and a practice, and why it is useful:

> i. it is the capacity to decipher the durable racial grammar that structures racialized hierarchies and frames the narrative of our republic (p. 100)

ii. it is an interactive process in which race functions as a tool of diagnosis, feedback, and assessment...emphasiz[ing] the relationship between race and power (p. 115)
iii. it does not focus exclusively on race...it constantly interrogates the dynamic relationship among race, class, geography, gender, and other explanatory variables (p. 115)
iv. to address the complex ways race adapts its syntax to mask class and code geography (p. 100).

Because racial literacy was conceptualized not only as a capacity, but also as a process and a practice, it is reasonable to understand racial literacy as both an internal capacity and an activity (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Nasir & Hand, 2006). Given that all activity possesses dimensions of historicity whereby "activity systems take shape and get transformed over lengthy periods of time", there is an implicit temporal feature to racial literacy (Engeström, 2009, p. 57; see also Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). Thus, the developmentalist anchor within constructive-developmental theory aligns with Guinier's (2004) full conceptualization of racial literacy as both active process and practice with the capacity to grow and change structurally over time (Chávez-Moreno, 2022; J. Warren, 2014; J. Warren & Sue, 2011).

Given that school leaders' situated racial beliefs impact their responses to racial inequities (Douglass Horsford, 2014; Evans, 2007a, 2007b; Henze et al., 2000; Ryan, 2003), I argue that examining the relationship between time, racial literacy, and school leadership practice will be foundational in clarifying how K-12 school leaders both think about and respond to racism in their school contexts.

3. Conceptual Framework: Developmental Racial Literacy Sensemaking

To examine school leaders' racial beliefs and change over time, I employ a developmental racial literacy sensemaking (DRLS) conceptual framework, leveraging constructive-developmental theory, racial sensemaking, culturally responsive school leadership,

and critical self-reflection (Figure 1). What follows is a brief description of DRLS's component parts.

3.1. Enculturation and Social Constructivism: Racism as Social and Cultural Process

What Farley and colleagues (2019) frame as a "wicked" problem, racism is a complex social process of racialized unfairness and racialized relational violence (Byng, 2013). For clarity, I define racism as the use of the social category of race as an organizing principle that governs opportunity, resource allocation, social accommodation, and personhood for dominant group advantage and status quo preservation (Leonardo, 2013; McClendon, 2002). As both social process (Fluerh-Lobban, 2019) and cultural practice (Brooks & Watson, 2019; Nasir & Hand, 2006), racism facilitates relational fragmentation by both rationalizing and mechanizing racialized inequity in different discursive forms, and at different sociocultural levels (Byng, 2013; Hall, 1997; Leonardo, 2013); including within schools (Anderson, 1988; Rooks, 2020).

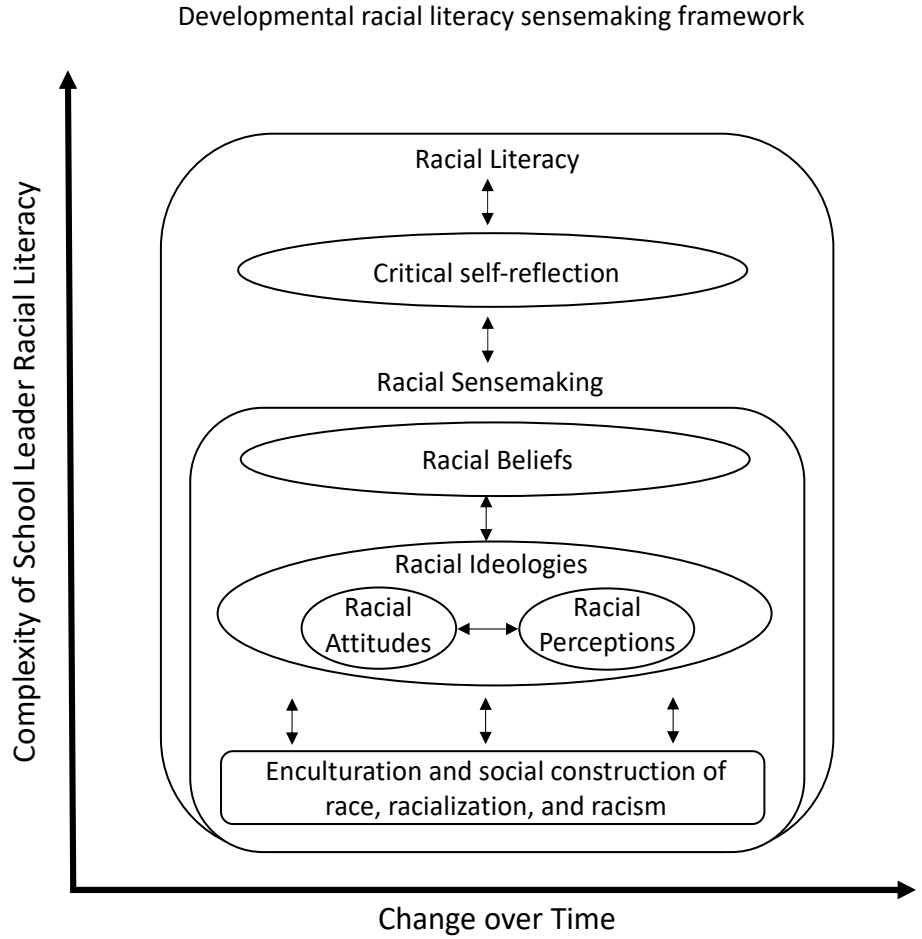
3.2. The Relationship between Racial Sensemaking, Racial Beliefs, Racial Attitudes, Racial Perceptions, and Racial Ideologies

Sensemaking is an ongoing process to reconcile issues, events or situations of ambiguity (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2017; Park, 2010). Thinking about sensemaking in an educational context, it can be described as "an active process of constructing meaning from present stimuli, mediated by prior knowledge, experiences, beliefs and values that is embedded in the social context within which people work" (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2017, p. 684). Encompassing racial attitudes, perceptions, and ideologies (Evans, 2007a; 2007b; Turner, 2015), racial sensemaking is an ongoing sociocultural process to make sense of racial beliefs.

Racial beliefs. Racial beliefs can be defined as propositions related to race and racism that are endorsed and accepted to be true (Quinn & Stewart, 2019). Because beliefs are best

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework: Developmental Racial Literacy Sensemaking (DRLS)



understood as part of belief systems (Pajares, 1992), racial beliefs can be broken into three subconstructs: racial attitudes, racial perceptions, and racial ideologies. I will briefly describe each one.

Racial attitudes. The stances (chosen positions in relation to claims about race and racism); stereotypes (generalized assertions and knowledge about racialized groups that are known, but not always endorsed), and affective orientations (feelings of closeness to or distance from social groups) that people hold toward different racialized groups (Bobo et al., 2012; Quinn & Stewart, 2019). In their study of White teachers' racial attitudes, Quinn & Stewart (2019), citing Bobo, et al. (2012), break down racial attitudinal beliefs into three categories: (1) beliefs on how race relations and speech should be governed; (2) beliefs about how racial inequalities can be explained; (3) beliefs about policies aimed at equalizing opportunities across racial lines.

Racial perceptions. Attributive and contextual interpretations of racial phenomena; episodic/visual element of beliefs (Boucher, 2018; DeMatthews et al., 2017; Torre & Murphy, 2015; Pajares, 1992).

Racial ideologies. Racial worldviews that encompass racial attitudes and perceptions. They are the set of ideas, practices, and representations that adapt, justify, and advance views on racialized hierarchies and racial inequalities; (Hall, 1985; Leonardo, 2005; 2009; Neville et al., 2005).

3.3. Culturally Responsive School Leadership, Critical Self-Reflection, Racial Literacy, and Developmentalism

As a complex social process that uses the social category of race to oppress racialized groups for dominant group advantage (Byng, 2013; Leonardo, 2013; McClendon, 2002), racism frustrates the goals of deep learning that are central to culturally responsive-sustaining education

(Banks, 2002; Howard, 2010; Khalifa, 2018; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Sleeter, 2012). To redress the deleterious impacts of racism on student learning and marginalized communities (Brooks & Watson, 2019; Carter et al., 2017; Green, 2017a, 2017b; Ladson-Billings, 2006), school leaders have been encouraged to critically self-reflect about how racism operates in schools, their personal lives, and society as part of their leadership practice (Irby et al., 2019; Khalifa, 2018; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011). For example, within the paradigm of culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL), one of its central tenets asserts that school leaders must critically self-reflect upon their leadership behaviors to positively impact student learning (Khalifa et al., 2016; Khalifa, 2018). Khalifa (2018) expounded on the skills that school leaders need to develop to animate critical self-reflection for effective CRSL implementation. These skills include:

- the ability to identify and understand the oppressive contexts that students and their communities face;
- the willingness and humility to identify and vocalize one's own personal background and privilege, which allows leaders to see how they are directly involved or complicit in oppressive contexts; and
- the courage to push colleagues and staff to critically self-reflect upon their personal and professional role in oppression and anti-oppressive works, and to eventually develop responsive school structures (p. 61)

Within a CRSL framework, school leaders who critically self-reflect about racism both deconstruct and interrogate their racial beliefs – that is, their racial attitudes, perceptions, and ideologies (Bobo et al., 2012; Quinn & Stewart, 2019; Neville et al., 2005). As school leaders engage in making sense of racism through the examination of their core racial beliefs, they expand their perspectives of how racism operates at micro, meso, and macro levels of society (e.g., individual, interpersonal, local contextual, institutional, societal; see Brooks & Watson, 2019).

From the standpoint of effective CRSL implementation, school leaders' examination of their racial beliefs connotes two assumptions: (1) that the process of examining racial beliefs will

catalyze the necessary epistemological shifts that render school leaders' perspectives of social reality more elastic, and thus more accommodating of ambiguity and complexity – two significant features of racism (Irby et al., 2019; Irby & Clark, 2018; Solomon, 2002; Theoharis, 2008); (2) that these more accommodative perspectives will render racism's social operations legible to school leaders in ways that inform leadership behaviors and organizational routines that counter racism's negative impacts on both student learning and culturally responsive-sustaining education efforts (Davis et al., 2022; Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2019, 2021; Irby, 2021; Mahfouz & Anthony-Stevens, 2020; Lash & Sanchez, 2022; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011).

This examination of racial beliefs to catalyze more complex understandings of racism animates racial literacy: a form of racial sensemaking where school leaders critically self-reflect about their racial beliefs (Douglass Horsford, 2010; Evans, 2007a, 2007b; Irby et al., 2019; Guinier, 2004; Turner, 2015; Radd & Grosland, 2018). Additionally, constructive-developmental theory reminds us that how we reflect about our social reality changes and grows more complex over time (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017, 2019; Kegan & Lahey, 2010), therefore it is reasonable to infer that school leaders' racial literacies are also developmental: changing and growing more complex over time (Chávez-Moreno, 2022).

CHAPTER III | LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Racial Literacy in Education Research

When Guinier (2004) theorized racial literacy, she was explicit about its constitutive parts: both as an internal sociocognitive capacity *and* an applied practice. And although Guinier specified that race needed to be leveraged as a tool of "diagnosis, feedback and assessment" in evaluating and judging social phenomena, it is less clear how to fully operationalize racial literacy across varying research domains and areas of practice (Laughter et al., 2021; Oto et al., 2022).

Looking specifically at how racial literacy has been taken up in education research, Laughter and colleagues (2021) conducted an extensive literature review. They found that empirically racial literacy scholarship often referred to an instructional process geared at developing teachers' and students' critical consciousnesss about race and racism in service of disrupting "the individual, institutional, and societal structures of racism" (p. 2). Situated primarily in teacher education (L. J. King, 2016; Kohli et al., 2018; Rogers & Mosley, 2006, 2008; Sealey-Ruiz, 2011; Souto-Manning, 2009) and curriculum and instruction (Epstein & Gist, 2015; Hollingworth, 2009; Skerrett, 2011; Vetter & Hungerford-Kressor, 2014; Winans, 2010), this robust corpus of scholarship largely concentrated on the learning processes necessary to grow more elastic understandings of racism to both discern its complexity and better analyze its social operations (Epstein & Gist, 2015; Nash et al., 2018; Philip et al., 2016). And although there is a strong research base investigating the relationship between racial literacy and instructional practice (Skerrett, 2011), Laughter and colleagues (2021) underscored how racial literacy research has rarely been investigated in relation to school leadership; despite notable exceptions (Douglass Horsford, 2010; 2014).

2. Racial Literacy in School Leadership Research

Douglass Horsford (2014) responded to the lack of focus on school leaders by conceptualizing a racial literacy implementation framework for school leadership. Organizing the framework as a four-stage progression that school leaders can leverage in their racial equity efforts, Douglass Horsford described its elements as:

1. *racial literacy*: understanding how race and racism work in U.S. society and schools;
2. *racial realism*: accepting the cultural reality that race is used as an organizing principle in a racialized society to govern resource distribution, access to opportunity, and determine personhood;
3. *racial reconstruction*: updating our interpretations of race and racism to anchor more comprehensive racial meanings; and
4. *racial reconciliation*: acknowledging the profound relational damage that racism produces to move toward making amends in service of durable forms of shared belonging.

Although Douglass Horsford (2014) conceptually operationalized racial literacy for school leadership practice, there are no studies from my review of the literature that have leveraged her specific framework to investigate empirically how racial literacy is implemented in a school leadership context. However, this does not suggest that a focus on the link between race-consciousness and school leadership is somehow absent from educational leadership research scholarship; such an inference would be verifiably false.

It is important to note that there has been a long tradition of educational leadership scholars offering robust theoretical and empirical research that outlined how school leaders' understandings of racism can disrupt racially inequitable learning contexts—particularly those with high concentrations of African-American students (Alston, 2012; Bass, 2019; Dantley, 2005; Dillard, 1995; Larson & Murtadha, 2005; Lomotey, 1993; Tillman, 2004).

Generally situated within a framework of critical theory (Apple, 2003; Freire, 2005; Freire & Macedo, 1995; Giroux, 1992; hooks, 1994), and often overlapping with insights from

educational anthropologists (Artiles, 2011; Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003; Ladson-Billings, 1995, 2014; Nasir & Hand, 2006) and critical multicultural education scholars (Banks & Banks, 1995; Gay, 2010; Howard, 2010; Nieto, 1992; Santamaría, 2014; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995), much of this foundational work was chiefly concerned with illustrating how the quality of school leaders' race-consciousness informed leadership actions that were responsive to minoritized students' intellectual and social-emotional learning (Khalifa et al., 2016; Khalifa, 2018; Theoharis, 2008; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011).

Extending this last point further, anti-racism, social justice, and critical educational leadership scholars have underscored how the quality of school leaders' consciousness about racism impacts their leadership actions (Gunzenhauzer et al., 2021; Ryan, 2003; Swanson & Welton, 2019). In these studies, however, racial literacy – generally referred to as race-consciousness rather than as a form of racial sensemaking— is framed from a possessive lens; not from a developmental lens. That is, racial literacy is described as something that school leaders already possessed and leveraged to guide their leadership actions (Chávez-Moreno, 2022; Dillard, 1995).

Furthermore, the studies that focused on developing future school leaders' racial sociocultural knowledge at the leadership preparation level were anchored in critical theory, critical race theory, and critical race pedagogy (Furman, 2012; Gooden, 2012; Jennings & Lynn, 2005); but lacked any rooting in constructive-developmental theory (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2019). What this means is that, although leadership programs rightfully tether the reflection on one's racialized experience to the analysis of differential racialized experiences in the U.S. to catalyze equitable leadership actions, educational leadership preparation programs largely ignore the developmental diversity of their cohorts. In other words, they ignore adults'

distinct sensemaking systems that make sense of their social reality, and thus inform their understanding of race and racism (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017, 2019).

Adding a developmental approach to racial literacy can deepen our understanding of how school leaders' racial beliefs grow more complex and change over time.

In the next section, I will describe culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) and how racial literacy shows up within critical self-reflection – one of CRSL's central tenets.

3. Racial Literacy & Culturally Responsive School Leadership

Culturally responsive school leadership asserts that school leaders must animate their leadership practices multidimensionally in order to effectively impact student learning (Khalifa, 2018). Informed by the rich research traditions of critical pedagogy (Apple, 2003; Ball, 2003; Freire, 2005; Giroux, 1992), critical multicultural education (Gay, 2000; McGee Banks & Banks, 1995; Nieto, 1992; Santamaría, 2014; Sleeter & McLaren, 1995) and educational anthropology (Artiles, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2014; Nasir & Hand, 2006), Khalifa, Gooden and Davis (2016) synthesized what they found to be the most effective practices that catalyze deep student learning and achievement—particularly for historically and currently minoritized student groups. The authors then applied those insights to school leadership. Calling this leadership framework—*culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL)*—four tenets operationalize its conceptualization: for school leaders to be effective, they must (1) develop culturally responsive teachers; (2) promote culturally responsive school climates; (3) serve as bridges that connect school-based communities to their place-based communities by engaging students, parents, and Indigenous contexts; and (4) critically self-reflect on leadership practices and behaviors.

Given that this study's focus is on how school leaders reflect about racism, I will use the next sub-section to illustrate the relationship between racial literacy and school leader critical self-reflection.

3.1. Racial Literacy & Critical Self-Reflection

As a feature of critical consciousness, critical reflection requires an interrogation of power asymmetries within social reality whereby one examines the underlying assumptions that drive processes that create power asymmetries and resource maldistribution in society (Freire & Macedo, 1995; Watts et al., 2011). Critical self-reflection by extension involves a sensemaking process whereby people interrogate foundational tensions between their own core belief systems and the contradictions of social reality (Mezirow, 1998). Khalifa (2018) expounded on the skills that school leaders need to develop to animate critical self-reflection for effective CRSL implementation. These skills include:

- The ability to identify and understand the oppressive contexts that students and their communities face;
- The willingness and humility to identify and vocalize one's own personal background and privilege, which allows leaders to see how they are directly involved or complicit in oppressive contexts; and
- The courage to push colleagues and staff to critically self-reflect upon their personal and professional role in oppression and anti-oppressive works, and to eventually develop responsive school structures (p. 61)

Within a CRSL framework, school leaders who critically self-reflect about racism both deconstruct and interrogate their racial beliefs – that is, their racial attitudes, perceptions, and ideologies (Bobo et al., 2012; Quinn & Stewart, 2019; Neville et al., 2005). As school leaders engage in making sense of racism through the examination of their core racial beliefs, they expand their perspectives on how racism operates at micro, meso, and macro levels of society (e.g., individual, interpersonal, local/contextual, institutional, societal; see Brooks & Watson, 2019).

From the standpoint of effective CRSL implementation, school leaders' examination of their racial beliefs connotes two assumptions: (1) that the process of examining racial beliefs will catalyze the necessary epistemological shifts that render school leaders' perspectives of social reality more elastic, and thus more accommodating of ambiguity and complexity – two features of racism (Irby et al., 2019; Irby & Clark, 2018; Solomon, 2002; Theoharis, 2008); (2) that these more accommodative perspectives will render racism's social operations legible to school leaders in ways that inform leadership behaviors and organizational routines that counter racism's negative impacts on student learning and culturally responsive-sustaining education (Davis et al., 2022; Flores & Gunzenhauser, 2019, 2021; Irby, 2021; Mahfouz & Anthony-Stevens, 2020; Lash & Sanchez, 2022; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011).

This examination of racial beliefs to catalyze more complex understandings of racism animates racial literacy: a form of racial sensemaking where school leaders critically self-reflect about their racial beliefs (Douglass Horsford, 2010; Evans, 2007; Irby et al., 2019; Guinier, 2004; Turner, 2015; Radd & Grosland, 2018).

In practice, critical self-reflection among school leaders can be likened to the responses of school leaders deemed *proactive agents* in Henze and colleagues' (2000) study. A 5-year qualitative study of racial-ethnic conflict among students in primarily urban schools, Henze et al. (2000) summarized the 11 proactive responses that these critically self-reflective school leaders leveraged to combat racial-ethnic conflict at their schools. They included, but were not limited to:

- Consistent standards of behavior and strict, fair disciplinary consequences are expected and applied across all diverse groups of students;
- Appropriate student behavior is seen as shared responsibility with parents;
- The school uses disaggregated data to understand achievement and disciplinary patterns and to inform program development and school change;
- Curriculum regularly addresses interethnic relations topics;

- Special events focus on race/ethnic relations;
- Mentoring and tutoring seek to raise achievement of underachieving students;
- Organizational structures (houses, families, pods, academies) break down school size and lead to greater sense of community, more personalization;
- Detracking and heteregeneous grouping of students provides for contact across ethnic groups;
- School staff come from ethnic/cultural backgrounds that mirror the student population;
- School-wide professional development addresses interethnic relations;
- The school uses a variety of means to involve parents (p. 204)

These school leaders' proactive responses operationalized Guinier's (2004) conceptualization of racial literacy whereby "race functions as a tool of diagnosis, feedback, and assessment...emphasizes the relationship between race and power...[and] reads race in its psychological, interpersonal, and structural dimensions" (p. 115). However, critical self-reflection among school leaders is a variable process in and of itself, leading to different school leadership actions (McMahon, 2007; Pollock & Briscoe, 2019; Ryan, 2003).

Situated in the Canadian context and building on the strong research base linking social cognition to leadership practice (Spillane et al., 2002), Pollock & Briscoe (2019) investigated school principals' perceptions of student difference and how those perceptions influenced their practice. Having conducted 59 semi-structured interviews with Ontario-based school principals, the authors found that school leaders interpreted ideas of social diversity and student difference in different ways, and that those different understandings influenced their leadership responses. The authors asserted that:

> a leader's conceptualization of difference is crucial to both discerning problems (i.e. stereotypes and judgments) and devising solutions. What principals eventually do to promote equity and inclusion in their schools will fundamentally be tied to the ways in which they understand difference within student populations. (p. 519)

Also situated in the Canadian context and as part of a larger study exploring school administrators' perceptions of ethnocultural diversity, Ryan (2003) examined how school leaders

perceive racism in two phases. During the first phase of the study, the author and a research assistant conducted open-ended interviews with 35 principals; specifically asking them to indicate the form and frequency of racism in their schools on a five-point likert scale where a 1 signaled no racism and a 5 meant pervasive racism.

The school leaders were asked to share their thoughts vis à vis ten categories: (1) stereotyping by students, (2) and educators; (3) harassment of students, (4) and educators; (5) violence; (6) graffiti; (7) name-calling; (8) exclusion; (9) fairness; (10) classroom portrayals.

At the next phase of the study, the author and his research team developed and administered a survey tailored to probe school leaders' perceptions of racism at their school. After recruiting 22 district leaders, Ryan (2003) received survey responses from 104 school leaders leading a range of school contexts. After analyzing the open-ended principal interviews coupled with survey data, the author offered two major findings from this rich data set.

First, school leaders' racial perceptions largely diverged from those of students and parents of color – particularly Black students. When minoritzed students asserted that non-Black educators were engaging in racially motivated harassment, school leaders often responded that student race was not a factor in their decision-making. Most school leaders not only asserted that race was not a factor but also held the position that it was student behavior that ultimately led to students' predicaments. This was true according to school leaders because students were "being treated the same way as everybody else" at their schools. The following quote from one principal in the study encapsulates this race-obscuring perception:

> It has nothing to do with what colour you are. It has to do with your behaviour and you're being treated the same way as everybody else here. We have a code of behaviour and we have expectations. We expect people to live by it and live up to it. (p. 154)

Second, when school leaders acknowledged the presence of racism in their schools, they held oversimplified and underdeveloped understandings of what constitutes racism. Specifically, school leaders, who recognized racism in the form of stereotyping, name-calling, or graffiti (racist hate symbols), "attributed the actions to aberrant individuals" (p. 153). Because school leaders rationalized racism in their schools primarily as interpersonal failures on the part of ignorant individuals, school leaders' responses to racism largely reflected that "they generally view it as form of individual prejudice...rather than to the system in which these actions occurred" (p. 159-161). One example was one school leader sharing that she in fact noticed teacher behavior that she interpreted as racist where "a few teachers make some fairly derogatory remarks about East Indian students". Furthermore, the school leader went on to describe one particular teacher's behavior:

> [The teacher would] do things like call down to the office...'there's a number of East Indian students in the hall'. I mean she would call us if 'There's a number of Black students bugging my kids. There's a number of Italian people in the hall'...it sounds ludicrous, but she didn't mind saying that in front of her whole class, over the PA. And she mentioned today this little girl came back to class and 'Oh she was wearing all these robes', she said, and 'Oh god, she smells' (p. 153).

Ryan (2003) underscored that while this school leader believed that "this particular teacher possessed racist attitudes that led her to say and do things that were harmful to individuals and groups"; after probing further, the school leader shared few details "about how she deals with the actions of this teacher or others like her" (p. 153). This suggests that school leaders both interpret racial phenomena that they recognize as racism, and hold racial beliefs that play a role in their response to racism in their schools. Consequently, any critical self-reflection endeavor will involve an examination of racial beliefs (Gooden et al., 2018; Khalifa, 2018; Sealey-Ruiz, 2021; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011).

In their study of the actions of six White principals committed to redressing racial inequities in schools, Theoharis and Haddix (2011) found that the participating school leaders underscored the inextricable links between critical self-reflection, racial literacy, and effective leadership practice when they:

> All shared that they felt that this personal emotional and intellectual work on their own consciousness was a fundamental step they needed to have done before they could effectively lead schools to be more equitable and just, which to them necessarily included dealing purposefully and openly about issues of race (p. 1340).

This is where developmental approaches to racial literacy anchored in constructive-developmental theory hold promise given its focus on the quality of our reflective practice when presented with what adult learning theorist Jack Mezirow (2009) described as "a disorienting dilemma" (e.g., racism in schools) (p. 94). Consequently, developmentalist perspectives can contribute to two areas that has received little examination in educational leadership scholarship thus far: the racial beliefs of culturally responsive school leaders; and how those racial beliefs grow more complex and change over time.

4. Research Questions

Given that CRSL (Khalifa, 2018) urges school leaders to view educational inequities multidimensionally in order to respond to them practically, an exploration into how school leaders understand racism is warranted. Furthermore, school leaders' racial literacies have been emphasized as forms of racial sensemaking that are integral to effective CRSL implementation (Khalifa et al., 2016; Khalifa, 2018).

Yet, two limitations present themselves within this body of scholarship. First, there is little empirical research investigating how racial beliefs grow more complex and change over time (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2019; see also Bridwell, 2013).

Second, as a form of racial sensemaking coupled with critical self-reflection, racial literacy is often framed as an imperative (i.e., something that leaders *must* possess in order to lead effectively and equitably) rather than as a developmental process (i.e., a socio-cognitive process that grows and changes over time; Chávez-Moreno, 2022).

An inquiry that examines culturally responsive school leaders' racial literacies both structurally *and* developmentally can proffer more robust insights about the content of their racial beliefs and its relationship to their leadership practice over time.

To this end, the following questions will guide my inquiry:

1. What are the racial beliefs of school leaders implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education?
2. In what ways do culturally responsive school leaders' racial beliefs change over time?

CHAPTER IV | METHODOLOGY

1. Researcher Positionality

Given the relational dynamics and power asymmetries inherent to conducting any research endeavor (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Schiller, 2016), it is important for me to share aspects of my own social location in service of approximating how I show up both in the world and my research (Milner, 2007). Informed by my own ethnic-racial and cultural identity, I approach my research with an understanding that both identity and learning are multiplicative (Crenshaw, 1991; Matsuda, 1989; Wing, 2003). Shaped by growing up in urban and suburban New York City and as the son of immigrant Haitian parents, my developmental understandings of place, race-ethnicity, class, culture, and language have been highly conjunctive and elastic from a very young age. Consequently, I am typically drawn to questions involving the relationship between people's sociocultural locations and how we "read" the world (Freire & Macedo, 1995; Luke, 2012). Informed by my professional experience, I problematize any discourse that seeks to explicate social inequities within economically constrained Black and Brown communities as uniformly endemic to the people who live there. As a former public school middle school teacher and non-profit education practitioner—who has worked for several years in mostly working-class Black and Brown communities— I came to understand that the dynamics animating processes of social unfairness and violence (e.g., structural racism) were deeply complex, shifting, and contradictory (Byng, 2013; Holst, 2020). This has motivated a strong commitment to exploring questions that seek to reveal racism's social complexity and dynamism in service of redressing its negative impacts to deep learning and relational integrity (Guinier, 2004; hooks, 1994; McGhee, 2021; Patel, 2014).

2. Research Design & Research Questions

Because my inquiry is fundamentally concerned with how school leaders make sense of their social reality, my research methodology and methods were primarily qualitative (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Using a dynamic narrative inquiry methodology (Daiute, 2014), I conducted a sequential (three-phase) qualitatively driven mixed methods dissertation study (DeCuir-Gunby & Walker-Debose, 2013; Hesse-Biber, 2010; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

During *Phase 1*, a convenience sample of 54 school leaders completed an online survey that gave insights into their culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) practices, their racial beliefs and their interpretations of racial phenomena. During *Phase 2*, at the close of the online survey, four principals were invited and agreed to participate in semi-structured 1-on-1 interviews to gain deeper understanding of their racial beliefs, how they make sense of racism, and how they drive culturally responsive-sustaining education at their schools. A total of 11 principal interviews were conducted with the four principals to gain insights into their racialized lived experiences, their racial learning, and their implementation of CRSL practices. During *Phase 3*, I asked the four principals if I could interview their school leadership team (SLT) members. Interviews with SLT members were motivated due to the distributed nature of school leadership (Harris & Spillane, 2008; Spillane et al., 2015), and to add texture to how culturally responsive-sustaining education shows (or does not show) up at their schools. Three focus group interviews were conducted with two of the four principals' SLTs. In total, this study draws on 14 interviews (11 principal-facing and 3 SLT-facing; more details in upcoming sections).

Although school leaders' responses to the online Qualtrics survey (more details to follow in Data Collection subsection) gave insights into their racial beliefs and interpretation of racial phenomena, they could not evince any reliable insights into school leaders' sensemaking systems

without conducting the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) with each survey respondent. This was one limitation in the study's design. Because I could only conduct the SOI with a smaller subset of principals within the sample, I leveraged the SOI less as a way to make inferences about how their specific sensemaking system (e.g, *Stage 4 – Self-Authoring* or *Stage 5 – Self-Transforming*) informs their leadership practice, but rather to get deeper insights into how selected school leaders make sense of the world; and to add texture to understanding the ways in which their racial beliefs change over time.

My research questions are as follows:

1. What are the racial beliefs of school leaders implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education?
2. In what ways do culturally responsive school leaders' racial beliefs change over time?

3. Methods

3.1. Subject-Object Interview (SOI)

The Subject-Object Interview (SOI) is a 60-90 minute interview protocol to determine an adult's developmental sensemaking system – that is, the qualitatively distinct way in which they make sense of the social world. In other words, the goal of the SOI is to learn how school leaders think about things; how they make sense of their own lived experience (see Appendix A).

Organized into two parts, Part One lasts roughly 15-20 minutes, and Part Two roughly 60 minutes. During Part One, school leaders are presented with ten (3" x 7") index cards and a pencil. Each card has a title printed on it as follows:

1. Angry
2. Anxious, nervous
3. Success
4. Strong strand, conviction

5. Sad
6. Torn
7. Moved, touched
8. Lost something
9. Change
10. Important to me

The purpose of the cards is to help school leaders jot things down that they might want to discuss during the SOI interview. We spend the first 15-20 minutes with the cards; and then we discuss together for an hour (60 minutes) or so about the content of what they jotted down on the cards they choose to discuss. For each index card, there is a corresponding prompt that I read to the school leader to generate thoughts. As an example, the prompt for *Angry* is:

- If you were to think over the last several weeks, even the last couple of months, and you had to think about times you felt really angry about something, or times you really mad or felt a sense of outrage or violation, are there 2 or 3 things that come to mind? Take a minute to think about it, if you like, and just jot down on the card whatever you need to remind you of what they were (if nothing comes to mind, you can skip it and move on the next card) need to remind you of what they were (if nothing comes to mind, you can skip it and move on the next card)

The SOI is relevant to this study because its qualitative interview process will provide deeper insights into who these school leaders are as people: providing insights into their values, core beliefs, and motivations; adding more texture to this study's focus on their racial beliefs and how they change over time (see Table 1).

3.2. Instrument – Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS)

I adapted the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) survey to include 13 items, rather than the standard 20 items, to reduce the time school leaders spent completing the online survey (see Appendix B for my rationale around the questions I removed).

Table 1

Summary of Data Sources and Their Purposes in Responding to Revised Research Questions

Data Source	Previous Research Questions	Revised Research Questions	Purpose
Online Qualtrics survey *(n= 54)*	*RQ1(a). What racial meanings are held by school leaders implementing culturally responsive education?* *RQ1(b). At what developmental meaning-making systems/orders of consciousness are these school leaders operating?*	*RQ1. What are the racial beliefs of school leaders implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education?*	• To both measure the level of racial awareness of school principals implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education; and understand their racial beliefs.
Interviews with four school leaders based on preliminary survey analysis *(n =11)*	*RQ1(b). At what developmental meaning-making systems/orders of consciousness are these school leaders operating?* *RQ2. What is the relationship between their racial meanings and their developmental racial literacies?* *RQ3. In what ways do their developmental racial literacies catalyze or constrain the organizational implementation of culturally responsive school leadership practices?*	*RQ1. What are the racial beliefs of school leaders implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education?* *RQ2. In what ways do culturally responsive school leaders' racial beliefs change over time?*	• To gain deeper understanding as to how selected school leaders make sense of their social reality overall, who they are as people and leaders, what their racial beliefs are, and how those change over time.
*Focus group interviews with school leadership team (SLT) members (n = 3)	*RQ3. In what ways do their developmental racial literacies catalyze or constrain the organizational implementation of culturally responsive school leadership practices?*	*RQ1. What are the racial beliefs of school leaders implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education?* *RQ2. In what ways do culturally responsive school leaders' racial beliefs change over time?*	• To gain deeper understanding as to who selected school leaders are as people and leaders according to their colleagues; how culturally responsive-sustaining education and their racial beliefs show (or do not show) up at their school.

Note: *: Due to scheduling conflicts, focus group interviews were conducted with two of the four principals. Additionally, given the size of their leadership team, one of the focus group interviews was a 1-on-1 interview with the principal's dean of students. Put together, two focus group interviews were conducted with one principal's SLT, and one 1-on-1 interview was conducted with one principal's dean, being counted as a focus group interview, for a total of three (n = 3).

To ensure that the survey items measure what they purport to measure, i.e., racial colorblindness[3], the CoBRAS has undergone extensive validation and reliability testing in previous research (see Neville et al., 2000). Anchored in theories of colorblind racial ideology (Frankenberg, 1993; Neville et al., 2013), the CoBRAS measures overall racial colorblindness through three subscales: *Denial of White Racial Privilege*, *Denial of Institutional Discrimination*, and *Denial of Blatant Racial Issues*, which are central components of colorblind racial attitudes.

It is important to note that the CoBRAS score –overall mean score range, 13 to 78 – measures the extent to which school leaders deny structural racism. Results from prior studies – mostly focused on undergraduate student populations and medical personnel – suggest that lower mean scores signal a lower denial of structural racism, thus *higher racial awareness*; higher mean scores signal a higher denial of structural racism, thus *lower racial awareness* (Ludwig & Suedbeck, 2023; Neville et al., 2000; Worthington et al., 2008). Survey items gauging racial attitudes as a function of denial of structural racism fall into three validated subscale categories:

1) *Denial of White Racial Privilege***,** mean score range 3 to 18;

2) *Denial of Institutional Discrimination*, mean score range 5 to 30;

3) *Denial of Blatant Racial Issues*, mean score range 5 to 30.

Of the 13 survey items, three are associated with *White Racial Privilege:*

- Q1: Race plays a major role in the type of social services that people receive in the U.S. (such as type of health care or day care).
- Q4: Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.
- Q13: Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.

[3] Annamma and colleagues (2017) push us to think beyond ableist discourses that frame the denial of structural racism as a lack of seeing/sight (i.e., blindness) toward more critical-material ones that clarify the evasive nature anchored in denying racism's structural operations, and how that set of actions relates to status quo preservation. Because colorblind is in the acronym, I chose not to substitute colorblind with color-evasive or race-evasive at all times, and chose to employ racial colorblindness at times to be consistent and avoid confusion for the reader.

Five with *Institutional Discrimination:*

- Q2: It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.
- Q3: Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.
- Q8: Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and adopt the values of the U.S.
- Q9: English should be the only official language in the U.S.
- Q11: Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.

Five with *Blatant Racial Issues*.

- Q5: Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.
- Q6: Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.
- Q7: It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.
- Q10: It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.
- Q12: Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.

Factor analyses (exploratory and confirmatory) have consistently supported the three-factor structure of the scale, with factor loadings exceeding .40, indicating that each item strongly relates to the underlying construct (Neville et al., 2000). I will briefly explain each subscale category that make up the overall CoBRAS score.

Denial of White Racial Privilege. What follows is an example of a survey item that measures the extent to which a school leader is aware of racial privilege: *"Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison"*. Agreement with that statement signals *high awareness* (low denial) of White racial privilege – that is, it evinces that the school leader holds a position that recognizes a relationship between race and incarceration in ways that disadvantage Black and Brown people, and do not disadvantage White people. Inversely, disagreement with that statement signals *lower awareness* of White racial privilege (high denial) where disagreement suggests that the school leader holds a position that belies the ways in which race,

class, and geography interact to maintain a carceral state that disenfranchises Black and Brown people, and not White people (see Gilmore, 2007).

Denial of Institutional Discrimination. What follows is an example of a survey item that measures the extent to which a school leader is aware of institutional discrimination: *"Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality"*. Agreement with this statement signals *high awareness* (low denial) of institutional discrimination – that is, it evinces that the school leader holds a position that recognizes that U.S. institutional policies have maintained resource maldistribution in ways that negatively impact Black and Brown people materially (e.g., racist housing policies, see Rothstein, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to enact institutional policies that proactively redress those harmful effects. Inversely, disagreement with this statement suggests *lower awareness* (high denial) of institutional discrimination whereby the school leader holds a position that disengages from a structural and historical analysis of racism.

Denial of Blatant Racial Issues. What follows is an example of a survey item that measures the extent to which a school leader is aware of blatant racial issues: "*Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today*". Agreement with this statement signals *lower awareness* (high denial) of blatant racial issues – that is, it evinces that the school leader holds a position that deems racism as an antiquated phenomenon with minimal significance in society today. Inversely, disagreement with this statement suggests *high awareness* (low denial) of blatant racial issues whereby the school leader holds a position that recognizes racism as an ongoing sociocultural process that operates relationally at multiple societal levels to effectuate present-day harms to Black and Brown people (see Byng, 2013; Haney López, 1995; Leonardo, 2013).

3.3. Photo-Elicitation Methods Used to Prompt Deeper Reflection about Racism

Within the online Qualtrics survey, I embedded three photo images meant to prompt deeper reflection about racism. I will briefly describe each photo image and how I conceptualized their use to gain insights into school leaders' racial sensemaking.

Image 1 (Equality, Equity, Reality) is a popular image where different representations of "equality", "equity", and "reality" are juxtaposed to highlight resource maldistribution and power asymmetries between social groups (Interaction Institute for Social Change, 2016*;* Figure C1, see Appendix C).

Image 2 is an image of a TIME magazine cover with Black athlete and activist Colin Kaepernick kneeling during the national anthem (Zagaris, 2016; Figure C2, see Appendix C).

Image 3 is an image of the January 6th insurrection/attack on the U.S. Capitol (Corum, 2021; Figure C3, see Appendix C).

Because *Images 2 and 3* can in many ways represent, symbolically, "the narrative of our republic", they both serve to illuminate the ways in which school leaders understand the relationship between racism and national identity (Banks, 2008). *Images 2 and 3* speak to Guinier's (2004) emphasis that racial literacy is needed to "decipher the durable racial grammar that structures racialized hierarchies and frames the narrative of our republic" (p. 100).

3.4. Data Collection

Data collection was broken up into three phases. During *Phase 1*, after receiving MSU IRB approval in April 2023, I sent invitation letters and informational flyers via email to professional education networks, community-based organizations, and personal contacts that work closely with principals in New York State. Email invitations and informational flyers included a link to an online Qualtrics survey consisting of questions focused on: a) informed

consent; b) participant background information; c) school leadership experience; d) culturally responsive school leadership practices; e) racial beliefs (Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale); f) racial perceptions (photo-elicitation). Furthermore, participants were informed of my identity as the lead investigator; that the survey can take between 15 to 45 minutes to complete; that participation was anonymous and confidential; and that voluntary informed consent was understood once the survey was completed and submitted. Also, to expand the reach of participants who could complete the online survey, I posted informational flyers with the survey link to social media sites, specifically Facebook and LinkedIn.

In addition, I downloaded the public directory for all school principals as an excel file. The total number of unique, active school principals was 4,411. Next, I removed all school principals that worked in New York City districts. This was necessary because, after receiving MSU IRB approval, NYC Department of Education stated that it required an additional and separate IRB process that proved too long to complete. Thus, I was not able to include school principals working in NYC public schools in this study.

However, school principals from all other districts throughout New York State were approved and eligible to participate. After removing NYC school principals from the public directory, the total number of school principals was reduced to 2,819. An additional two principals with no contact information were removed, leaving a total universe of 2,817 school principals. Next, I created a column and assigned a random number to each school principal. I did this using the excel RAND function, which generates a unique random number between 0 and 1. Once all unique random numbers were generated for all 2,817 school principals, I sorted the column from smallest to largest. From there, this set of school principals became the universe of school principals I invited to participate in the study and complete the online survey.

Incentives were offered in the form of a $25 Amazon gift card to school leaders who completed the survey. The only criteria to participate was that: 1) they were a principal leading a school in New York State at the time of the study; 2) they implemented leadership actions to respond to vulnerable student populations at their schools; 3) they were willing to answer questions that prompted reflection about racism.

After sending out invitation emails and receiving responses over a 4-month period (April-July 2023), a convenience sample of 54 school principals completed the online Qualtrics survey (*N = 54*; see Table 2 for sample details and demographics).

Sample Details and Demographics. The median age of the sample was 48 years old. 23 principals identified as women and 31 identified as men. 46 out of 54 principals (roughly 85%) identified as White. Five principals identified as Black/African American. One principal identified as Black and Latino, and one principal identified as White and Latina. One principal identified as Asian.

23 participants had 1–4-year tenures leading their current schools (~43%); 31 had 5-10+ year tenures leading their current schools (~57%). In terms of total years of experience in school leadership, seven participants had less than five years total experience in school leadership (~13%); 20 had 5-9 years (~37%); and 27 had 10 or more years total experience in school leadership (~50%).

During *Phase 2*, I sought to identify a subset of survey respondents to invite to participate in 1-on-1 interviews to determine how they lead, how they make sense of the world, and how they think about racism. After doing some initial coding of participants' survey responses, I noticed some variation in the range of racial beliefs and perceptions, particularly in their interpretations of photo images meant to prompt deeper reflection about racism. Similar to Phase

Table 2

Demographics of online survey respondents

Age	n (%)
37-49	28 (~52%)
50-55	20 (~37%)
56 and up	6 (~11%)
Gender	n (%)
Identifies as Woman	23 (~43%)
Identifies as Man	31 (~57%)
Race	n (%)
Asian, only	1 (2%)
Black/African American, only	5 (9%)
White, only	46 (85%)
White + Hispanic/Latino/a/x	1 (2%)
Black/AA + Hispanic/Latino/a/x	1 (2%)
Total Years Leading Their School	n (%)
1-4	23 (~43%)
5-10+	31 (~57%)
Total Years in School Leadership	n (%)
Less than 5	7 (~13%)
5-9	20 (~37%)
10 or more	27 (~50%)

Note: N = 54. All survey respondents were school principals leading a school located in New York State.

1, I sent targeted e-mail invitation letters to 14 survey respondents explaining that they were selected to participate in 1-on-1 interviews which would explore the relationship between their culturally responsive leadership practice and how they make sense of racism. Of the 14 invitations that were sent, four principals responded and agreed to participate. Despite my effort to seek a range of racial beliefs and perceptions, all four principals showed similar levels of racial awareness based on their survey responses.

For each of the four principals, two in-depth interviews were conducted. The first was a 60-90 minute semi-structured interview via Zoom that focused on principals' childhood upbringings; their relationship with school as students; their earliest memories of racial learning; barriers to racial learning; the ways in which they implemented culturally responsive school leadership; how race/racism shows up in their practice, and so on. The second interview also conducted via Zoom was the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) – a 60-90 minute interview protocol to determine an adult's developmental sensemaking system. This sequence was chosen to establish rapport and trust between me and the participating school leaders.

During *Phase 3*, I asked the four principals if I could interview their school leadership team (SLT) members to add texture to who these school leaders are from their teammates' perspectives; and to how racial learning and culturally responsive-sustaining education show up (or do not show up) at their schools. Three focus group interviews were conducted with two of the four principals' SLTs (for summary view, see Figure 2).

3.5. Data Analysis

Phase 1: Quantitative Statistical Analysis. To assess normality of distribution of overall CoBRAS scores (overall racial awareness scores), both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and the Shapiro-Wilk test were performed (see Table 3). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test

Figure 2

Participant Selection and Data Collection Methods at Each Phase of Dissertation Study

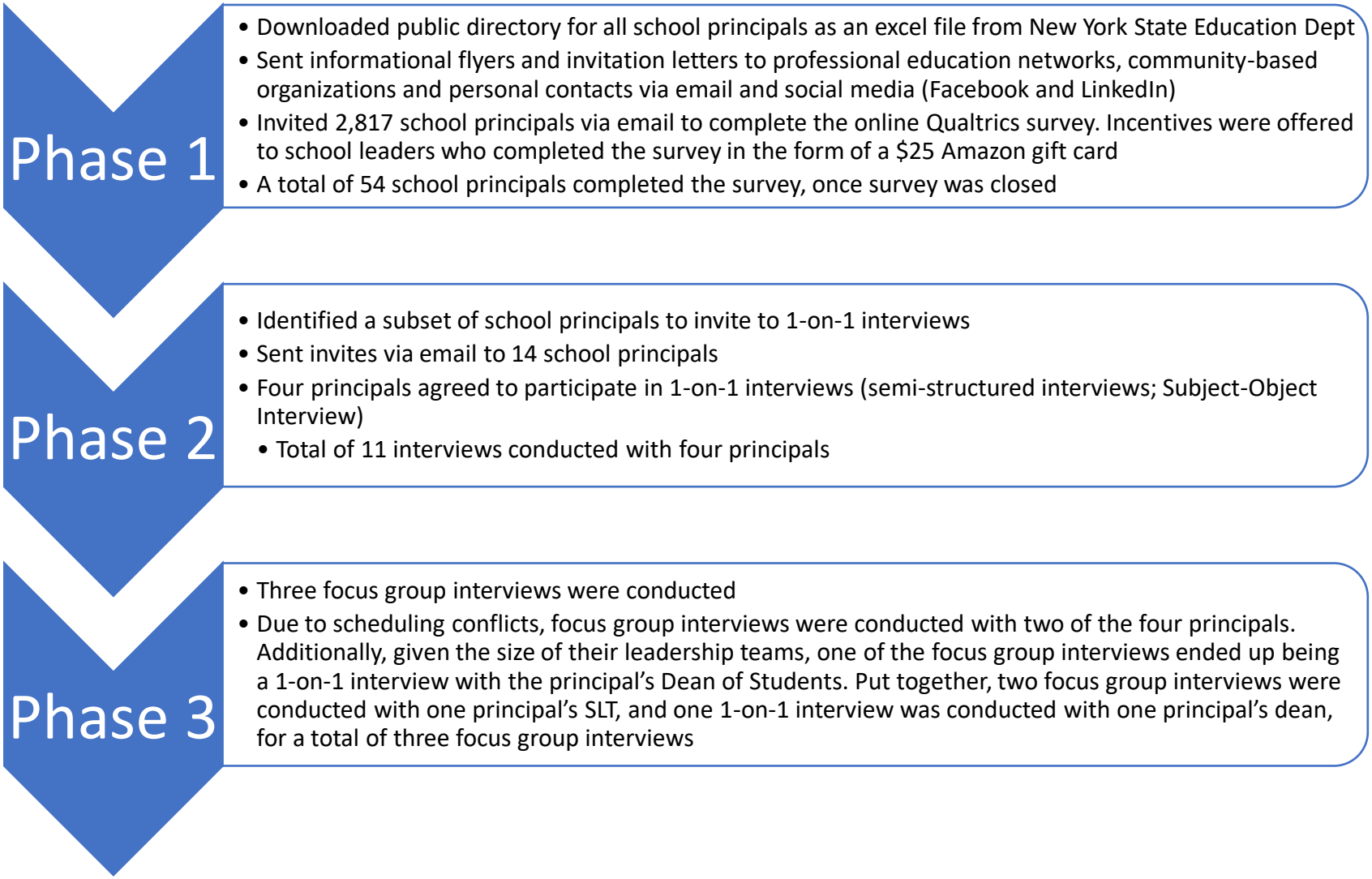


Table 3

Normality Tests for Sample's Overall ColorBlind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) Scores

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Overall CoBRAS Score	.076	54	.200*	.986	54	.775

Note: *: This is a lower bound of the true significance; a: Lilliefors Significance Correction

indicated that distribution of CoBRAS scores among this sample of school leaders did not significantly deviate from a normal distribution, $D(54) = 0.076$, $p = 0.200$. Also, the Shapiro-Wilk test indicated that distribution of CoBRAS scores among this sample of school leaders did not significantly deviate from a normal distribution, $W(54) = 0.986$, $p = 0.775$. Results from both these tests suggest that normality assumptions were met for this sample's distribution of CoBRAS scores.

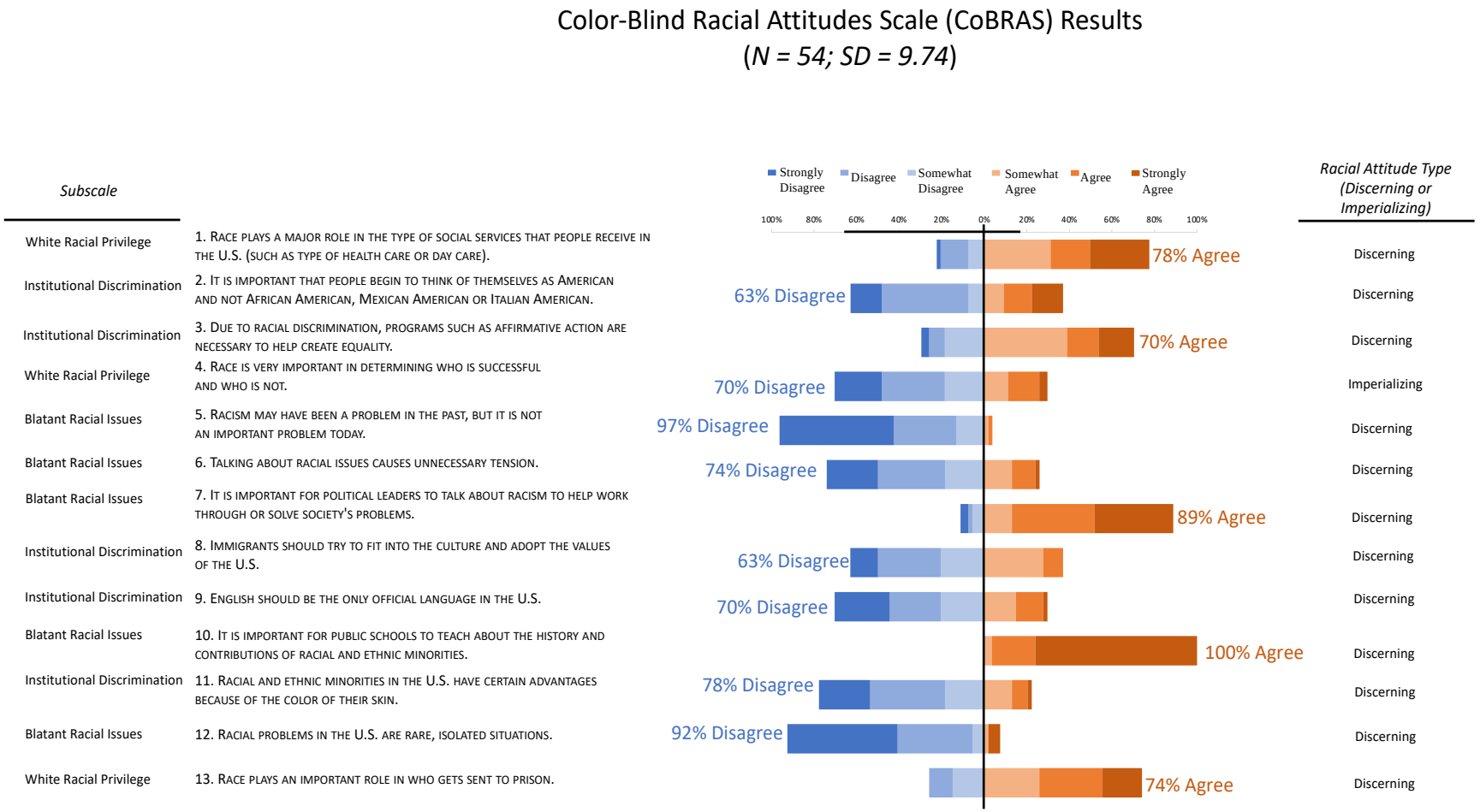
Because the convenience sample identified as majority White (46 of 54, or 85%), analyses of group mean differences in overall CoBRAS scores (racial awareness scores) as a function of race/ethnicity were not performed, as results would be highly skewed. However, descriptive statistics were used to evaluate any statistically significant mean differences in overall CoBRAS scores between genders.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the racial awareness scores between women school leaders and men school leaders. This test was found to be statistically non-significant, $t(52) = 1.796$, $p = .0783$. Results suggest that there was not a statistically significant difference in the racial awareness scores between women school leaders (n = 23, M = 30.48, SD = 2.05) and men school leaders (n = 31; M = 35.19, SD = 1.67).

Overall, this sample's total CoBRAS mean score was M = 33.19, SD = 9.74, suggesting this sample of school leaders express a lower denial of structural racism, thus higher racial awareness (see Figure 3). As culturally responsive-sustaining education is predicated on creating conditions of belonging for historically and currently marginalized student populations (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 2014) as well as framing racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse student groups as resourceful, rather than lacking (Sleeter, 2012; Valenzuela, 1999), it is

Figure 3

Survey results from Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS)



Subscale		*Racial Attitude Type (Discerning or Imperializing)*
White Racial Privilege	1. Race plays a major role in the type of social services that people receive in the U.S. (such as type of health care or day care).	Discerning
Institutional Discrimination	2. It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.	Discerning
Institutional Discrimination	3. Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.	Discerning
White Racial Privilege	4. Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.	Imperializing
Blatant Racial Issues	5. Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.	Discerning
Blatant Racial Issues	6. Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.	Discerning
Blatant Racial Issues	7. It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.	Discerning
Institutional Discrimination	8. Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and adopt the values of the U.S.	Discerning
Institutional Discrimination	9. English should be the only official language in the U.S.	Discerning
Blatant Racial Issues	10. It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.	Discerning
Institutional Discrimination	11. Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.	Discerning
Blatant Racial Issues	12. Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.	Discerning
White Racial Privilege	13. Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.	Discerning

Note: N = 54, overall mean score = *33.19*, *SD = 9.74*; this signals low denial of structural racism/low racial colorblindness; thus suggesting high racial awareness (high number of discerning racial attitudes).

reasonable to assume that school leaders implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education would express low denial of structural racism, thus exhibiting higher racial awareness.

However, because research has shown that educators with high racial awareness and positive racial attitudes can still advance racist school policies and engage in racist behaviors (Irby et al., 2019; Philip, 2011; Ryan, 2003; Swanson & Welton, 2019), including educators of color (Cherry-McDaniel, 2019; DeMatthews et al., 2017; Khalifa, 2015), I found it important to analyze the sample data further to identify any nuances around racial attitudes and perceptions. After reviewing school leaders' photo-elicited responses (the qualitative survey data), I found evidence of racial colorblindness and White nativist attitudes that were not captured in the overall CoBRAS data. This prompted me to return to my quantitative survey data.

In an attempt to explore variations within the sample and because this sample's CoBRAS scores were normally distributed, I employed visual binning in SPSS. For clarity, visual binning allows researchers to group a more or less continuous number of variables into a smaller number of buckets or "bins" for easier analysis (see TIBCO Software Inc., n.d.). Because the overall mean score was 33.19, and since that aligns with a lower racial denial (thus higher racial awareness), I found it is reasonable to assume that scores that were 1 standard deviation above the mean may correspond to a higher probability of higher racial denial.

To this end, I set visual binning parameters to create four bins at 1 standard deviation (*SD = 9.74*) above and below the mean to identify any within-sample variations around racial attitudes. It yielded the following cutoff scores (rounded to the nearest whole number).

- **Bin 1**: Scores ≤ 23 (33.19 –1 SD)
- **Bin 2**: Scores between 24 - 33
- **Bin 3**: Scores between 34 – 43 (33.19 + 1 SD)
- **Bin 4**: Scores ≥ 44

Bin 1 grouped overall scores less than or equal to 23 (n=12; ~22% of sample). I expected school leaders represented in Bin 1 to express very low racial colorblindness and display very high racial awareness. Bin 2 grouped overall scores between 24 and 33 (n=15; ~28%). For Bin 2, I expected these school leaders to hold high racial awareness at levels similar to the overall sample. Bin 3 grouped overall scores between 34 and 43 (n=17; ~31%). Bin 4 grouped overall scores of 44 or higher (n=10; ~19%). For Bins 3 and 4, I expected these school leaders to hold racial attitudes that express higher racial colorblindness (lower racial awareness).

After creating the four bins, I employed the constant comparison method to enrich the quantitative analysis of the CoBRAS scores. In this process, I categorized school leaders' photo-elicited qualitative data (their racial perceptions), noting instances of racial colorblindness. I then overlayed my open codes and emerging themes with the appropriate school leaders within the appropriate bins. From there, I examined each bin, noting variations in responses to CoBRAS survey items. Results show that school leaders within Bins 3 and 4 held racial attitudes that express higher denial of structural racism, thus higher racial colorblindness (lower racial awareness).

Phase 1: Qualitative Data Analysis. During Phase 1, survey respondents shared open-ended responses to three photo images meant to prompt deeper reflection about racism (Image 1: Equality, Equity, Reality; Image 2: TIME magazine cover of Colin Kaepernick kneeling; Image 3: January 6th insurrection/attack on the U.S. Capitol). Each photo image was accompanied by two guiding questions to focus their responses: *1) What does this image mean to you? 2) How does it connect to your personal or professional experience?*

At the end of Phase 1, I downloaded the survey responses and isolated school leaders' photo-elicited responses. For each image, I created a column labeled *initial codes* and another

column labeled *evidence of racism as multiform, uniform, no concrete evidence*. In the *initial codes* column, I went through each school leader's photo-elicited responses and noted initial impressions related to their racial beliefs, their leadership practice, and their overall lived experience. After getting through the initial codes column, I moved to the *evidence of racism as multiform, uniform, no concrete evidence* column, where I went through school leaders' photo-elicited responses and noted whether their response showed evidence of conceptualizing racism as a complex phenomenon (*multiform)*; a simple phenomenon (*uniform*; e.g., racism is merely one thing: the poor interpersonal behaviors of racists; see Bonilla-Silva, 2006); or neither because no determination could be made *(no concrete evidence)*.

Once I completed *initial codes* and *evidence of racism as multiform, uniform, no concrete evidence* for all school leaders' photo-elicited responses, I overlayed school leaders' CoBRAS scores and sorted the sample by CoBRAS score bin. Bin 1 – the group of school leaders with the lowest CoBRAS scores, suggesting the lowest denial of racism, thus highest racial awareness – held overall scores less than or equal to 23 (n=12; ~22% of sample). Bin 2 grouped overall scores between 24 and 33 (n=15; ~28%). Bin 3 grouped overall scores between 34 and 43 (n=17; ~31%). Bin 4 – the group of school leaders with the highest CoBRAS scores suggesting the highest denial of racism, thus lowest racial awareness – held overall scores of 44 or higher (n=10; ~19%).

Once school leaders' photo-elicited responses were sorted by bin, I employed the constant comparison method, identifying differences and similarities. Constant comparison revealed qualitative differences in the responses of school leaders according to their bins whereupon I assigned categories to describe the distinct features that animate these school leaders' photo-elicited responses: Bin 1 school leaders (highest racial awareness) = *highest*

number of discerning racial attitudes; Bin 2 = *high number of discerning racial attitudes*; Bin 3 = *discerning with some imperializing racial attitudes*; Bin 4 school leaders (lowest racial awareness) = *highest number of imperializing racial attitudes*.

Following my developmental racial literacy sensemaking (DRLS) framework, school leaders' photo-elicited responses constituted their racial perceptions – that is, their attributive and contextual interpretations of racial phenomena (e.g., photo images meant to prompt deeper reflection about racism).

Phases 2 and 3: Qualitative Data Analysis. During Phase 2, I conducted 11 interviews with four principals to gain deeper insights into their racial beliefs and culturally responsive leadership practice (see Appendix D). Lasting roughly 60-90 minutes, the first interview for all four principals leveraged a semi-structured interview protocol that focused on lived experience and racial sensemaking over time:

- Can you talk a bit about your own experience in school or with school as a student? Where did you grow up?
- Was racism discussed in your family? Tell me more about that
- How would you describe your neighborhood's racial composition?
- Can you describe your earliest memory of learning about racism?
- What were some barriers to learning about racism?
- What does racism mean to you today?
- Which student groups do you identify as the most underserved/marginalized in your school? What factors have contributed to these designations?
- What are some activities you (and your team) have implemented to reduce marginalization among those student groups?
- As you think back to your own training and professional development, were there opportunities for you to learn about racism; or practice discussing racism?

Using *Sonix*, I transcribed school leader Zoom interviews, making necessary edits to ensure transcript accuracy. Then, I uploaded the produced transcripts and Zoom interviews to *Dovetail* — a research analytics platform – to better organize and analyze my interview data. Once school leader Zoom interviews and transcripts were successfully uploaded and matched, I

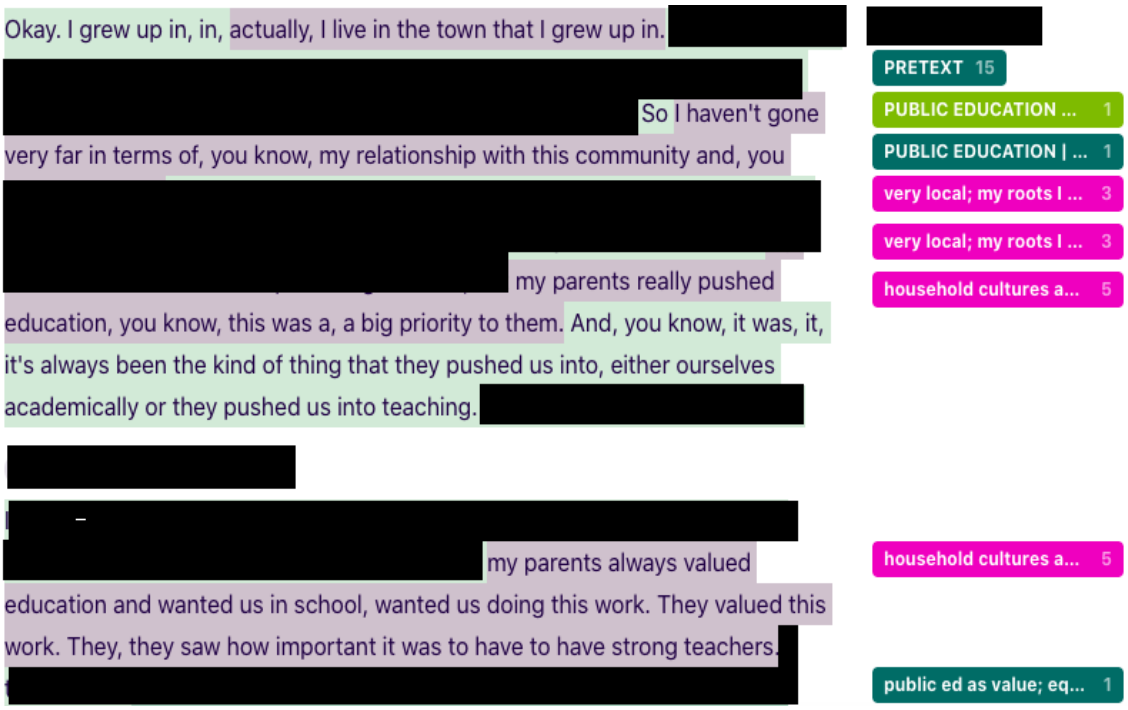
reviewed each interview, noting initial codes related to racism, leadership practices/behaviors, or lived experience within the transcript by highlighting relevant words, phrases, or segments. Examples of initial codes are: *very local; my roots I suppose*, *public education means democratic/great leveler*, *household cultures and rules*, which were placed to the right of interview text (see Figure 4).

Once I completed initial coding of each interview, I wrote an analytical memo to situate how each school leader made sense of racism within their own life story; noting if there were instances of racial belief change. The process of writing analytical memos made me revisit school leader interviews and led me to bracket their racial sensemaking into temporal blocks: pretext (which encompassed racial events/phenomena before their time as a school principal; context (which were racial events/phenomena during their time as school leaders); posttext (their responses specifically about what stories about racism they envision happening at their school or district).

Although my interview guide questions were temporally organized (pretext, context, and posttext), the interviews did not flow in that type of sequence; at times, pretext insights were within context insights, and vice versa. Therefore, it was important for me to review each interview and code them appropriately. Once I completed temporal bracketing in *Dovetail*, I again reviewed each school leader interview and used the constant comparison method, looking for recurring themes across the temporal brackets (pretext, context, and posttext) of the selected school leaders. I noted emerging themes, specifically around the change process within all school leaders' racial beliefs. I conducted member checks with selected principals to ensure accuracy of their statements and my interpretations.

Figure 4

Example of My Initial Coding of a School Principal Interview using Dovetail



Note: Some elements redacted to ensure participant anonymity.

With regard to focus group interviews, I used the same approach as I did for the 1-on-1 school leader interviews as it relates to initial coding, noting when they mention how their school principal makes sense of racism. Once initial coding was completed, I again wrote analytical memos about focus interviews in particular, adding to the insights and reflections of previous analytical memos. This iterative process prompted deeper insights into these school leaders' values, leadership styles, and behaviors through the racial sensemaking stories of their leadership teammates.

Additionally, the second interview for all four principals was the Subject-Object Interview (SOI) – a 60-90 interview protocol designed to determine an adult's developmental sensemaking system. Once the SOIs were recorded and transcribed, I followed the appropriate SOI coding procedures to determine the four principals' developmental sensemaking systems (Lahey et al., 2011). This added more texture to understanding who the principals are as people, and to build more rapport and trust between me and the school leaders (see Appendix A).

Moreover, over the span of this study, I wrote a total of 58 analytical memos to interrogate the presuppositions and assumptions upholding my initial thoughts, reflections, and insights about this study's data. This led to constant revision and refinement of how I came to understand school leaders' racial beliefs and how they make sense of racism over time.

Overall, my analysis revealed that 1) school leaders who are mandated to implement culturally responsive-sustaining education hold race-evasive attitudes when making sense of issues related to White racial privilege and institutional discrimination; 2) school leaders with race-evasive attitudes express racial perceptions that animate White nativist and cultural imperialist beliefs; 3) school leaders with race-evasive attitudes held racial perceptions that clash ideologically with the goals of culturally responsive-sustaining education; and 4) school leaders

with high racial awareness outline four distinct change phases in their racial beliefs and racial sensemaking over time – *Obscuring*, *Shattering*, *Revealing*, and *Appraising* – all operating to animate a racial learning change process I term: a *developmental racial learning stream*.

3.6. Introduction to Participants

After sending out interview requests to survey respondents with a mixture of racial attitudes based on CoBRAS scores and photo-elicited responses, four school principals accepted my invitation for 1-on-1 interviews. All four principals participated in two 60-90 minute interviews each, one of which included the Subject-Object Interview (SOI). As a reminder, the SOI is an interview protocol that allows researchers to determine adults' developmental sensemaking systems and get deeper insights into how they see the world (Kegan, 2009; Lahey et al., 2011).

All four principals belonged to Bin 1 and held racial attitudes expressing low denial of structural racism, signaling higher racial awareness. All four principals were leading schools in the state of New York at the time of the study. All four principals had over 5 years of school leadership experience. Of the four principals, two identified as White women; one as a White man; and one as a White Latina (see Table 4 for additional participant details).

What follows is a brief introduction to each principal to provide a vignette of who they are, where they come from, where they work, and what they value. The names used for each principal are pseudonyms.

Four Principal Vignettes

Principal CeCe. Principal CeCe is a White woman from Western NY. She has over 5 years school leadership experience**.** She described her school district context as moderately well-resourced. Principal CeCe grew up in a household where male headship was operationalized in

Table 4

Focal Participant Details – Four School Principals: Principals CeCe, Kay, Jay, and DiDi

*Name	Age	Years of Total School Leadership Experience	Self-reported identity dimensions	School Type (Suburban, Rural, Urban)	CoBRAS Mean Score	Interpretation of CoBRAS Score	Bin Number
Principal CeCe	in her 40s	Over 5 years	White woman	Suburban	19	Low Denial of Racism/Low Racial Colorblindness; High Racial Awareness	1
Principal Kay	in her 50s	Over 15 years	White woman	Rural	13	Low Denial of Racism/Low Racial Colorblindness; High Racial Awareness	1
Principal Jay	in his 50s	Over 10 years	White man	Suburban	22	Low Denial of Racism/Low Racial Colorblindness; High Racial Awareness	1
Principal DiDi	in her 50s	Over 5 years	White Latina	Suburban	22	Low Denial of Racism/Low Racial Colorblindness; High Racial Awareness)	1

Note: *All names are pseudonyms.

ways that were both deeply harmful and made natural, and where abusive relations were normalized. She got her self-worth from pleasing others. She shared that she has been working hard to undo the many forms of shame anchored in her childhood. This effort has catalyzed a strong commitment to examining and unsettling her core beliefs, and using what she learns to inform her leadership practice. Principal CeCe describes herself as inadequate when it comes to racial equity work as she feels she is still learning and new to its discourses.

Principal Kay. Principal Kay is a White woman from Western NY. She is a veteran educator with over 15 years of school leadership experience. She described her school context as socially conservative suburban. Given that she grew up in the area where she works, Principal Kay has deep roots in her local community. Her parents highly valued education and pushed her and her siblings to pursue teaching careers. Principal Kay views public education as a social democratic good that when operationalized can serve the role of – as she put it: "the great leveler" – to reduce marginalization and disproportionality in larger society.

Principal Jay. Principal Jay is a White man from Upstate NY. He is a veteran educator with over 10 years of school leadership experience. He described his school district context as well-resourced. Principal Jay had positive and negative experiences in school depending on whether teachers connected with him. His home life was unstable and challenging due to his father's addictions, so he often had to figure things out on his own. He shared that his mother provided discipline to ensure good behavior. Principal Jay grew up in a racially and ethnically diverse neighborhood and school environment, but he didn't fully understand racial divides during his childhood/adolescence.

Principal DiDi. Principal DiDi is a White Latina from Central America, Florida and Upstate NY. She spent the first 10 years of her life in Central America before coming to the

United States. She has over 5 years of school leadership experience. Her own experience as an ELL [English Language Learner] brought to the fore the systemic barriers many immigrant students face in the U.S. educational system. She described her school district context as a well-resourced suburban district with "traditional" teachers. Principal DiDi considers herself a "chameleon" who is used to cultural border-crossing. She explained that she has "one foot in one world and one foot in another world"; yet never feels like she fully belongs in the U.S..

Focus Group Participants: School Leadership Teams

At the end of the first and second interviews, I asked each of the four school principals if I could conduct focus group interviews with their school leadership teams (SLTs). During *Phase 3*, I conducted three focus group interviews with two principals' SLT members. I met twice with one school leadership team and once with the other SLT. Each focus group interview lasted roughly 60-90 minutes and were conducted virtually via Zoom. Once transcribed using Sonix, focus group interview transcripts were imported into *Dovetail* where I reviewed transcripts specifically creating initial codes, related to their own racial beliefs; how racial learning is engaged at their school; and how culturally responsive-sustaining education shows up (or does not show up) at their school and district.

Due to scheduling conflicts, focus group interviews were conducted with two of the four principals (Principal Kay and Principal CeCe). Additionally, given the size of their leadership teams, one of the focus group interviews ended up being a 1-on-1 interview with Principal CeCe's Dean of Student (Reed). Put together, two focus group interviews were conducted with one principal's SLT, and one 1-on-1 interview was conducted with one principal's dean of students, for a total of three focus group interviews (see Table 5 for participant details).

Table 5

Focus Group Interview Participant Details –Principal Kay's Team and Principal CeCe's Team

Focus Group Interview Number	Principal's School Leadership Team (SLT) & Team Members	Position/Role	Years of Educator Experience	Self-reported identity dimensions
Focus Group Interview 1	Principal Kay's SLT			
	Aria	School Psychologist	Over 15 years	Mexican-American woman
	Finn	Student Support Specialist	Over 10 years	White man
	Jade	Reading Specialist Teacher	Over 10 years	White woman
	Sasha	Special Education Teacher	Over 5 years	White woman
	Blake	Social Worker	Over 5 years	White woman
	Skye	Paraprofessional	Over 2 years	White woman
Focus Group Interview 2	Principal Kay's SLT			
	Aria	School Psychologist	Over 15 years	Mexican-American woman
	Finn	Student Support Specialist	Over 15 years	White man
	Jade	Reading Specialist Teacher	Over 10 years	White woman
	Zoe	Social Worker	Over 5 years	White woman
	Mia	Teacher	Over 5 years	White woman
	Leah	Special Education Teacher	Over 2 years	White woman
Focus Group Interview 3	Principal CeCe's SLT			
	Reed	Dean of Students	Over 5 years	White man

Note: *All names are pseudonyms.

For Principal Kay, there were two focus group interviews with her SLT. During the first group interview, six SLT members attended, including 1 school psychologist, 1 student support specialist, 2 teachers, 1 social worker, and 1 paraprofessional. Of the six, four identified as White women, one identified as a Mexican-American woman, and one identified as a White man. During the second focus group interview, six SLT members attended as well, although it was not the exact same group of SLT members that attended the first interview. The second interview included 1 school psychologist, 1 student support specialist, 3 teachers, and 1 social worker. Of the six, four identified as White women, one identified as a Mexican-American woman, and one identified as a White man.

Focus group interviews with Principal Kay's SLT members animated the ways in which Principal Kay reflects with her team about racism, cultural responsiveness, and belonging as part of her leadership practice. One of her team members, Aria – a school psychologist with over 20 years of educator experience – recounted how "beautiful" Principal Kay managed a troubling racial incident where a White student used a racial slur toward students of color.

For Principal CeCe, there was one 1-on-1 interview with her dean of students – Reed. Reed is a White man born in the Pacific Islands and raised in upstate New York. He has over 3 years of experience in his current role. Reed's interview added more texture to how Principal CeCe's racial learning showed up in her leadership practice, describing how they work together to deepen their staff's racial learning through book studies focused on White privilege and racial injustice.

4. Limitations

There are four primary limitations to this study that are important to note. First, because of unforeseen IRB requirements for New York City, no school principals working in New York

City public schools could participate in this study. Given the dynamism of New York City's racial-ethnic landscape and the sheer volume of students (nearly 1 million; see New York State Education Department, n.d.), it is reasonable to assume that the inclusion of the perspectives of New York City school principals would deepen our understanding of school leaders' racial beliefs, and its relationship to the implementation of culturally responsive-sustaining education.

Second, despite outreach efforts, all school principals who participated in Phase 2 or Phase 3 of this study had the lowest denial of structural racism, suggesting they had the highest racial awareness in the sample. This excludes the perspectives of school principals at different levels of racial awareness. A point of future research is to focus on the racial sensemaking over time of school leaders' with low racial awareness.

Third, many school principals working in districts outside of New York City did not have formal school leadership teams. In many instances, when I employed the term "school leadership team" (SLT), principals had not heard of the term and did not have a formal mechanism of collective decision-making within their building. However, one principal explained that given the smaller size of her school, collective decision-making includes district leadership (e.g., superintendents; state regional liaisons, and the like). The "SLT" terminology may need to be revised, or other terms employed, to better identify how collective decision-making is (or is not) occurring.

Fourth, due to travel constraints, I could not conduct any field observations at focal participants' schools to observe how school leaders and their teams implemented culturally responsive-sustaining education. Although principal and SLT member testimonies and experiences are strong primary sources, the additional layer of data collected *in situ* would deepen triangulation of data sources, and could add texture and nuance to research insights.

CHAPTER V | FINDINGS

1. Diverging Dispositions and Racial Learning Streams

Findings suggest that school leaders mandated to implement culturally responsive-sustaining education can hold diverging dispositions: racial attitudes that are both race-conscious and race-evasive. Quantitative survey results indicate that school leaders hold racial attitudes that recognize that structural racism disadvantages racialized Black and Brown people at multiple societal levels (what I term *discerning* racial attitudes) while *also* holding racial attitudes that fail to recognize that structural racism advantages racialized White people at multiple societal levels (what I term *imperializing* racial attitudes). Furthermore, a subset of school leaders diverged from the relatively high number of *discerning* racial attitudes of the overall sample, holding a number of *imperializing* positions that would consider this set of school leaders highly race-evasive (Figures 5 & 6).

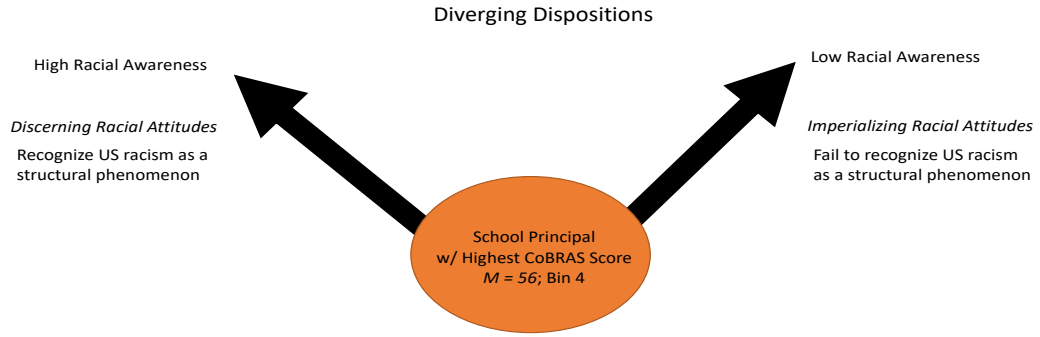
Moreover, findings reveal that when interpreting photo-images meant to prompt deeper reflections of racism, highly race-evasive school leaders advanced White nativist and culturally imperialist logics seeking to preserve U.S. cultural hegemony and White social advantage – racial perceptions I describe as *pro-racism* perceptions. In particular, these *pro-racism* perceptions showed evidence of struggling to integrate what they viewed as unfair characterizations of the United States.

For example, when responding to Image 1 (Equity, Equality, Reality), a White woman principal – with a high number of *imperializing* racial attitudes and over 20 years of school leadership experience leading a school in NY – shared:

> I am between the middle picture [equity] and picture on the right [reality]. I believe in acceptance, love, equality. I do not believe in promoting one group over another. I think in trying to "right the ship" in terms of racism - we have promoted marginalized groups at the expense of other groups. I believe that I have been the victim of reverse racism. I used

Figure 5

Diverging Dispositions: Principal with Highest Number of Imperializing Racial Attitudes (Highest Racial Colorblindness in Sample)

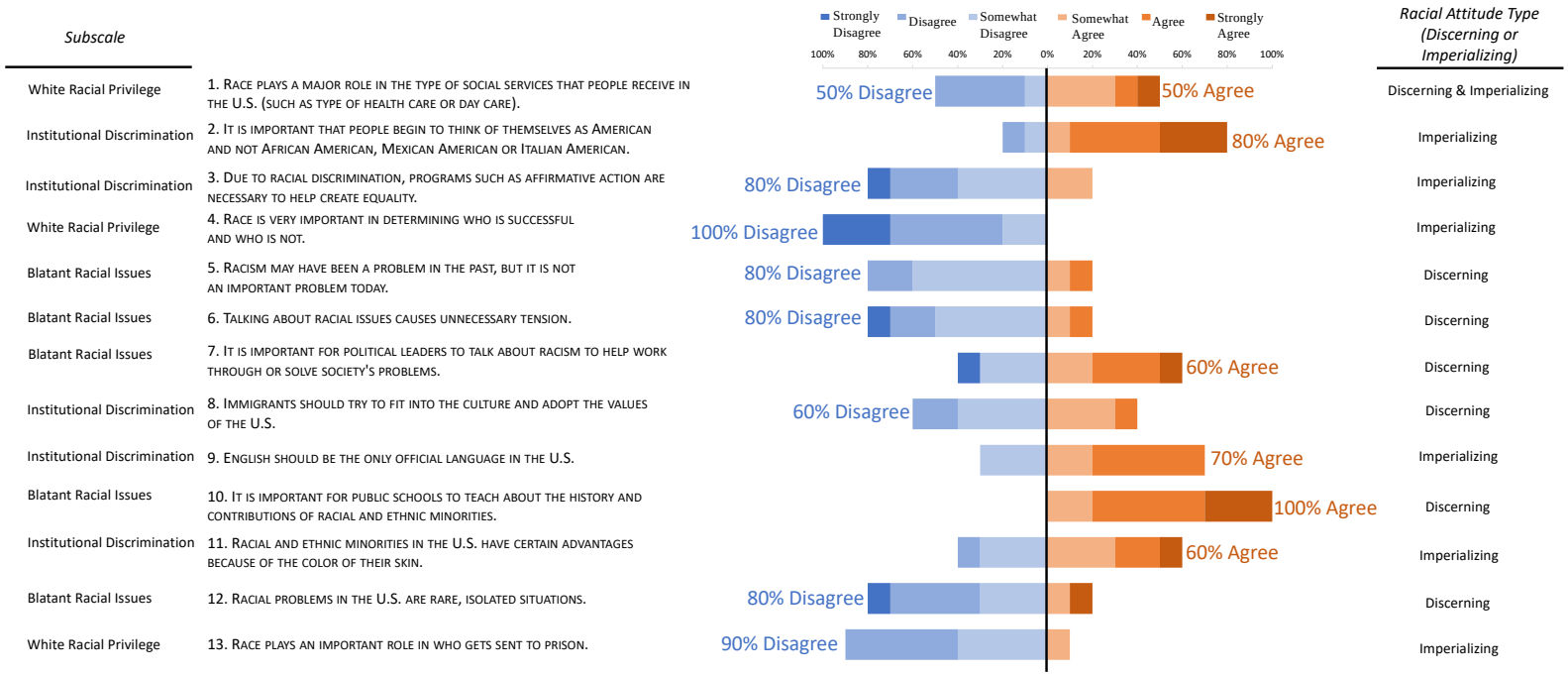


Subscale	*Racial Attitude Type*	*Principal's Position*	**Survey Items** **(Bolded)** survey items in parentheses are reverse scored such that 6 (Strongly Agree) = 1; 5 (Agree) = 2; 4 (Somewhat Agree) = 3; 3 (Somewhat Disagree) = 4; 2 (Disagree) = 5; 1 (Strongly Disagree) = 6.	*Principal's Position*	*Racial Attitude Type*	*Subscale*
			Strongly Disagree 1 · Disagree 2 · Somewhat Disagree 3 · Somewhat Agree 4 · Agree 5 · Strongly Agree 6			
White Racial Privilege	——	——	**(Q1): Race plays a major role in the type of social services that people receive in the U.S. (such as type of health care or day care).**	Disagree	*Imperializing*	White Racial Privilege
Institutional Discrimination	——	——	Q2: It is important that people begin to think of themselves as American and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American.	Agree	*Imperializing*	Institutional Discrimination
Institutional Discrimination	——	——	**(Q3): Due to racial discrimination, programs such as affirmative action are necessary to help create equality.**	Somewhat Disagree	*Imperializing*	Institutional Discrimination
White Racial Privilege	——	——	**(Q4): Race is very important in determining who is successful and who is not.**	Disagree	*Imperializing*	White Racial Privilege
Blatant Racial Issues	——	——	Q5: Racism may have been a problem in the past, but it is not an important problem today.	Strongly Agree	*Imperializing*	Blatant Racial Issues
Blatant Racial Issues	——	——	Q6: Talking about racial issues causes unnecessary tension.	Strongly Agree	*Imperializing*	Blatant Racial Issues
Blatant Racial Issues	——	——	**(Q7): It is important for political leaders to talk about racism to help work through or solve society's problems.**	Strongly Disagree	*Imperializing*	Blatant Racial Issues
Institutional Discrimination	——	——	Q8: Immigrants should try to fit into the culture and adopt the values of the U.S.	Agree	*Imperializing*	Institutional Discrimination
Institutional Discrimination	——	——	Q9: English should be the only official language in the U.S.	Agree	*Imperializing*	Institutional Discrimination
Blatant Racial Issues	*Discerning*	Agree	**(Q10): It is important for public schools to teach about the history and contributions of racial and ethnic minorities.**	——	——	Blatant Racial Issues
Institutional Discrimination	——	——	Q11: Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.	Somewhat Agree	*Imperializing*	Institutional Discrimination
Blatant Racial Issues	*Discerning*	Disagree	Q12: Racial problems in the U.S. are rare, isolated situations.	——	——	Blatant Racial Issues
White Racial Privilege	——	——	**(Q13): Race plays an important role in who gets sent to prison.**	Disagree	*Imperializing*	White Racial Privilege

Figure 6

Diverging Dispositions: School Leaders Diverging from Discerning Racial Attitudes and Choosing Imperializing Racial Attitudes

Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) Results for Bin 4
(n = 10; school leaders with highest instances of racial colorblindness)



Note: n = 10, overall mean score = *47.30*, *SD* = *3.92*; this signals higher denial of structural racism/higher racial colorblindness as compared to overall sample; thus suggesting lower racial awareness (higher number of *imperializing* racial attitudes/lower number of *discerning* racial attitudes).

> to train people who then got promotions over me due to being a minority. TV shows and commercials are now representing a disproportionate representation of our make up in the US. The US is made up of 75% white people. I look at commercials/news shows - and the make up of cast is now more minority than white. Why wouldn't we represent the truth of what our nation is - in other words - for example - out of 4 news casters - have 2 women, 2 men; 3 of the people being white - since we make up 75% of the populations. I am an anti-Trump person - and oppose what he represents as a person and a "leader" - so I don't want to sound like some red-neck who is hateful. I have love in my heart for all people - but I am annoyed at the promotion of certain groups over another - and the misrepresentation of our country. I know in the past - minorities were misrepresented - but does it make it right to now misrepresent white people - then we are still doing the same thing! I purposely left my name and school off of this because my view is not popular with the latest diversity, equity and inclusion movement. While I whole-heartedly support the concept - of love and acceptance - we are misrepresenting our country's make up of people.

At the core of this principal's *pro-racism* perception is the visceral feeling that efforts to redress the marginalization of Black and Brown communities are shifting the United States in ways that are harmful to White people. This school leader's *pro-racism* perception put into sharp relief how her racial ideologies diverge from the relational goals of culturally responsive-sustaining education; and anti-racist stances of educational leadership more broadly (AERA 2020; Diem & Welton, 2021; Khalifa, 2018; Wright, 2022).

With regard to how racial beliefs change over time, this study's focal participants – four principals with high racial awareness – illustrated how school leaders who demonstrate high discernment of racism's social dynamism did not start from a place of high racial awareness in their own racial sensemaking. In fact, they all stressed in their narratives how they never put active effort in reflecting about racism, until an unexpected or unplanned racial incident forced them to wrestle with their racial beliefs and experiences.

All four principals underscored how this unexpected or unplanned racial incident shattered their *Obscuring* phase – that is, their preconceived notions that they knew everything there was to know about race and racism.

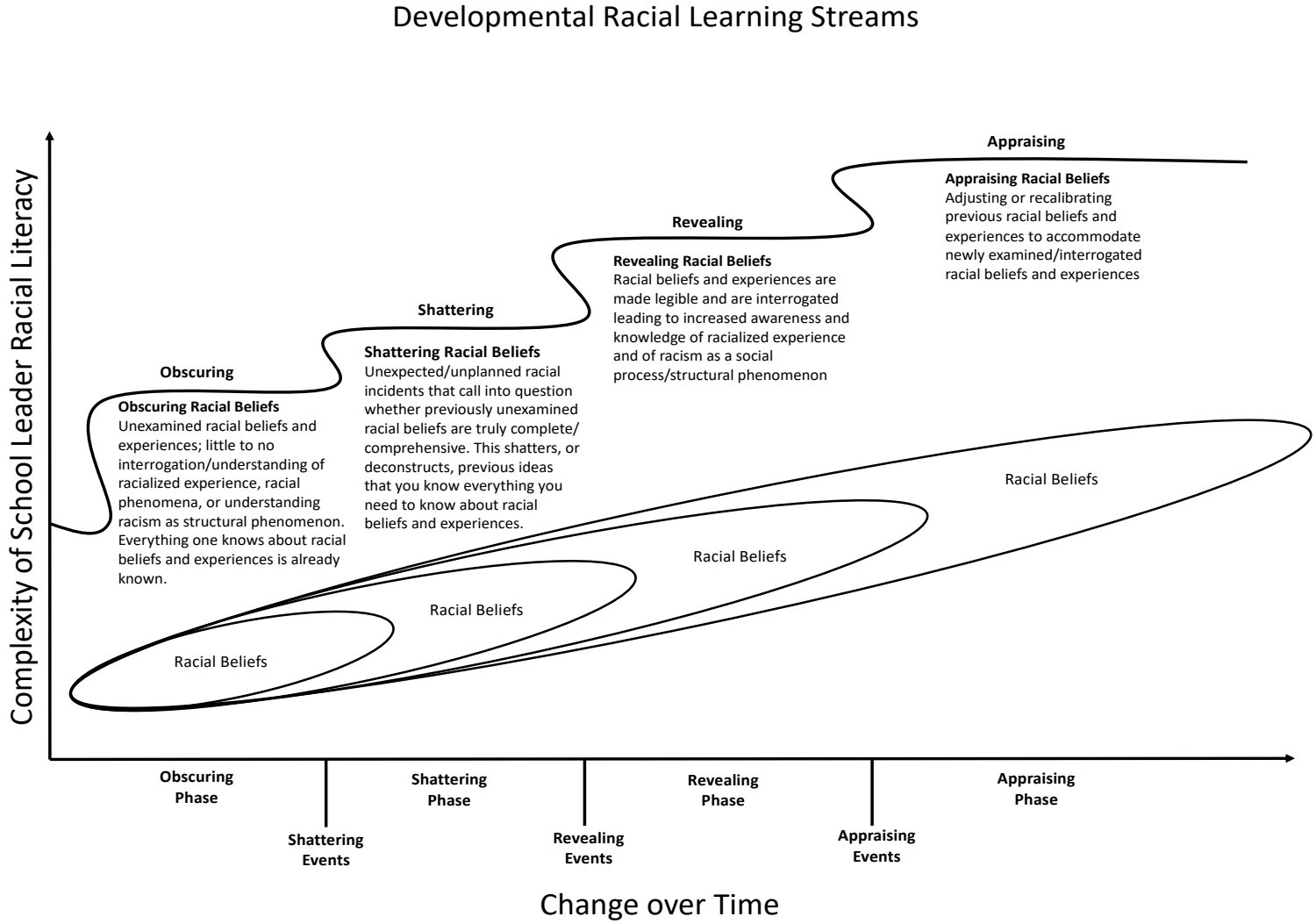
This *Shattering* phase led to their search for more information and knowledge about racial beliefs and racialized experiences. This search for racial knowledge increased their racial awareness revealing that racism was a structural phenomenon; and that racial beliefs and racialized experiences were more complex than previously believed. This *Revealing* phase made their racial beliefs legible and cemented that there was more to learn about the complexity of racism. Once they had spent time interrogating their racial beliefs and racialized experiences, they were able to adjust, or recalibrate, their previously held racial beliefs to accommodate their newly examined, and more complex racial beliefs. This *Appraising* phase informs how they understand racial phenomena and guides their attempts at implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education at their schools.

Put together, these four principals with high racial awareness animated the texture of their racial literacy by sharing the *Obscuring*, *Shattering*, *Revealing*, and *Appraising* phases of their racial learning journeys. I term this racial learning change process: *developmental racial learning streams* (Figure 7).

Despite their racial beliefs growing *upstream* – that is, growing more complex over time, all four principals expressed how that growth did not translate to the operationalization of organizational leadership actions that foster the conditions to meet the deep learning goals of culturally responsive-sustaining education. A major constraint they all highlighted was how intraschool efforts that both support racial learning and drive culturally responsive-sustaining education can be viewed as educational malpractice by district leadership or the local community. However, members of these principals' school leadership teams underscored how seeing their principal publicly engage in racial learning signaled to them that racial learning is time well spent and valuable to student learning.

Figure 7

Developmental Racial Learning Streams with Four Temporal Phases: Obscuring, Shattering, Revealing, and Appraising



Note: Adapted from Kegan & Lahey, 2010

Diverging Dispositions and Racial Learning Streams encapsulates this study's two major themes illustrating how school leaders' racial beliefs can prove incompatible with the goals of culturally responsive-sustaining education; and how their racial beliefs can change over time from low racial awareness to high racial awareness. To best animate *diverging dispositions and racial learning streams* as a thematic whole, I will organize this section into two primary sections: Quantitative and Qualitative.

In the Quantitative section, I will first revisit the ColorBlind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS) survey providing more details about its elements and what they measure. Then, I will present a major subtheme: *diverging dispositions: imperializing attitudes*. I will then transition to the Qualitative section.

In the Qualitative section, I will present two subthemes: *diverging dispositions: pro-racism perceptions* and *four principals: four developmental racial learning streams*.

After these two sections, implications for school leadership will be discussed.

2. Quantitative Section

RQ1. What are the racial beliefs of school leaders implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education?

2.1. Diverging Dispositions: Imperializing Racial Attitudes

Imperializing Racial Attitudes. Although most school leaders in this convenience sample held racial attitudes that signaled high awareness of structural racism, school leaders with the highest instances of racial colorblindness also demonstrated sharp divergences in racial beliefs at two subscale levels: institutional discrimination and White racial privilege. Further analysis of six survey items associated with institutional discrimination and White racial privilege revealed that highly race-evasive school leaders adopted *imperializing* racial attitudes that diverge from the *discerning* racial attitudes exhibited by the overall sample.

Discerning racial attitudes are racial attitudes that signal positions that recognize racism as a structural phenomenon. *Imperializing* racial attitudes are racial attitudes that signal positions that fail to recognize racism as a structural phenomenon. It is important to note that school leaders with *imperializing* racial attitudes can also share *discerning* racial attitudes, illuminating how the diverging quality of school leaders' racial attitudes does not remain constant for all racial stances. School leaders with the highest number of *imperializing* racial attitudes held positions that fail to recognize structural racism at two levels.

First, these school leaders' racial attitudes dismiss the ways in which Black and Brown people have been historically disenfranchised to advance White people's social advantage. For example, when responding to the survey item, *"Racial and ethnic minorities in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin*", 60% of school leaders with the most *imperializing* racial attitudes agreed while all other school leaders disagreed. To believe that Black and Brown people are afforded advantages because of their phenotype ignores how racialization has historically worked in the U.S. to both marginalize Black and Brown people, and preserve social and economic power for White people.

Second, school leaders with the highest number of *imperializing* racial attitudes view the United States as a uniform entity, rooted in "Americanism" where subtractive, assimilationist logics are upheld as central to national identity. For example, when responding to the survey item, "*It is important for people to begin to think of themselves as Americans and not African American, Mexican American or Italian American"*, 80% of school leaders with the most *imperializing* racial attitudes agreed, diverging from the *discerning* attitudes of the overall sample. To believe that racialized people should think of themselves as "Americans" obscures

the ways in which whiteness has been historically leveraged as the rubric to index "White" as "American" (Leonardo, 2004, 2009).

Furthermore, the school leaders with the highest *imperializing* racial attitudes displayed racial ideologies that diverge from the relational goals of culturally responsive-sustaining education.

What follows is a qualitative analysis of how school leaders with a high number of *imperializing* racial attitudes responded to two photo-images meant to prompt deeper reflection about racism. The two photo images – Image 1 (Equality, Equity, Reality) and Image 2 (TIME magazine cover of Colin Kaepernick kneeling) – elicited racial perceptions that I describe as *pro-racism* perceptions.

3. Qualitative Section

RQ1. What are the racial beliefs of school leaders implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education?

3.1. Diverging Dispositions: Pro-Racism Perceptions

As a reminder, school leaders were asked to respond to three photo images to prompt deeper reflection on racism. For each image, they were asked two guiding questions: *1) What does this image mean to you? 2) How might this image connect to your professional or personal experience?*

For the purposes of this subsection, I will present findings on school leaders' racial perceptions in response to two images: Image 1 (Equality, Equity, Reality) and Image 2 (TIME magazine cover of Colin Kaepernick kneeling). Racial perceptions for Image 3 (Trump supporters holding "Stop the Steal" rally on January 6, 2021, in DC) did not evince robust insights into school leaders' racial beliefs.

Despite the discerning quality that school leaders with *imperializing* racial attitudes can convey in their racial beliefs (see Figure 5), they also engage in racial interpretations that evince logics rooted in White nativist imperialism and White replacement theory (see Jardina, 2019; Serwer, 2019). I describe the quality of this form of racial perception as *pro-racism*.

For example, when responding to Image 2 (TIME magazine cover of Colin Kaepernick kneeling), a White man school principal with the highest number of *imperializing* racial attitudes within the sample (see Figure 5), over 10 years of school leadership experience, and leading a school in suburban NY, shared:

> I don't go for this at all - we are ALL Americans and, despite the flaws, we are the greatest country in the history of modern civilization. Have there been wrongs or sins committed? Of course. But, look at what [Brittney] Griner went through in Russia over a vape pen or whatever it was; Americans, most Americans, aren't political prisoners. So, while there are things we can always work on and improve, I believe the laser focus by

> politicians and the [mainstream media] on racism and race relations in America is done by design and has caused tremendous damage that will take a long time to improve.

In this school principal's racial perception, he reveals six insights into his racial beliefs: 1) his negative feelings toward Colin Kaepernick kneeling where he doesn't "go for this at all"; 2) his absolutist imperialist belief that the U.S. is "the greatest country in the history of modern civilization"; 3) his belief that the U.S. has "flaws" and that "wrongs or sins" have been committed, with no specificity as to what those flaws, wrongs, or sins are; 4) his view that "most Americans...aren't political prisoners" because the U.S. has more civil liberties' protections compared to geopolitically adversarial countries (i.e., "Russia"); 5) his reasoning that public discourse on "racism and race relations in America" can be attributed to "a laser focus by politicians" and mainstream media outlets that advance public racial discourse "by design"; 6) his view that public racial discourse "has caused tremendous damage that will take a long time to improve".

It is important to note that there is no mention of *why* Colin Kaepernick is kneeling in the first place. Instead this principal's racial perception shows evidence of a *pro-racism* quality that seeks to maintain the character of "America" as "the greatest country in the history of modern civilization". And despite the settler colonial logics upheld by this principal's *pro-racism* perception (Patel, 2014), it does not suggest the absence of responsiveness to vulnerable student populations on the part of this school leader. The same principal identified Economically Disadvantaged and English Language Learners as the most underserved and marginalized student groups at his school. When asked what factors have contributed to these student groups' marginalization, his response was:

> There has been a large influx of ELL [English Language Learners] students, primarily Spanish speaking. Our district population has gone from about 15% ELL to 30% in about 5 years.

Additionally, when asked about the actions they implemented to support those student groups, he shared that:

> We have hired more ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages] teachers and created after school organizations that are designed to help support these students.

Without deeper observation of actions, which go beyond the methods of this study, there is limited ability to confidently measure the quality of said actions meant to support those identified vulnerable student groups. However, because of this principal's awareness of racial-ethnic demographic change, coupled with the programmatic support of English Language Learners, it would be reasonable to suggest that this principal enacts a high leverage leadership practice (e.g., hiring and placing personnel in the form of "more ESOL teachers"; see Galloway & Ishimaru, 2019) *while* also advancing a form of absolutist racial analysis rooted in relational contradictions (i.e., The U.S. as "the greatest country in the history of modern civilization" reported in 2021 that 3.8 million children lived in poverty, and in 2022, roughly 9 million children lived in poverty 2022; see Shrider & Creamer, 2023).

Additionally, this school principal's *pro-racism* perception illustrates how principals with highly race-evasive racial attitudes can simultaneously recognize *and* fail to recognize the ways in which structural racism disadvantages Black and Brown people, and advantages White people.

What follows is a deeper analysis of the *pro-racism* perceptions of one school principal responding to Images 1 and 2: a school principal I have chosen to name Principal Lavender.

Introduction to Principal Lavender. Multiple examples of *pro-racism* perceptions came from a White woman principal, with over 20 years school leadership experience leading a school in NY. Her school's geographical type (urban, suburban, rural) was not included because she chose to omit her school's name when she completed the online survey. For this reason, I

have assigned her the pseudonym Lavender. Principal Lavender belongs to the subset of school leaders who have high instances of *imperializing* racial attitudes – evincing high race-evasion and low racial awareness (see Figure 6).

Principal Lavender chose Economically Disadvantaged when prompted to choose which student populations were most underserved or marginalized at her school. When identifying factors that contribute to Economically Disadvantaged students being the most underserved or marginalized, she identified "no parent advocacy" as a cause. Additionally, she shared that "students do not have the vast and rich experiences to draw from - which affects their learning and their vocabulary". When asked which actions she and her leadership team implemented to support Economically Disadvantaged students, she shared:

> Added more social workers. We have tried to do community/parent events and workshops - unfortunately, what we find is that groups we have targeted for these events are not the ones that show (and the ones that do show - really don't need this). Our school has taken on more responsibility of providing basic needs to our students in order to get them in a place [where] learning can happen (ie - snacks, food, clothes, supplies, counseling, etc).

Principal Lavender's school leadership actions show evidence of at least one high leverage leadership practice – *hiring and placing personnel* – in the form of additional social workers (see Galloway & Ishimaru, 2019). Although weak in its efficacy, the programmatic support through "community/parents events and workshops" evince actions attempting to both promote positive school climate and engage parents, students, and families.

When prompted to respond to Image 1 (Equity, Equality, and Reality), Principal Lavender shared:

> I am between the middle picture [equity] and picture on the right [reality]. I believe in acceptance, love, equality. I do not believe in promoting one group over another. I think in trying to "right the ship" in terms of racism - we have promoted marginalized groups at the expense of other groups. I believe that I have been the victim of reverse racism. I used to train people who then got promotions over me due to being a minority.

> TV shows and commercials are now representing a disproportionate representation of our make up in the US. The US is made up of 75% white people. I look at commercials/news shows - and the make up of cast is now more minority than white. Why wouldn't we represent the truth of what our nation is - in other words - for example - out of 4 news casters - have 2 women, 2 men; 3 of the people being white - since we make up 75% of the populations.
>
> I am an anti-Trump person - and oppose what he represents as a person and a "leader" - so I don't want to sound like some red-neck who is hateful. I have love in my heart for all people - but I am annoyed at the promotion of certain groups over another - and the misrepresentation of our country. I know in the past - minorities were misrepresented - but does it make it right to now misrepresent white people - then we are still doing the same thing! I purposely left my name and school off of this because my view is not popular with the latest diversity, equity and inclusion movement. While I whole-heartedly support the concept - of love and acceptance - we are misrepresenting our country's make up of people. Another example - trans gender population - maybe at 5% - yet we have to now label our bathrooms as unisex (I am in [an elementary school] building!) - that is ridiculous.

At the core of Lavender's racial perception is the visceral feeling that the United States is shifting in ways that are harmful to White people. Her racial perceptions points to two false logics undergirding this visceral feeling: 1) that unfair advantages are given to Black and Brown people *because* they are Black and Brown; 2) that efforts to increase Black and Brown representation are efforts to erase White people.

Although it is clear that structural racism works to create social, political, and economic advantages that are disproportionately experienced by people racialized as White in the U.S. (Leonardo, 2004), Principal Lavender's racial perception suggests that an awareness of racial power dynamics still competes with feelings that seek to preserve White people's social status in the U.S.. When Principal Lavender expresses that she is "annoyed at...the misrepresentation of our country", this illustrates what I mean by the *pro-racism* quality of her racial perceptions – that is, interpretations of racism that seek to maintain, in this case, White over-representation in U.S. society, despite knowing that "in the past – minorities were misrepresented".

Image 1 - Insights into Principal Lavender's Racial Beliefs. To analyze Principal Lavender's *pro-racism* perception more easily, I will break it into three segments. The first segment is as follows:

> I am between the middle picture [equity] and picture on the right [reality]. I believe in acceptance, love, equality. I do not believe in promoting one group over another. I think in trying to "right the ship" in terms of racism - we have promoted marginalized groups at the expense of other groups. I believe that I have been the victim of reverse racism. I used to train people who then got promotions over me due to being a minority. TV shows and commercials are now representing a disproportionate representation of our make up in the US. The US is made up of 75% white people. I look at commercials/news shows - and the make up of cast is now more minority than white. Why wouldn't we represent the truth of what our nation is - in other words - for example - out of 4 news casters - have 2 women, 2 men; 3 of the people being white - since we make up 75% of the populations.

In the first segment of her *pro-racism* perception, Principal Lavender reveals five insights into her racial beliefs: 1) her commitment to "acceptance, love, equality" while feeling stuck between equity and reality; 2) her rejection of White supremacist ideology as she does "not believe in promoting one group over another"; 3) her feeling that she is a "victim of reverse racism" because Black and Brown people were undeserving of work-related promotions; 4) her belief that efforts to combat structural racism "have promoted marginalized groups at the expense of other groups"; 5) her view that, given White people's numerical dominance in the U.S., efforts to increase racial representation in the U.S. is misrepresenting "the truth of what our nation is".

Principal Lavender continued:

> I am an anti-Trump person - and oppose what he represents as a person and a "leader" - so I don't want to sound like some red-neck who is hateful. I have love in my heart for all people - but I am annoyed at the promotion of certain groups over another - and the misrepresentation of our country. I know in the past - minorities were misrepresented - but does it make it right to now misrepresent white people - then we are still doing the same thing! I purposely left my name and school off of this because my view is not popular with the latest diversity, equity and inclusion movement. While I whole-

> heartedly support the concept - of love and acceptance - we are misrepresenting our country's make up of people.

In this second segment of her *pro-racism* perception, Principal Lavender reveals five additional insights into her racial sensemaking: 1) her desire to dissociate from "some red-neck who is hateful" by declaring she is "anti-Trump"; 2) her reiteration of having "love" in her heart "for all people"; 3) her discernment of historical marginalization of Black and Brown people, given that she knows "in the past – minorities were misrepresented"; 4) her instinct that her racial perception may be incompatible "with the latest diversity, equity and inclusion movement", despite "whole-heartedly" supporting the concept; 5) her feeling that historical marginalization of Black and Brown people has become a springboard to promote "certain groups over another" and "misrepresent white people".

What's more, Principal Lavender shared her view on supporting the privacy and wellness of transgender students and families. She wrote:

> Another example - trans gender population - maybe at 5% - yet we have to now label our bathrooms as unisex (I am in [an elementary school] building!) - that is ridiculous.

In this third and final segment of her *pro-racism* perception, Principal Lavender revealed her belief that efforts to support the wellness of queer children "is ridiculous" because the "trans gender population" is a numerically low demographic. This reasoning clarifies what Guinier (2004) meant by "the interest-divergence dilemma" whereby structural racism – in conjunction with queer antagonism in the form of transphobia – "fabricates interdependent yet paradoxical relationships between race, class, and geography" and other axes of social difference, such as gender expression (p.100).

Image 2 - Insights into Principal Lavender's Racial Beliefs. When prompted to respond to Image 2 (TIME magazine cover of Colin Kaepernick kneeling), Principal Lavender shared:

> Privilege - or white privilege is an offensive term to me. But I dare not say that out loud - as I would be labeled a hater. The person in the picture [Colin Kaepernick] is further ahead financially in life than I would ever dream of being - yet he won't be grateful and stand for our flag?

Principal Lavender's linking of gratitude to standing for "our flag" animates the *pro-racism* quality of her racial perception as it maintains logics rooted in false, albeit romantic, majoritarian narratives of the U.S. as a place we must always be proud of, despite evidence to the contrary (see Banks, 2002; U.S. Kerner Report, 1968).

Similar false logics animating Principal Lavender's *pro-racism* perception of Image 1 emerged in her racial perception of Image 2 (TIME magazine cover of Colin Kaepernick kneeling). When responding to Image 2, Principal Lavender's racial perception showed no evidence of engaging the motivation for Colin Kaepernick's kneeling. In other words, there was again no evidence of engaging why Colin Kaepernick was kneeling in the first place. Reflective analysis on this question would at minimum bring to the fore that his kneeling was a form a protest of police violence against Black and Brown people in the U.S.. As one White man principal with *a high number of imperializing* racial attitudes – over five years of school leadership experience and leading a school in rural NY – noted: "The athlete went against expectations to make a point about racism. It helped me to be more aware and open-minded". In contrast, Principal Lavender's racial perception expressed various forms of White resentment.

In her *pro-racism* perception, Principal Lavender reveals three insights into her racial beliefs: 1) her view that "white privilege is an offensive term"; 2) her admission that she maintains silence on her authentic feelings about racism as she "dare not say that out loud" in

fear of being viewed as “a hater”. With research stressing that any racial equity effort requires public race talk from school leaders (Buehler, 2013; Gooden & O’Doherty, 2015; Irby & Clark, 2018; Kose, 2009), her admission proves both illuminating and troubling; 3) her questioning why Colin Kaepernick “won’t be grateful and stand for our flag” given his financial wealth.

Put together, Principal Lavender’s *pro-racism* perceptions of Images 1 and 2 rendered 14 insights into her racial beliefs, revealing two recurring features: 1) a visceral resentment toward efforts that shed light on the ways in which U.S. structural racism advantages White people; 2) a propensity to preserve narratives of U.S. dominance, in the form of upholding White racial dominance.

Furthermore, Principal Lavender’s racial beliefs signal *both* a strong alignment with the tenets and rhetoric of diversity, equity, and inclusion, *and* a strong aversion to the practices necessary to operationalize its principles. Supporters of culturally responsive school leadership will need to think deeply and strategically around the design and implementation of mechanisms that identify and support school leaders like Principal Lavender. This will be a necessary endeavor to transform school leaders’ *imperializing* racial attitudes and *pro-racism* perceptions to more discerning and anti-racist stances to fully operationalize the deep learning and racial equity efforts central to culturally responsive-sustaining education.

RQ2. In what ways do culturally responsive school leaders' racial beliefs change over time?

3.2. Four Principals: Four Developmental Racial Learning Streams

After I analyzed and assessed all four principals' Subject-Object Interviews (SOIs), it was determined that Principals CeCe, Kay, Jay, and DiDi held both a *Self-Authoring* developmental sensemaking system (Stage 4) and a *Self-Transforming* developmental sensemaking system (Stage 5) (Table 6). This translates to both sensemaking systems being present. When two sensemaking systems are present, it is customary for the researcher to determine which sensemaking system is most pronounced, or more dominant, between the two (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2019; Lahey et al., 2011). As such, through further analysis of their SOIs, I determined that Principal CeCe held a dominant *Self-Transforming* sensemaking system. *Self-Transforming* adults engage a sense of self that is flexible to the relational context, making judgments and acting with best interests for the given situation even though it may be partial or incomplete. They have the capacity to stand back from both their sociocultural frame and personal value system to appraise the context more fully.

Principals Kay, Jay, DiDi held dominant *Self-Authoring* sensemaking systems. *Self-Authoring* adults value the self and internal authority. They have grown to take perspective on the interpersonal context and society's expectations of them. In other words, they can hold, prioritize, and reflect on different perspectives and relationships (see Table 6).

Additional in-depth interviews with the four principals – exploring their childhoods and earliest memories learning about racism – illuminated a change process within their racial beliefs over time. I term this change process in their developmental racial literacy: a *developmental racial learning stream*. Developmental racial learning streams are punctuated by four temporal phases:

Table 6

Stage Levels of Developmental Sensemaking Systems and How they Relate to Social Justice Leadership

Sensemaking System (Order of Consciousness/ Way of Knowing)	Descriptive Features	Relationship to Social Justice Leadership	Limitations/Growing Edges
Instrumental (Stage 2) *Rule-oriented self*: How can I get the things I want and need?	• Adults at the instrumental order are generally motivated by self-interest, purpose, wants, and concrete needs. Instrumental knowers are subject to their desires, unable to think abstractly; and they generalize from one context to another.	• Instrumental leaders approach social leadership and by asking "What can I do?" with an emphasis on concrete steps and behaviors. • They have dualistic (or binary) thinking; focusing on "right" and "wrong" answers –"right" ways to think and "right" ways to act.	• Seeing beyond one's own experiences and worldviews. • Might tend to focus their social justice efforts on their more immediate surroundings and specific individuals rather than on organizational or systemic dynamics. • More fully taking teammates' perspectives. • Recognizing there is not just one "right" way to address equity issues.
Socializing (Stage 3) *Other-focused self*: What you think of me, I think of me.	• Adults at the socializing order value others' (external authority) expectations and opinions. They are shaped by the definitions and expectations of their interpersonal environment. It is the most common sensemaking system among adults. • Unlike instrumental knowers, socializing knowers have developed the capacity to think abstractly—to think about thinking—to make rationalizations, and to reflect on their actions and the actions of others.	• Socializing leaders will turn to valued others not for the one "right" way of teaching or leading for social justice but for the *best* way, or the way they should teach and lead to meet other's expectations. • Often bring strong relational qualities to their leadership.	• Engaging in conflict and difficult conversations. • Taking a strong stand for an idea when others may disagree. • Questioning their own ability to effectively engage in public talk about race and racism. • It may be very hard for socializing knowers to address sensitive topics such as race or racism as they worry that doing so may threaten important relationships.
Self-Authoring (Stage 4) *Reflective self*: Am I staying true to my own values and competencies?	• Adults at the self-authoring order value the self and internal authority. Self-authoring knowers have grown to take perspective on the interpersonal context and society's expectations of them. In other words, they can hold, prioritize, and reflect on different perspectives and relationships. • They can control their feelings and emotions and are able to discuss their internal states. They also have the capacity to hold opposing feelings simultaneously and not be torn apart by them.	• May feel more comfortable advocating for their students, colleagues, themselves, and what they believe in. • Self-authoring leaders engage in conflict without feeling torn apart, thinking systemically, and enacting a clear vision – dispositions that generally align with many traditional understandings of effective leadership.	• Working with teammates with very different views and ideas. • Inviting others into one's thinking and vision. • Critiquing one's own vision.
Self-Transforming *Interconnecting self*: How can we learn from each other and grow together?	• Adults at the self-transforming order have the capacity to stand back from both their sociocultural frame and personal value system to appraise the context more fully. • Self-transforming knowers engage a sense of self that is flexible to the relational context, making judgments and acting with best interests for the given situation even though it may be partial or incomplete. • Self-transforming knowers remain in the minority (e.g., current estimates place them at about 8-11% of the population in the United States) between the ages of 40 and 60 years old.	• Often seek out other people with whom they can engage in deep dialogue about life issues, especially the paradoxes and inconsistencies that exist in our world and within ourselves. • While self-transforming leaders can take a firm stand for their values and principles, they also recognize the value of looking beyond themselves, of opening up their ideological suits of armor to explore an even wider spectrum of ideas and possibilities.	• Meeting people where they are • Navigating hierarchical structures • Needing support when required to make quick decisions amid complexity • Continuing to grapple with the complexities of learning and unlearning about identity and equity • Growing the capacity to recognize and be patient with the slow pace of change

Note: Adapted from Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017, 2019; Drago-Severson et al., 2020; Kegan & Lahey, 2010

1) *obscuring*; 2) *shattering*; 3) *revealing*; and 4) *appraising*; each of which I will describe in further detail in the following subsections. Moreover, interviews with these four school leaders – and in the case of Principals CeCe and Kay: interviews with their colleagues – revealed insights into how these school leaders enact (or do not enact) culturally responsive-sustaining education at their schools.

What follows is a view into each principal's developmental racial learning stream – that is, how each principal's racial beliefs changed over time; and how their racial literacies show up in their implementation of culturally responsive school leadership.

Principal CeCe's Developmental Racial Learning Stream.

Principal CeCe's Obscuring Phase: Obscuring Racial Beliefs. During the *obscuring* phase, racial beliefs are largely unexamined with little to no understanding of racialized experience or the ways in which racism operates at multiple social levels in society. During this phase, racialized conversations are often insignificant or perplexing.

As Principal CeCe explained when asked about her earliest memory learning about racism:

> The only thing I really remember about a conversation about race growing up would be my parents had a family...they're our friends in our church who had adopted two children who were black. And I remember my mom saying how...talking about how tricky that was...because they didn't know much and there was some learning involved. So that was the first time I had ever really...thought about that. I remember in the church...people making comments about interracial marriage that sticks with me and how...some people were fine with it and some people were not. And that was confusing to me. But again, I didn't think about that...I didn't put a lot of thought into that.

Principal CeCe recalled the racialized discourse of interracial marriage as "confusing" to her illustrating the disorienting feature of the obscuring phase within her developmental racial learning stream. Further, Principal CeCe corroborates the absence of any interrogation of her

own racial beliefs when she confirmed that she "didn't think about that" or "didn't put a lot of thought into that".

Principal CeCe's Shattering Phase: Shattering Racial Beliefs. During the *shattering* phase, a generally unexpected or unplanned racial incident occurs to the individual such that racial beliefs are publicly questioned or challenged. This racial incident creates disorientation in the form of conflict between previously obscure racial beliefs and racial beliefs rendered legible, shattering the idea that racial beliefs cannot be critiqued.

For Principal CeCe, she could not recall any formative racial incident during her childhood or adolescence, however she did share examples from her tenure as a principal at a previous school building. Although she could not provide many details due to privacy issues, she did share that:

> a new superintendent came in who acted in a way that absolutely went against what I believed to be true about education, leadership and morality. And then there was a day when there was a situation involving race and I said, I cannot stay here anymore. I cannot, I will not be used to do this to my team and to children. And so I walked in the middle of the year.

For Principal CeCe, her *shattering* phase was catalyzed by her superintendent's ongoing unethical behavior which included "a situation involving race" that led to her decision to resign from her school leadership role.

Principal CeCe's Revealing Phase: Revealing Racial Beliefs. During the *revealing* phase, racial beliefs and racialized experiences are made legible and are interrogated, leading to increased awareness and knowledge of racialized experience. In addition, this leads to viewing racism more as a structural phenomenon and social process with more complexity than previously understood.

For Principal CeCe, her *revealing* phase was mediated by a former colleague who had gone through her own racial learning as a trans-racial adoptee. She explained:

> when I first became a principal of my old school, I hired an assistant principal who was adopted into a family that was white and she's brown. And so she has, you know, done so much work. And so she was an incredible teacher...I'm so grateful to her because she just opened my eyes to a lot of things and I was just in a place of like learning so much from her. She's a person who I felt safe asking questions to. She's been a gift to me in helping me learn. And I know that's not her responsibility, but...she's just been a person for me.

Principal CeCe affirms that hearing about her colleague of color's racialized experiences "opened my eyes", revealing the complexities of racialized experience. And despite understanding that it wasn't her colleague's duty to support her racial learning, she "felt safe asking questions" in growing her racial awareness and knowledge.

Principal CeCe's Appraising Phase: Appraising Racial Beliefs. During the *appraising* phase, racial beliefs are adjusted or recalibrated to accommodate newly interrogated racial beliefs and experiences. An example of appraising racial beliefs is Principal CeCe's racial perceptions of Images 1 (Equality, Equity, Reality) and 2 (TIME magazine Cover of Colin Kaepernick kneeling).

When responding to Image 1 (Equality, Equity, Reality), Principal CeCe wrote:

> It visually represents what I believe to be true about these terms and our current reality in our country. We must drive for equity which also must include acknowledging our current reality. I have experienced this as a female surrounded [b]y so many male leaders. I have also seen the realities of this with my own child who is gay and navigating an educational system where she experiences hate regularly. We must continue to actively work for change in our systems.

At the core of Principal CeCe's Image 1 racial perception is a belief that structural power asymmetries persist in U.S. society leading to harmful outcomes for children and families (i.e., "current reality in our country", her child experiencing "hate regularly"), and that remedying those harmful outcomes requires structural social changes (i.e., "change in our systems").

Further, when responding to Image 2 (TIME magazine Cover of Colin Kaepernick kneeling), Principal CeCe wrote:

> I support and fight alongside those who are speaking out against injustice and privilege. My child does not stand for the pledge in school because she does not support a country where she does not feel safe being who she is. Our country was founded on white privilege and violence. We must do better.

When she states that the U.S. "was founded on white privilege and violence", this illustrates an anti-racist quality to Principal CeCe's racial perception. Given that it foregrounds how structural racism disadvantages racialized Black and Brown people, and advantages White people ("Our country was founded on white privilege and violence"), it challenges and unsettles the logics of U.S. metanarratives that obscure how structural racism works in society (e.g., *the U.S. is neither founded on white privilege nor on violence*).

For clarity, I employ *U.S. metanarrative* here to mean the set of mainstream stories that inform what we believe to be true about the history, reality, and future direction of U.S. society (C.A.M Banks, 1996; J. Banks, 2002). Because the development of these mainstream stories tether directly to social processes of racial formation, subjugation, extraction, violence, and dispossession of racialized Black and Brown people for racialized White social advantage (see Byng, 2013; Molina, 2002; Omi & Winant, 1994, Sabzalian, 2019), U.S. metanarratives often work to erase both the existence and the significance of these social processes to preserve the falsehood that U.S. society is beyond ideological critique – that is, beyond external critique (McClendon, 2002).

As Principal CeCe moved through the *obscuring*, *shattering*, *revealing*, and *appraising* phases of her racial learning, the change over time in her racial beliefs and experiences prompted more complex racial beliefs that informed a more structural view of racism. This level of

understanding guided leadership efforts and actions meant to operationalize the tenets of culturally responsive-sustaining education.

When prompted to choose the most vulnerable student populations at her school, Principal CeCe chose Economically Disadvantaged, LGBTQIA+, and Black and Hispanic students. Principal CeCe identified "limited community supports, not enough training for staff, lack of diversity in student and staff populations" as factors contributing to those student groups being identified as the most underserved or marginalized.

When asked what actions she and her leadership team implemented to support Economically Disadvantaged, LGBTQIA+, and Black and Hispanic students, Principal CeCe shared:

> Student support teams; staff positions focused on family support; bi-weekly data and student review and action planning meetings; student mentoring; free tutoring during the school year and summer with free transportation for all; free enrichment opportunities with free transportation during the school year and summer for all; removing barriers by providing all school supplies for all students; providing dental cleanings, sneakers, school snacks, backpacks, clothing, and weekend food packs for all students who need them.

Principal CeCe's leadership actions show evidence of two high-leverage leadership practices: 1) *fostering an equitable school culture*; 2) *hiring and placing personnel* (Galloway & Ishimaru, 2019). First, *fostering an equitable school culture* ranging from the targeted provision of school supplies and oral healthcare "for all students who need them" to access to enrichment opportunities and transportation at no cost. Second, *hiring and placing personnel* through the placement of staff to support students and families (e.g., "student support teams" and "staff positions focused on family support").

CRSL in Action: Principal CeCe. In a conversation around how her district would define racism, Principal CeCe shared that you would get "mixed answers" depending on who you talked to. She stressed that, although there is a focus on student wellness, some district leaders

shy away from any public race talk, and push to focus instead on "belonging" to avoid dealing with people deemed "too sensitive" about social issues, including racism.

For example, Principal CeCe recounted an experience when a Black student at her school advocated to remove the word "picnic" from the title of their annual family event given its relationship to anti-Black violence (lynchings)[4]. She explained that after listening to the Black student and his reasoning, she advocated to have the name of the event changed. By engaging the voices of students of color – particularly Black students – Principal CeCe's decision to change the event's name animates race-conscious trust-building – an active ingredient in the enactment of cultural responsiveness (Banwo et al., 2021; Khalifa, 2018; Reed & Swaminathan, 2016). However, when Principal CeCe shared her decision (which she regarded as culturally responsive) with some district leaders, she recalled that "they got very defensive" claiming that this Black student's advocacy was in fact an example of "changing our language".

In contrast, Principal CeCe underscored how her superintendent was nothing but supportive of her decision, and understood her motivation for changing the event's name. Principal CeCe's leadership context exposes how district leaders can hold contradictory and competing beliefs around what constitutes cultural responsiveness; and what actions are deemed appropriate or inappropriate. This foregrounds the often uncertain decision-making terrain that school leaders must navigate when implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education (DeMatthews, 2016).

Furthermore, at the level of professional learning, there was evidence of *curated spaces of white discomfort* (Irby, 2021) through a leadership team book study exploring issues of White

[4] It is important to clarify that the word "picnic" is not a shorthand for the racist euphemism "pick-a-nigger" in reference to the lynching of Black people, particularly Black men. There is, however, compelling evidence that lynchings of Black people occurred at social events such as family gatherings, sporting events, communal functions, and the like (see Pilgrim, 2004; Wells-Barnett, 1892/2005).

privilege and racial injustice. In our 1-on-1 interview, Reed – Principal CeCe's Dean of Students – revealed that:

> our culturally responsive book that we read together was 'Raising White Kids', which is...by a white author about raising white kids...in a racially unjust America. And...[you] just get the sense that members of our team are not willing to go as deep as we need to in order to...affect change. And part of that might be...their pulse on where the school board and the larger community is at...that we need to take steps gradually, but certainly at times it feels like it's not enough.

Here, Reed – a White man born in the Pacific Islands and raised in upstate New York – expresses his view that his colleagues seem reluctant to engage in deeper reflection of their racial beliefs and experiences at the expense of actions that could "affect change". Additionally, Reed foregrounds how his colleagues' fear of district or community backlash informs their position that change is best when incremental where "we need to take steps gradually" even though that incremental approach does not serve the needs of their students. Despite Reed's view that incrementalism feels like "it's not enough", there is still an organizational routine where school leaders and staff are spending some time reflecting to some extent on about their racial beliefs and experiences. This begs many questions – a few being: 1) How do school leaders push back against local community desires (i.e., prohibiting racial learning in schools) when they betray the learning goals of culturally responsive-sustaining education? 2) What forms of structured professional learning and development are necessary for school leaders to navigate the tensions that arise from critically self-reflecting about racism with staff and community members?

If the goals of culturally responsive-sustaining education – *welcoming and affirming environment*; *high expectations and rigorous instruction*; *inclusive curriculum and assessment*; *ongoing professional learning and support* (New York State Education Department, n.d.) – are to be met with any real fidelity, there needs to be urgent focus on these questions to support the

school leaders who ultimately must drive this work relationally, instructionally, and organizationally (Grissom et al., 2021).

Principal Kay's Developmental Racial Learning Stream.

Principal Kay's Obscuring Phase: Obscuring Racial Beliefs. When asked about her earliest memory learning about racism, Principal Kay explained:

> I think I made it all the way to college without really knowing anyone of color and really putting it together that our experiences might have been different.

Here Principal Kay corroborates that examining her racial beliefs was not an activity she engaged in consciously, and that it was not until her college experience that she realized there was more to racialized experience than previously believed. This unawareness of racial belief and experience animates the obscuring feature of her *obscuring* phase. Further, Principal CeCe corroborates the absence of any interrogation of her own racial beliefs when she confirmed that it wasn't until she got to college that she began "putting it together" that racialized experiences exist and are different for people racialized as Black and non-Black.

Principal Kay's Shattering Phase: Shattering Racial Beliefs. Principal Kay remembered a specific unexpected racial incident that animated her *shattering* phase. During her college years, she shared that:

> there were a lot of guys who were Black who came from New York City...some of them were athletes, some of them just straight scholars...I remember joking with somebody and just made a flippant comment about, you know, calling people 'boys'. And I got a lot of backlash. It was like, 'who you calling boys?' and, you know, all this stuff. And it was like, wait a minute, I just call guys 'boys'...I didn't know what it meant. I wasn't meaning anything by it. And I remember...being like, what did I, what did I just do? And that was a distinct memory for me. It was kind of like, I didn't mean anything by it. I don't even know what I'm talking about...I don't even know what I don't know. And here I'm walking into a cultural situation that, you know, I just was calling guys 'boys' and it kind of came back at me in a way I didn't quite understand.

Principal Kay recalled the racialized discourse of calling her Black male college friends "boys" as something she "didn't quite understand". This racialized experience highlights the disorienting nature of her *shattering* phase, where racial beliefs and experiences are publicly challenged. Further, it shatters the preconceived notions that racial beliefs and experiences cannot be examined.

Principal Kay's Revealing Phase: Revealing Racial Beliefs. For Principal Kay, it was through structured racial learning into the lives of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X that revealed that her racial beliefs were limited in their scope. She explained that as part of her college's curriculum:

> we spent a lot of time talking about conversion, like Catholic Christian kind of conversion and spending a lot of time, you know, one of my classes we spent a lot of time talking about Martin Luther King. And rather than me take that path through that class, I went the Malcolm X path, because he also went through this amazing, you know...Muslim conversion in this whole process. And I spent a lot of time just trying to be more self-aware and more culturally aware and just...more sensitive because I didn't know what I didn't know. So it's funny that it was college though. I feel like a late bloomer.

For Principal Kay, her *revealing* phase was mediated by exploring the racialized experiences and beliefs of prominent Black scholar-activists, whose racial beliefs were rooted in Black radical Christology (MLK, Jr) and Black Islamic-Pan-African nationalism (Malcolm X). This increased her racial awareness and knowledge where she saw the benefit of spending time "trying to be more self-aware...more culturally aware...more sensitive" to what she didn't know about race and racism.

Principal Kay's Appraising Phase: Appraising Racial Beliefs. Focusing on her racial perceptions, Principal Kay shared the following when responding to Image 2 (TIME magazine cover of Colin Kaepernick kneeling):

> This image means Freedom of Expression to me. It means fighting disenfranchisement. It means making a statement in a humble and peaceful but powerful way. As a school leader in a predominantly white school, I recognize the need for allies. This image means being willing to sacrifice and stand up for one another. It isn't about disrespect, it's about how great America can be...I want my children, both my own and my school children, to be willing to stand up for one another.

In this segment of her racial perception, Principal Kay reveals five insights into her racial beliefs: 1) her view that Colin Kaepernick's kneeling is "freedom of expression"; 2) her belief that his kneeling is about "fighting disenfranchisement"; 3) her view that his actions resonate "in a humble and peaceful but powerful way"; 4) her belief that his kneeling "isn't about disrespect"; 5) her desire for a context where her own children and her students are "willing to stand up for one another". Principal Kay's desire for contexts where her children and her students are "willing to stand up for one another" evince a mutualizing ethic central to shared belonging and caring leadership philosophies (Bass, 2009; Gray et al., 2018; Noddings, 1984).

The quality of her racial perception is more anti-racist as it rests in her affirming that Colin Kaepernick's kneeling "means fighting disenfranchisement" and "isn't about disrespect". This characterization shows that Principal Kay is engaging *why* Kaepernick is kneeling in the first place in direct tension with the *pro-racism* racial perceptions of school leaders like Principal Lavender that showed no evidence of engaging Kaepernick's motivation for his protest.

CRSL in Action: Principal Kay. Principal Kay's *discerning* racial attitudes operationalize themselves when responding to the contributing factors to student vulnerability at her school. She recognized that despite her program's efforts to support students of color and students with disabilities, the system still works to reify their vulnerable status by "segregating them in special programs"; particularly "boys of color".

When asked what actions her and her leadership team implemented to support these vulnerable students, she wrote that they worked "to reshape the design of these programs" by

trying “to infuse the curriculum with technology, nature studies and public service” so students “feel part of something bigger [than] just school”. Despite the strong focus on curriculum and social skills development, there was no evidence in Kay’s leadership actions of organizational racial equity resources being leveraged (i.e., Black and Brown influential presence; curated spaces of white discomfort; courageously confrontational culture; open awareness of racial emotions and beliefs; race-conscious inquiry leadership; see Irby, 2021). However, two focus group interviews with Principal Kay’s leadership team members, did reveal a deeply racially charged incident that Principal Kay had to manage where one White student called students of color “niggers”[5]. Aria, a Mexican-American school psychologist with over 10 years of counseling experience, explained how:

> we had an incident where there was a little boy, white boy, who was calling some boys of color...niggers...I appreciated the way we brought them all in. You know, we were having a community meeting. We brought all the students in...[all the staff] so it was like a huge team to let them know...hey, this is some serious stuff going on here. But I definitely appreciated how [Principal Kay]...approached it, it was beautiful. It was something like: hey, you know what? This might be uncomfortable for you guys, but we need to talk about it. We need to talk to you and let you know why it’s unacceptable to say this word. And we need to ask you, why does it make you feel it’s okay to say it? And then on the other hand, how does it make you feel...when somebody that’s in your class is saying this to you?...So I think being very real with the students that way, instead of teeter tottering about it...it was a beautiful way in the way she approached it.

For this particular incident, Principal Kay and her team animate two CRSL tenets: 1) promoting culturally responsive, inclusive, anti-oppressive school contexts; and 2) engages students, parents, and Indigenous contexts by establishing community credibility, rapport, and trust (Khalifa, 2018). In addition, she operationalized two organizational racial equity resources in her cultural responsiveness: *courageously confrontational culture* and *open awareness of*

[5] I choose to reveal the word “niggers” instead of employing n-word because Aria, the school psychologist recounted verbatim what the White boy student said to students of color during our focus group interview. In order to honor both the severity and the veracity of the racial incident, I have decided against masking what was said during both the interview and the actual racial incident.

racial emotions and beliefs (Irby, 2021). By addressing this racial incident publicly through a community assembly where there would be public discussion as to "why it's unacceptable to say this word", Principal Kay set the expectation that public race talk is necessary to any racial learning, even when White students use racial slurs toward students of color. Additionally, Principal Kay's approach to prompt student reflection by asking questions about the relationship between race, language, and emotions modeled to both students and staff how to animate a courageously confrontational culture when managing racial transgressions (see Irby, 2021). Further, it provided a forum for students and adult staff to openly express their racial emotions and beliefs. Despite Principal Kay's ability to engage in challenging racial discussions, there was no evidence of organizational routines or protocols to manage racial incidents in general. Principal Kay corroborated this insight when she shared that she felt her work was merely "reacting to the incident" rather than being "truly culturally responsive". This underscores how having *high awareness* of structural racism does not predict the implementation quality of culturally responsive school leadership actions that drive organizational racial equity. What does it mean, then, for school leaders who are highly racially aware, but feel like they are largely improvising their responses to racial incidents? How do school leaders ensure their cultural responsiveness is both contextual and intentional? These are questions worth exploring to better support school leaders like Principal Kay.

Principal Jay's Developmental Racial Learning Stream.

Principal Jay's Obscuring Phase: Obscuring Racial Beliefs. For Principal Jay, he shared how although different racial-ethnic groups were visible in his neighborhood and at school, discussions about race and racism were largely absent. He shared that race and racism:

> wasn't talked about...It just wasn't, I mean, growing up in the seventies, you know, I was a kid in the seventies, early eighties...as a family, we didn't really talk about it, but there

> are all [these] people from all kinds of backgrounds that were running around through our house...it wasn't talked about.

Principal Jay confirms the obscuring feature of the *obscuring* phase where racial beliefs and experiences are left unexamined because there was no active discussion of race or racism within his family that he could remember.

Principal Jay's Shattering Phase: Shattering Racial Beliefs. Principal Jay remembered an unexpected racial incident at an early age that began to animate his *shattering* phase. He explained that when he was five or six years old:

> My oldest sister's [friend]... he was about six foot, three or four. He was a great friend of my sister's, very dark [skinned] young man. And he knocked on the door, they were going out with friends. And I opened the door and looked up and he looked at me [and said] 'yes, I'm a large Black man, I'm about to step into your living room'. And he was just big...not what I expected. And he just looked at me and said, 'yep, I'm a Black man, and I'm going to a party with your fair skinned white sister. And I'm like, okay...So that was just like in your face. But he did it with a smile and it was kind, it wasn't meant any other way, you know? And they'd been friends for a long time. I didn't know. [My] mom comes out, gives him a hug and it is just kind of like, alright, that makes sense. And then as I look back now, I probably, you know, clearly didn't quite get it all.

Here Principal Jay confirms how, at a very young age, he was already making racialized associations at the somatic level where his sister's tall Black male friend wasn't what he "expected" when he opened the door. When his sister's friend affirmed that he was a Black man going to a party with his White sister, this brought into sharp relief for Principal Jay the racialization of the Black body because as he put it, "that was just...in your face". And despite admitting that he "clearly didn't quite get it all", witnessing his mother embracing his sister's Black friend shifted his initial position of disorientation to a position where "that makes sense".

Principal Jay's shifting perception of racialized Black male bodies from "not what I expected" to "that makes sense" illustrates the shattering of his preconceived notions of racialized experience.

Principal Jay's Revealing Phase: Revealing Racial Beliefs. Principal Jay explained that it wasn't until high school that he started to wonder about race and racism. He shared that:

> it was probably high school when I started to think about...how the school was the hub and everybody came, all the kids came together there. I didn't always see the [racial-ethnic] tension, but it was there. But...my first memories of it, of race, you know, being something identifiable as a physical feature was young...as a social construct [to] divide and oppress people...that took quite a bit longer...we get the government politics in more modern US history. I'm like, okay, this I get. But it took that and seeing those struggles to look at the foundation of the nation...I questioned a lot of stuff as a kid, which probably got me in some trouble. But...my experiences with race are, for me, seemed fragmented. Different stages of my own learning.

For Principal Jay, it took interrogating the racial and political history of the U.S.'s founding to catalyze his more complex view of race "as a social construct" operating to "divide and oppress people". This increased racial awareness and knowledge signals how Principal Jay's racial beliefs grew more complex during his *revealing* phase.

Principal Jay's Appraising Phase: Appraising Racial Beliefs. Focusing on his racial perceptions, when responding to Image 1 (Equality, Equity, Reality), Principal Jay wrote that:

> It is a simplified representation of a much larger social issue. It has some issues in how it represents the broader issues around diversity and equity. In its most basic form it connects to what I have seen in the communities in which I live and work. As a white male I have not experienced the same level of inequity. I have experienced the inequity that comes along with growing up in a struggling working class family but nothing in terms of race, gender, religion (not intersectionality of discriminatory experiences).

In this racial perception, Principal Jay reveals three insights into his racial beliefs: 1) his view that the image simplifies "a much larger social issue"; 2) his recognition that, despite growing up in working class White household, he incurs no social penalties for his racialized and gendered identities as "a white male"; 3) his recognition that multiple axes of difference ("race, gender, religion") are valued in different ways producing different forms of inequities in lived experiences ("intersectionality of discriminatory experiences").

At the core of his racial perception is a recognition that racialized experiences differ in society, and that White people, and in particular White males, do not experience social penalties for identifying or being read as White and male.

CRSL in Action: Principal Jay. Principal Jay identified Economically Disadvantaged students, English Language Learners, LGBTQIA+ students, Black Students, and Multiracial students as the most vulnerable student populations at this school. When asked about the leadership actions he and his team implemented to support these student groups, Principal Jay shared:

> we conducted student surveys about their school experience, held circle discussions with students and staff, and took the gathered data and presented it to a cadre of students in order to build an action plan for this school year. The students made recommendations, we introduced professional development on implicit bias, and recommended changes in the master schedule, removal of prerequisite courses and minimum course grade thresholds for access to AP and University in the High School courses. We worked with the students to develop an action plan for this school year. The plans came to a screeching halt with the introduction of a district wide SEL one-size fits all program. Our equity and diversity administrator was reassigned and the work slowed considerably.

Principal Jay stressed in our interview that Black and Brown students were active participants in the school improvement plan process – from survey design to data analysis, insights, and action steps.

In their CRSL actions, Principal Jay and his leadership team animate two CRSL tenets: 1) promoting culturally responsive, inclusive, anti-oppressive school contexts; and 2) engages students, parents, and Indigenous contexts by establishing community credibility, rapport, and trust (Khalifa, 2018). In addition, their actions leverage two organizational racial equity resources: 1) *Black and Brown influential presence*; and 2) *Race-conscious inquiry leadership* (Irby, 2021).

First, students communicated their thoughts and feelings about their school experience through surveys. Second, in-school discussions between students and staff occurred focused on how to improve student experience. Third, insights from student survey data were shared with students and were primed to inform a schoolwide improvement plan. Fourth, students shared recommendations with school administration, which included: implicit bias training for staff, changes to school schedule, removal of access barriers to AP (advanced placement) and college preparatory courses.

Despite these schoolwide efforts being race-conscious and informed by Black and Brown students, district leadership actions derailed these efforts where "plans came to a screeching halt...with a district wide SEL one size fits all program". This illustrates how district leadership actions intended to support social-emotional learning of all students ("one size fits all SEL program") can derail intraschool efforts to advance cultural responsiveness and racial equity improvement.

Principal DiDi's Developmental Racial Learning Stream.

Principal DiDi's Obscuring Phase: Obscuring Racial Beliefs. Although there was no explicit interrogation of her racial beliefs, Principal DiDi shared her experience of unbelonging as an ELL [English Language Learner], who transitioned at a young age from school in Central America to school in the United States. She shared that:

> I'm actually a former ELL [English Language Learner], I moved to the United States when I was in third grade. And my experience of, I was born in [Central America] and I did attend school there. I attended a parochial school; that was quite common to do. So when I moved to the [United] States, I started in a public school and it was during a time that was sink or swim. There were no services provided to...ELLs. And it probably took me, I would say, about a year to really catch up on the language...And I very clearly remember what that felt like...it didn't feel good.

When Principal DiDi asserts that her experience as an English Language Learner (ELL) "didn't feel good" because there were no services to support her learning, she animates the "subtractive" feeling of social exclusion and unbelonging that many Latinx ELLs experience in U.S. schools (Bartlett & García, 2011; Valenzuela, 1999). For Principal DiDi, her experience as an ELL short-lived the obscuring feature of her *obscuring* phase as it put into sharp relief the power asymmetries endemic to Latinx racialized experience, yet did so in more complex sociocultural and sociolinguistic terms ("it was during a time where it was sink or swim"; "no services provided to ELLs"; "took...about a year...to catch up on the language") rather than oversimplified Black-White binary ways of reading race and racism (e.g., *race and racism simply relate to skin color*; see Alcoff, 2003; Solórzano & Yosso, 2001).

Principal DiDi's Shattering Phase: Shattering Racial Beliefs. Regarding her *shattering* phase, Principal DiDi remembered a particularly acute racial incident as a teenager catalyzed by her father in relation to her relationship with a Dominican boy. She shared that:

> it was my own parents, you know?...this speaks to the fact that people think they know...a group or can apply a stereotype because they think they know a group...or what have you. And...my parents were very adamant that I could not divorce myself from...being from [Central America] and having all those traditions which we practiced at home...as I grew up and the language...that was super important to them. But what was also interesting is...I had a boyfriend in eighth grade, my first boyfriend, and he was Dominican. And when my father found out that was the end of that, he actually went to that boy's parents' house...[I was] mortified.

She continued:

> my dad was like, there's no way in hell you're...going to be with a Dominican...maybe Puerto Rican, but not Dominican, because he had a certain idea...Puerto Ricans work hard, Dominicans not so much. And...it's like, oh my God. And I was like, that is not who I am...so I would say that that was my earliest [memory of learning about racism], and it was my own parents and really beginning to understand and learn...who they were as individuals and their thought processes...about the world, about people. And you know...I had never...I never thought of people that way before...at least I don't consciously recall that. And so yeah...that evening is quite etched in my mind.

For Principal DiDi, the racist logics expressed in her father's reasoning for disapproving of her relationship with a Dominican boy ("Puerto Ricans work hard...Dominicans, not so much") shattered the unexamined mode of her racial beliefs because she went from having "never thought of people that way before" to learning more about her parents "as individuals and their thought processes...about the world, about people".

Principal DiDi's Revealing Phase: Revealing Racial Beliefs. Principal DiDi explained that it was through her graduate school experience doing field work in Mexico with Maya women that revealed more complex views around racialized experience and history. During her *revealing* phase, she reflected on how:

> all these missionaries that were going out...to the field and doing all of this work...they were the scholars, right?...all White men...all White men documenting what? not reality. And yet...we had to...spend hours on end actually photocopying original texts because it wasn't anything that was written or updated, and at the time I was just like eating it all up...But to go back and think, oh my god...this perspective is so skewed and...we just take for granted that that's how it is. And, and there's no real mention of how that actually should be corrected...or how do you even go about correcting that...who do you talk to?

She continued:

> So...in terms of doing my own field work, I wanted to focus on women...I wanted to focus on the grassroots movement...in a small village with a Mayan woman, in what she had done and why she was doing what she was doing. And, so for me...it's like that's what I needed to be able to do.

For Principal DiDi, it took her questioning why producers of knowledge have historically been "so skewed" toward the perspectives of racialized White men to reveal the racialized power asymmetries that exist within social knowledge construction (see Banks, 2002). Her experience working with Mexican Maya women directly challenged the false logics that posit that dominant Western male epistemologies encapsulate all knowledge all of the time (see Grosfoguel, 2012).

Principal DiDi's Appraising Phase: Appraising Racial Beliefs. Focusing on her racial perception, Principal DiDi shared the following when she responded to Image 2 (TIME magazine cover of Colin Kaepernick kneeling):

> This is an individual expressing their profound understanding of racism in this country. It's a reminder that we have a lot of work to do in our schools and society.

In her racial perception, Principal DiDi reveals one clear insight into her racial beliefs: 1) her view that Kaepernick's kneeling connects to an analysis of "racism in this country".

At the core of her racial perception is a recognition of the false logics within U.S. metanarratives that claim that there is no structural racism. As Principal DiDi asserted when I asked her about the barriers to racial learning: "I think the barrier is the myth that there is no racism in the United States". A further corroboration of both the anti-racist feature of Principal DiDi's racial perceptions and her view of racism as a structural phenomenon.

CRSL in Action: Principal DiDi. Working in an affluent majority-White suburban district in New York, Principal DiDi shared how a major constraint in driving culturally responsive-sustaining education at her school has been the significant lack of support from district leadership. She explained how:

> there has to be evidence that there's definitely support from the board and the district level admin, when questions are raised with respect to why are we teaching X, Y, and Z. Because that's [who] I am...I am the shield for district admin, not the other way around.

And although Principal DiDi believes building-level staff want to do culturally responsive-sustaining work, she stressed that it is school board and district leadership that need to show support, particularly when questions arise from parents about curriculum decisions. Regarding an exchange with a parent concerned about gender-related content, she explained how:

> over the summer...corresponding over 200 emails in the span of maybe two months with a parent, not to mention the numerous phone calls and in-person meetings all around [in regard to] why we're teaching gender, what she termed gender theory, but it's gender identity...and terms in health [class]...and not one word of support or action of support [from the board or district leadership].

Principal DiDi underscored that, despite her own labor and efforts to engage parents and families ("over 200 emails in the span of maybe two months with a parent"), an effective organizational implementation of culturally responsive-sustaining education rests on the extent to which district leadership specifies the logics and actions that both uphold and animate cultural responsiveness and deep learning. She asserted that:

> there has to be a commitment. There has to be policy that's written by the board, which is their main job...so that parents and community knows we are committed to this work and we're committed to this change. So it's yeah...New York State puts out guidance for culturally responsive framework to be used and implemented in schools, but it's guidance, right? That's when now the district needs to put forth...policy that's going to alert everybody to the fact that this is what we believe and this is the work that we will be engaged in.

Here Principal DiDi evinces that a major constraint to her own efforts to drive culturally responsive-sustaining education was not related to a lack of effort or clarity on her part. Rather, given that there was misalignment stemming from inadequate district support, it is reasonable to wonder about district leaders' racial beliefs. In other words, what are the racial beliefs of district leaders in charge of writing the policy guidelines that Principal DiDi would like created and advanced? Do district leaders hold *imperializing* racial attitudes? Do they express *pro-racism* perceptions?

Deeper exploration into these questions may better illuminate how school *and* district leaders can work to grow cultural responsiveness that moves us toward the racial equity and deep learning goals central to culturally responsive-sustaining education.

What follows is a discussion exploring implications for K-12 educational administration and school leadership.

CHAPTER VI | DISCUSSION

I conducted this study because equity and justice-focused school leadership research asserts that racial literacy plays a significant role in animating core tenets of culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL). For CRSL to be effective, a core tenet that it stresses is critical self-reflection where school leaders must interrogate the presuppositions, assumptions, and presumptions undergirding their beliefs about power asymmetries in social reality (Khalifa, 2018). Animating critical self-reflection requires an interrogation of racial beliefs and experiences to better discern the ways in which racism operates structurally at multiple social levels to preserve negative outcomes for racialized student populations, particularly those living in economically disadvantaged localities (Khalifa, 2018). This interrogation of racial beliefs and experiences for deeper understandings of structural racism is generally referred to as *race-consciousness* (Gunzenhauzer et al., 2021; Swanson & Welton, 2019), rather than racial literacy (Chávez-Moreno, 2022; Douglass Horsford, 2014). Generally framed as a set of racial sensitivities and content knowledge to acquire over time, racial literacy is rarely conceptualized as a racial sensemaking process that grows more complex and changes over time (Chávez-Moreno, 2022; Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017, 2019). Although there is strong research exploring how school leaders' racial sensemaking informs their leadership practice (DeMatthews et al., 2017; Evans, 2007a, 2007b; Henze et al., 2000; Ryan, 2003; Turner, 2015), little is known about how school leaders critically self-reflect about racism, and the extent to which their racial beliefs change over time (Drago-Severson & Blum-DeStefano, 2017, 2019; Douglass Horsford, 2011, 2014; Irby et al. 2019; Laughter et al., 2021).

In this study, I explored the racial beliefs of school leaders implementing culturally responsive-sustaining education using sensemaking and constructive-developmental frameworks.

Findings revealed that on topics of institutional discrimination and White racial privilege, racial beliefs among a subset of school leaders diverged heavily from the goals of culturally responsive-sustaining education. Additionally, findings showed evidence of diverging racial ideologies among school leaders, particularly around how they perceived the United States and its relationship to structural racism. Moreover, findings illustrated how racial beliefs can be subsumed within racial learning processes – *developmental racial learning streams* – that change over time; and that despite high racial awareness, leadership practices that animate culturally responsive-sustaining education can fall short of being *sustained* organizationally. These findings offer deeper, more nuanced, and in many ways, more paradoxical insights into school leaders' racial literacies and their implementation of CRSL practices.

In particular, my findings animate what Guinier (2004) called the interest-divergence dilemma. Whereas the interest-convergence dilemma clarified how the needs of non-dominant status groups are tethered to the accommodation of dominant status groups' needs (Bell, 1980), Guinier focuses on the interest-divergence dilemma. To Guinier, the interest-divergence dilemma illustrates both the complexity and dynamism of structural racism as it creates "interdependent yet paradoxical relationships" (p. 100; i.e., the complexity) between race, class, and geography, and other variables (i.e., the dynamism). And while Guinier admits that it is more difficult to "read" interest-divergence, thus requiring "a new racial literacy", she makes it clear that identifying interest divergences can proffer more durable understandings on how structural racism changes and sustains itself throughout society. With findings revealing diverging dispositions among school leaders vis à vis their views of institutional discrimination and White racial privilege, applying an interest-divergence framework to program content and curricula in leadership preparation programs and professional development efforts could prove fruitful. In

other words, rather than looking at where school leaders' racial beliefs align, examining where school leaders' racial beliefs seem incompatible could prove more illuminating to our understanding of how school leaders make sense of race and racism; and perhaps, more catalytic to those who undergo that process (Philip, 2011).

Additionally, the combination of the CoBRAS survey and non-textual artifacts (e.g., photo images) to evaluate racial beliefs may prove necessary to reliably analyze racial beliefs and experiences, while also rendering divergences legible for further analysis.

1. Diverging United States, Diverging Futures

I asked the four focal principals in this study – Principals CeCe, Kay, Jay, and DiDi – about the future of racism at their schools. Specifically, I asked: *Imagine you are now retired from your current role at your school. What stories about racism do you imagine are being told/expressed at your school?* In their study of racism and urban school leadership, Brooks & Watson (2019) stressed that, in addition to pretext and context, it is important to engage posttext – or, the racial futures that school leaders envision in relation to their leadership practice. Put together, the four principals shared a range of racial futures marked by worry, distrust, tempered hope, and disappointment.

Throughout their responses was the interplay between values – that is, our desired outcomes for future actions (Begley, 1996, 2004) – and place, or that which we call home (Said, 1978, 1994). At the core of their visioning was a deep uncertainty when appraising what the United States stands for. Principal Kay animated this feeling when she answered:

> I don't know...I think this country is a different place. I think the conversations that are happening at home come to school. And those conversations that are happening at school...that's my worry, is that without that very conscientious approach at school, we run the risk of it being worse than it is now...we thought we were past it. Like maybe we thought we didn't have to have these conversations at school. But as things get more volatile and more...dichotomous...farther apart...as the ends get farther apart from the

> middle, which is what seems to be happening...it's going to make things more difficult at school, more contentious, more aggressive, more antagonistic, more hateful. And my worry is that when I'm retiring, that's the world these kids will be in. And either this will be a place where none of that's acceptable or this will be a reflection of society at large. And I guess the second one worries me quite a bit. So that's probably the best way I could answer that question; is that we need to do something. And...it's not going to come from outside in, it's going to have to go the other way, from inside out. And I think that's an obligation that we have...to these children.

Principal Kay's vision of racism's future in the U.S. reveals six insights into her racial beliefs: 1) her position that the U.S. is "a different place"; 2) her view that engaging in deep racial conversations requires care and thoughtfulness animating a "conscientious" approach to race talk; 3) her position that continued social polarization will make education and school leadership "more difficult" as social relations anchored in antagonism and hatred are sustained rather than challenged; 4) her fear that without some unknown set of actions, a world rooted in combativeness and division is the one "kids" will inherit; 5) her position that whatever actions needed to redress the harms of structural racism will need to come "from inside out", and not through external agents; 6) her stance that enacting these efforts is "an obligation" to the care of children.

Although Principal Kay's response conveys a commitment to ethics of critique, care, and justice (Begley, 2006; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011), interest-divergence would push us to ask:

- What would *Principal Lavender*'s view of racism's future be?
- In what ways would it differ from Principal Kay's response?
- How would Principal Lavender's *pro-racism* perceptions engage with her commitments to multiculturalism and inclusion?
- If Principal Kay and Principal Lavender were leading schools together, how would their racial beliefs change over time? How would their racial learning streams change over time?
- What activities would catalyze Principal Lavender into *shattering* or *revealing* phases?
- Would engaging these questions deeply lead Principal Lavender to express more *discerning* racial attitudes rather than *imperializing* ones?
- Would Principal Lavender's increased racial awareness lead to any structural changes in supporting vulnerable student populations if her colleagues and district leaders maintain *obscuring* phases?

Findings suggest that this divergence approach to racial learning and developmental racial literacy in educational leadership may be useful in understanding how school leaders of different racial epistemologies reflect about race and racism.

2. Clashing Values, Questioning Leadership

Given that structural racism maintains racialized vulnerability and effectuates premature death (Gilmore, 2007), there is no doubt that racism is what Farley and colleagues (2019) describe as a socially "wicked" problem for school leaders to confront. With racism's fidelity to violence, cruelty, unfreedom, and inhumanness (Melamed, 2015), it comes to no surprise that racism is often evaluated on moral-ethical grounds (Gunzenhauser et al., 2021). Generally, within an educational administration context, school leaders' moral-ethical decision-making is informed by consequentialism (what will be the favorability of certain actions if taken or not taken?) or consensus (what actions will satisfy the most people?) (see Begley, 2006; Begley & Johansson, 2008). However because values are composites based on internal and relational capacities and experiences (Begley, 1996, 2006; Hodgkinson, 1991), there are instances where school leaders' values-informed perspectives to respond to moral-ethical dilemmas will clash with the values-informed perspectives of district leadership.

For example, Principal CeCe recounted how one of her major challenges as a school principal is the recurrence of unethical, unlawful, and immoral behaviors exhibited by district leaders. She explained that there were:

> different examples of the same theme keep coming up...it would be people in positions of leadership and power doing things that are illegal, unethical, not right...getting away with it and being allowed to continue in those positions, doing the things that they're doing. Pisses me off.

Principal CeCe continued to express her discontent by sharing the impacts of these unethical behaviors on people other than herself. She described how:

> I have walked alongside nine people in the past two years who are being forced to or choosing to leave educational positions because of the choices and behaviors and actions of their superiors, that are not aligned with their core beliefs...I've had my own experience of that.

Principal CeCe's testimony speaks to the realities of moral-ethical dilemmas where those assuming roles of responsible arbiters are themselves facilitating irresponsible behaviors and actions to no end or without reprimand. For so much focus on accountability in schools around performance (Scott & Quinn, 2015), a focus on relational responsibility (Stovall, 2014) seems limited as there is little durable support to appropriately respond to school leaders who betray moral-ethical principles of critique, care, and justice (Bass, 2009; Begley, 2006; Lowery, 2020; Shapiro & Stefkovich, 2011). National policy organizations, such as the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), would do well to provide explicit values-informed guidance on how to manage betrayals of Standard 2 (Ethics and Professional Norms) effectively and appropriately (NPBEA, 2015) when those betraying ethics are school and district leaders. Additionally, if those betrayals are connected to issues of equity and cultural responsiveness (Standard 3), it would be reasonable to examine the ways in which school leaders attempt to respond to moral-ethical dilemmas and how those responses constrain or catalyze equity and cultural responsiveness goals.

3. Clashing Values, Resigning Leadership

Clashing values can also directly impact the tenure of school leaders. Both Principals Jay and DiDi expressed that they had plans to resign or leave building leadership altogether, due to a misalignment between their values and the actions of the district. For Principal Jay, the lack of follow-through by district leaders in a well-resourced district motivated him sharing that he is exiting his current role in summer 2024. He explained that the school and the district pushed for

equity-audits to isolate where there is marginalization among vulnerable student populations, only to skip doing the recommended actions that would reduce marginalization. He recalled how:

> these folks talk a lot about their equity work, creating welcoming and affirming environments. I got a copy of an equity audit. They had a consulting group come in and do it [a few years ago]....they'd also hired a person to work the SEL [social emotional learning] and equity end for the district. They hired two positions. And I had been working closely with, with the one colleague, cause we had some stuff go down in the beginning of the year around a rumor that someone was gonna rip a hijab off of a female student's head...so we worked on that.

He continued:

> We were running student discussion circles, [the SEL equity director] was doing interviews, we're gathering data and just putting together a plan...[and it] prompted [that] we need building wide implicit bias training...the kids need it, the adults need it. We got that going. So [the SEL equity director] and I looked at this and we went to our superintendent and I said, we want this to go. Now we've got four weeks before the end of the third marking period I can just call IT [Information Technology] and we can pull it off. And that got shut down...[Principal Jay's superintendent] said, 'I thought you were talking about next year'. And I'm like...'how about for the fourth marking period?' [Principal Jay's superintendent responds] 'I need to speak to the board just to give them a heads up'. [Principal Jay] asked every month if [his superintendent] had spoken to the board: [his superintendent] hadn't spoken to the board...hadn't done a thing to fix the very easy structural adjustments that could have been made from the equity audit. And I'm like, you're not doing the work.

For Principal Jay, his superintendent's lack of follow-through to advocate for schoolwide implicit bias training translated to what he viewed as disregard for their equity-focused efforts. He highlighted how "there are structural" changes that the district can advance "that'll make a difference for kids tomorrow", yet district leadership chooses to disengage from those efforts because as Principal Jay underscored: "you don't wanna do it". Ultimately, this lack of will from district leadership highlighted clashing motivations between Principal Jay and the district, and became the foundation of his decision to resign.

In Principal DiDi's case, she came from a socioeconomically mixed district with strong equity-focused district leadership and local community support, and felt she was taking a risk

moving to an affluent, predominantly White district that was new to cultural responsiveness and equity-focused work. Nevertheless, despite her fear, she moved to her current district because as she exclaimed: “affluent white people need to really be engaged in these conversations and this work”. However, Principal DiDi’s fears were confirmed when it was clear that her efforts to “raise consciousness” as a building leader could move no further without district engagement and commitment. And from Principal DiDi’s view, the district chose to keep the equity work “very superficial” in ways that betrayed her values, making the current situation “very sad” because as she said: “I thought I could make a difference and...I realize I can’t”. As of the writing of this Discussion chapter, Principal DiDi confirmed she offered her resignation in March 2024; she plans to work in a district or central office, but is no longer interested in building level school leadership.

4. Social Learning Theory of Developmental Racial Literacy in Educational Leadership

In conclusion, findings from this study suggest that, despite racial awareness of structural racism, school leaders hold positions and views on race and racism that prove ideologically incompatible. Further, school leaders with high racial awareness and more complex racial literacies seem unsupported by district leadership to effectively implement culturally responsive-sustaining education at their schools, particularly in well-resourced, relatively affluent, predominantly White communities. Deeper examination of principals’ racial beliefs over time illuminated four distinct racial learning phases – *obscuring*, *shattering*, *revealing*, *appraising* – that constitute developmental racial learning streams.

This emergent research suggests that a richer way to frame racial literacy is as a racial learning process. Thinking of racial literacy as a racial learning process relates closely to how social-emotional learning (SEL) is conceptualized: a sociocognitive process that changes over

time (Barnes, 2019; Durlak et al., 2015; Jagers et al., 2019; Markowitz and Bouffard, 2020). With increased focus on how SEL shows up in adult educators (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Jennings et al., 2020), developmental approaches to racial learning and school leadership can illuminate how time impacts why school leaders hold the racial beliefs they hold, and how time is spent to influence leadership actions. In other words, how much time concretely (in hours, weeks, years) does it take to move school leaders upstream throughout their *developmental racial learning stream*? How long does it take to move from an *obscuring* phase to a *revealing* phase? How should these efforts be scaffolded given our differentiated ways of learning and varied sociocultural and sociohistorical knowledge bases?

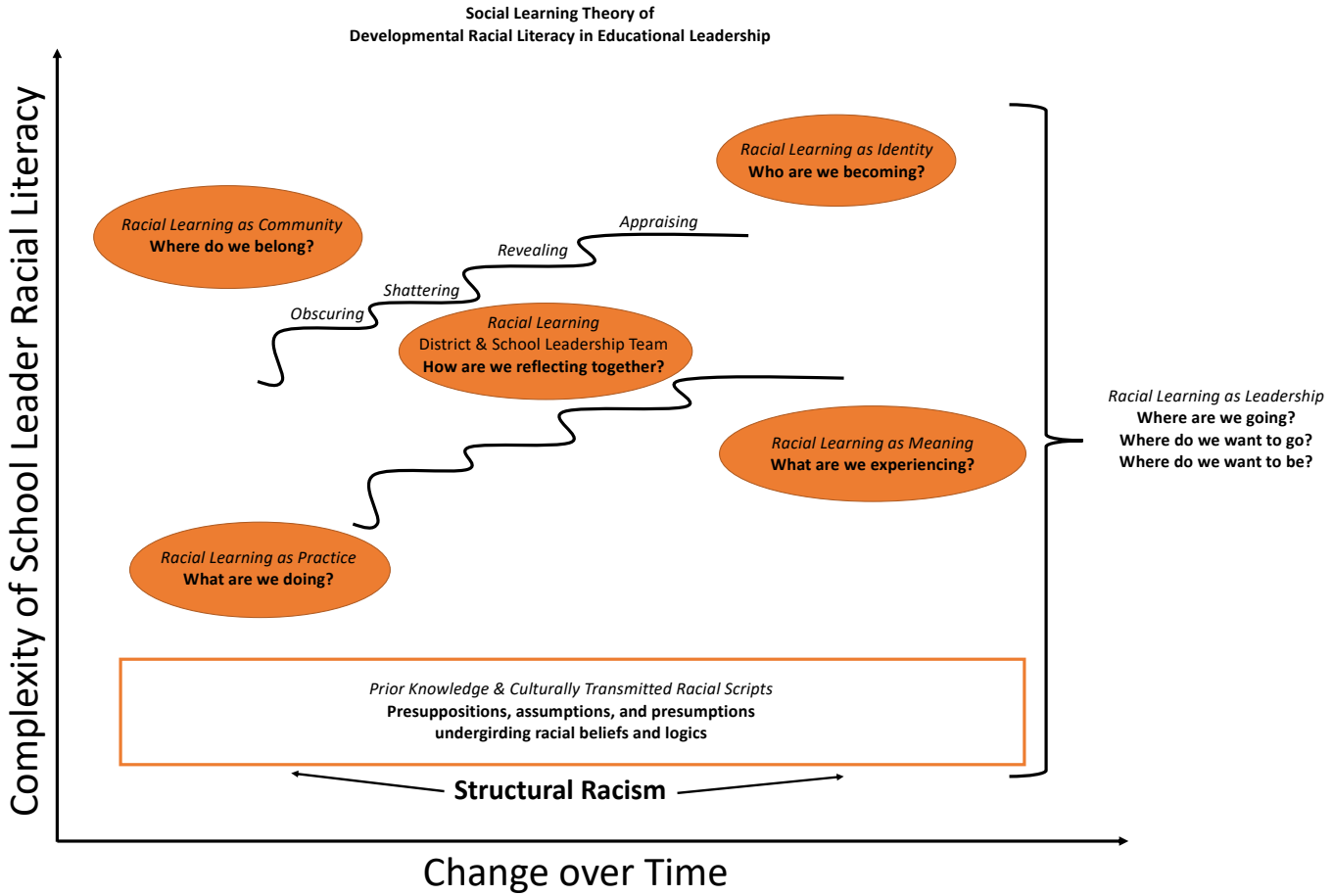
Exploring these questions in future research would deepen our understanding of racial literacy and help identify the conditions necessary to sustain racial literacies that attempt to prevent racialized vulnerability and premature death in schools, so as to promote culturally responsive-sustaining education and deep learning.

On the theoretical front, social learning theories (Wenger, 2009) could add strong foundations that can deepen the constructive-developmental bases undergirding my *developmental racial learning streams* work. As such, future research inquiries will seek to further develop, refine, and employ a *social learning theory of developmental racial literacy in educational leadership* (see Figure 8).

To redress racism's deleterious impacts on student learning and marginalized communities (Brooks & Watson, 2019; Carter et al., 2017; Green, 2017a, 2017b; Ladson-Billings, 2006), school leaders have been encouraged, as part of their leadership practice, to critically self-reflect about how racism operates in schools, their personal lives, and society (Irby et al., 2019; Khalifa, 2018; Theoharis & Haddix, 2011).

Figure 8

Social Learning Theory of Developmental Racial Literacy in Educational Leadership



Note: Adapted from Kegan & Lahey (2010) and Wenger (2009)

Within a culturally responsive school leadership (CRSL) framework, school leaders who critically self-reflect about racism both deconstruct and interrogate their racial beliefs – that is, their racial attitudes, perceptions, and ideologies (Bobo et al., 2012; Quinn & Stewart, 2019; Neville et al., 2005). This examination of racial beliefs to catalyze more complex understandings of racism animates racial literacy: a form of racial sensemaking where school leaders critically self-reflect about their racial beliefs (Douglass Horsford, 2010; Evans, 2007a, 2007b; Guinier, 2004; Irby et al., 2019; Radd & Grosland, 2018; Turner, 2015). This study sought to deepen our understanding of school leaders' racial literacies by examining their racial beliefs, and how they change over time.

Principals CeCe, Kay, Jay, and DiDi – four principals with high racial awareness and strong commitments to driving culturally responsive-sustaining education at their schools – ultimately fell short of implementing the actions that both sustain CRSL and meet its deep learning goals. And although some school leaders, like Principal Lavender, appear to betray the goals of CRSL by way of their racial beliefs, this study suggests that our racial literacies move through racial learning streams over time; even Principal Lavender. Thus, no matter how incoherent or false her premises may be, Principal Lavender may be stuck preserving the false racial logics within her *appraising* phase (Irby, 2021).

With this in mind, we can leverage interest-divergence (Guinier, 2004) to generate inquiries that may clarify what animates Principal Lavender's developmental racial learning stream. Questions such as:

- What was her relationship with school as a student?
- What was her earliest memory learning about racism?
- What are barriers to learning about racism?
- What does racism mean to her?
- Fill in the blank: I used to think racism was _____, now I think racism is _____.
- What does the United States of America mean to you?

- Think of people you trust. If those trusted people asked you to explain the United States' relationship with racism, what would you tell them?

These questions, although limited in their scope, begin to embark on what may be necessary to meet the deep learning goals of culturally responsive-sustaining education. Given that Principal Lavender can easily be *Superintendent Lavender*, *Board Member Lavender*, *Teacher Leader* Lavender, and the like, there need to be inroads into how we understand the incompatible ways in which dominant-status groups (e.g., affluent White people) experience social status threat (Jardina, 2019; Siddiqi et al., 2019), and how those misperceptions inform their leadership actions.

It should not be lost that Principal Lavender and other school leaders in this sample demonstrated the capacity to recognize structural racism. And yet, this capacity for recognition did not preclude them from *also* holding positions that failed to recognize false racial logics in U.S. metanarratives. In other words, you can simultaneously exhibit race consciousness when reflecting on leadership behaviors *and* maintain arguments that convert "Others" into weapons of fear that distract from actively redressing resource maldistribution, racialized vulnerability, and premature death in schools, and society writ large (Brooks & Watson, 2019; Fendler, 2006; Leonardo, 2009, 2013).

Future research should embrace inquiries, designs, and methods that illuminate how forms of weaponized othering develop (Othering & Belonging Institute, n.d.), and how learning communities – both professional and personal – can work together *upstream* to unsettle the continuously complex adaptations of structural racism over time.

REFERENCES

Alcoff, L. M. (2003). Latinas/os, Asian-Americans and the Black/White paradigm. *Journal of Ethics, 7*(1), 5–27.

Alston, J. A. (2005). Tempered radicals and servant leaders: Black females persevering in the superintendency. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 41*(4), 675–688. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X04274275

Alston, J. A. (2012). Standing on the promises: A new generation of Black women scholars in educational leadership and beyond. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 25*(1), 127–129. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2011.647725

American Educational Research Association. (2020). *Statement in support of anti-racist education.* https://www.aera.net/Newsroom/Statement-in-Support-of-Anti-Racist-Education

Anderson, J. D. (1988). *The education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935*. University of North Carolina Press.

Apple, M. W. (2003). Freire and the politics of race in education. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 6*(2), 107–118. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603120304821

Artiles, A. (2011). Toward an interdisciplinary understanding of educational equity and difference: The case of the racialization of ability. *Educational Researcher, 40,* 431–445. doi:10.3102/0013189X11429391

Bal, A. (2018). Culturally responsive positive behavioral interventions and supports: A process–oriented framework for systemic transformation. *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies, 40*(2), 144-174.

Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy, 18*(2), 215–228. https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093022000043065

Banks, C.A.M. (1996). The intergroup education movement. In J. A. Banks (Ed.) *Multicultural Education, Transformative Knowledge, and Action* (pp. 251–277). Teachers College Press.

Banks, C. M., & Banks, J. (1995). Equity pedagogy: An essential component of multicultural education. *Theory Into Practice,* 34, 152–158.

Banks, J. A. (2002). Race, knowledge construction, and education in the USA: Lessons from history. *Race Ethnicity Education, 5*(1), 7–27. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320120117171

Banks, J. A. (2008). Diversity, group identity, and citizenship education in a global age. *Educational Researcher, 37*(3), 129–139. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X08317501

Banwo, B. O., Khalifa, M., & Seashore Louis, K. (2021). Exploring trust: Culturally responsive and positive school leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration*. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-03-2021-0065

Barnes, T. N. (2019). Changing the landscape of social emotional learning in urban schools: What are we currently focusing on and where do we go from here? *The Urban Review, 51*(4), 599–637. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11256-019-00534-1

Bartlett, L., & García, O. (2011). *Additive schooling in subtractive times*. *Bilingual education and Dominican immigrant youth in the Heights.* Vanderbilt University Press.

Bass, L. (2009). Fostering an ethic of care in leadership: A conversation with five African American women. *Advances in Developing Human Resources, 11*(5), 619–632. https://doi.org/10.1177/1523422309352075

Bass, L. R. (2019). Black male leaders care too: An introduction to Black masculine caring in educational leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly,* 1-43.

Begley, P. (1996). Cognitive perspectives on values in administration: A quest for coherence and relevance. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 32*(3), 403-426.

Begley, P. T. (2004). Understanding valuation processes: Exploring the linkage between motivation and action. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, *32*(2), 4–17.

Begley, P. T. (2006). Self-knowledge, capacity and sensitivity: Prerequisites to authentic leadership by school principals. *Journal of Educational Administration, 44*(6), 570–589. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230610704792

Begley, P. T., & Johansson, O. (2008). The ethical dimensions of school leadership. *Journal of School Leadership, 18*(4), 401-422. https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460801800405

Bell, D. (1980). Brown vs. Board of Education and the interest convergence principle. *Harvard Law Review, 93,* 518-533.

Bobo, L. D., Charles, C. Z., Krysan, M., & Simmons, A. D. (2012). The real record on racial attitudes. In P. V. Marsden (Ed.), *Social trends in American life: Findings from the General Social Survey since 1972* (pp. 38–83). Princeton University Press.

Bochman, D. J., & Kroth, M. (2010). Immunity to transformational learning and change. *The Learning Organization, 17*(4), 328–342. https://doi.org/10.1108/09696471011043090

Bonilla-Silva, E. (1997). Rethinking racism: Toward a structural interpretation. *American Sociological Review, 62*(3), 465-480. https://doi.org/10.2307/2657316

Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States* (2nd ed). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Boucher, M. L. (2018). *Participant Empowerment Through Photo-elicitation in Ethnographic Education Research: New Perspectives and Approaches*. Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-64413-4

Bridwell, S. D. (2013). A constructive-developmental perspective on the transformative learning of adults marginalized by race, class, and gender. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *63*(2), 127–146. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713612447854

Brooks, J. S., Arnold, N. W., & Brooks, M. C. (2013). Educational leadership and racism: A narrative inquiry into second-generation segregation. *Teachers College Record*, *115*(11), 1–27.

Brooks, J. S., & Watson, T. N. (2019). School leadership and racism: An ecological perspective. *Urban Education, 54*(5): 631–655. http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0042085918783821

Brooks, J. S., & Witherspoon Arnold, N. (Eds.). (2013). *Antiracist school leadership: Toward equity in education for America's students introduction*. Information Age Publishing.

Brown, C., Maggin, D. M., & Buren, M. (2018). Systematic review of cultural adaptations of school-based social, emotional, and behavioral interventions for students of color. *Education and Treatment of Children*, *41*(4), 431–456. https://doi.org/10.1353/etc.2018.0024

Brown, K. D. (2017). Why we can't wait: Advancing racial literacy and a critical sociocultural knowledge of race for teaching and curriculum. *Race, Gender & Class*, *24*(1–2), 81–96.

Brown, K. D., & Kraehe, A. (2010). When you've only got one class, one chance: Acquiring sociocultural knowledge using eclectic case pedagogy. *Teaching Education*, *21*(3), 313–328. https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2010.500372

Brown, K. M. (2010). Schools of excellence and equity? Using equity audits as a tool to expose a flawed system of recognition. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership*, *5*(5). https://doi.org/10.22230/ijepl.2010v5n5a206

Buehler, J. (2013). 'There's a problem, and we've got to face it': How staff members wrestled with race in an urban high school. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *16*(5), 629–652. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2011.646256

Byng, M. 2013. You can't get there from here: A social process theory of racism and race. *Critical Sociology 39*(5): 705–16.

Capper, C. A., Theoharis, G., & Sebastian, J. (2006). Toward a framework for preparing leaders for social justice. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *44*(3), 209–224. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230610664814

Carter, P. L. (2016). Educational equality is a multifaceted issue: Why we must understand the school's sociocultural context for student achievement. *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences*, *2*(5), 142–163. https://doi.org/10.7758/RSF.2016.2.5.07

Carter, P. L., Skiba, R., Arredondo, M. I., & Pollock, M. (2017). You can't fix what you don't look at: Acknowledging race in addressing racial discipline disparities. *Urban Education*, *52*(2), 207–235. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916660350

Chávez-Moreno, L. C. (2022). Critiquing racial literacy: Presenting a continuum of racial literacies. *Educational Researcher*, 0013189X2210933. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X221093365

Cherry-McDaniel, M. (2019). Skinfolk ain't always kinfolk: The dangers of assuming and assigning inherent cultural responsiveness to teachers of color. *Educational Studies*, *55*(2), 241–251. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2018.1500912

Corum, S. (2021). Trump supporters hold "Stop the Steal" rally in DC amid ratification of presidential election [Online image]. Getty Images North America. https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/pro-trump-supporters-storm-the-u-s-capitol-following-a-news-photo/1230454843?adppopup=true

Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, *43*(6), 1241-1299. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039

Daiute, C. (2014). *Narrative Inquiry: A Dynamic Approach*. SAGE Publications, Inc. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781544365442

Dantley, M. E. (2005). African American spirituality and Cornel West's notions of prophetic pragmatism: Restructuring educational leadership in American urban schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *4*, 651-674.

Davis, S. J., Lettis, M. B., Mahfouz, J., & Vaughn, M. (2022). Deconstructing racist structures in K-12 education through SEL starts with the principal. *Theory Into Practice*, *61*(2), 145–155. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2022.2036061

Decuir-Gunby, J. T., & Walker-Devose, D. C. (2013). Expanding the counterstory: The potential for Critical Race Mixed Methods studies in education. In M. Lynn & A. D. Dixson (Eds.), *Handbook of critical race theory in education* (pp. 248–259). Routledge.

Delpit, L. D. (1992). Acquisition of literate discourse: Bowing before the master? *Theory Into Practice*, *31*(4), 296–302. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849209543556

DeMatthews, D. (2016). Effective leadership is not enough: Critical approaches to closing the racial discipline gap. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, *89*(1), 7–13. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2015.1121120

DeMatthews, D., & Mawhinney, H. (2014). Social justice leadership and inclusion: Exploring challenges in an urban district struggling to address inequities. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *50*(5), 844–881. https://doi. org/10.1177/0013161X13514440

DeMatthews, D. E., Carey, R. L., Olivarez, A., & Moussavi Saeedi, K. (2017). Guilty as charged? Principals' perspectives on disciplinary practices and the racial discipline gap. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *53*(4), 519–555. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X17714844

DeMatthews, D. E., & Izquierdo, E. (2020). Supporting Mexican American immigrant students on the border: A case study of culturally responsive leadership in a dual language elementary school. *Urban Education*, *55*(3), 362–393. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085918756715

Diem, S., Welton, A. D., Frankenberg, E., & Jellison Holme, J. (2016). Racial diversity in the suburbs: How race-neutral responses to demographic change perpetuate inequity in suburban school districts. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *19*(4), 731–762. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2014.946485

Diem, S., & Welton, A. D. (2021). *Anti-racist educational leadership and policy: Addressing racism in public education*. Routledge.

Dillard, C. B. (1995). Leading with her life: An African American feminist (re)interpretation of leadership for an urban high school principal. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *31*(4), 539–563.

Douglass Horsford, S. (2010). Mixed feelings about mixed schools: Superintendents on the complex legacy of school desegregation. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(3), 287–321. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X10365825

Douglass Horsford, S. (2011). Vestiges of desegregation: Superintendent perspectives on educational inequality and (dis)integration in the post–Civil Rights era. *Urban Education*, *46*(1), 34–54. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085910391596

Douglass Horsford, S. (2014). When race enters the room: Improving leadership and learning through racial literacy. *Theory into Practice*, *53*(1), 123-130.

Douglass Horsford, S., Clark, C. (2015). Inclusive leadership and race. In G. Theoharis & M. Scanlan (Eds.), *Leadership for increasingly diverse schools,* (pp. 58-81). Routledge.

Douglass Horsford, S., Alemán Jr., E. A. & Smith, P. A. (2019). Our separate struggles are really one: Building political race coalitions for educational justice, *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 18*:2, 226-236. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2019.1611868

Drago-Severson, E. (2009). *Leading adult learning: Supporting adult development in our schools*. NSDC.

Drago-Severson, E. (2016). Teaching, learning and leading in today's complex world: Reaching new heights with a developmental approach. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, *19*(1), 56–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2015.1096075

Drago-Severson, E., & Blum-DeStefano, J. (2017). The self in social justice: A developmental lens on race, identity, and transformation. *Harvard Educational Review*, *87*(4).

Drago-Severson, E., & Blum-DeStefano, J. (2019). A developmental lens on social justice leadership: Exploring the connection between meaning making and practice. *Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies*. Southern Connecticut State University.

Drago-Severson, E., Blum-Destefano, J., & Brooks-Lawrence, D. (2020). Connections bring us closer to equity and justice: Programs build knowledge and skills teachers need to be influential beyond their classrooms. *The Learning Professional*, *41*(5), 32–40.

Durlak, J. A., Domitrovich, C. E., Weissberg, R. P., & Gullotta, T. P. (Eds.). (2015). *Handbook of social and emotional learning: Research and practice*. The Guilford Press.

Dumas, M. J. (2016). Against the dark: Antiblackness in education policy and discourse. *Theory Into Practice*, *55*(1), 11–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2016.1116852

Engeström, Y. (2009). Expansive learning: Toward an activity-theoretical reconceptualization. In K. Illeris (Ed.), *Contemporary learning theories: Learning theorists...in their own words* (pp. 53–73). Routledge.

Epstein, T., & Gist, C. (2015). Teaching racial literacy in secondary humanities classrooms: Challenging adolescents' of color concepts of race and racism. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *18*(1), 40–60. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2013.792800

Evans, A. E. (2007a). Changing faces: Suburban school response to demographic change. *Education and Urban Society*, *39*(3), 315–348. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013124506297961

Evans, A. E. (2007b). School leaders and their sensemaking about race and demographic change. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *43*(2), 159–188. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X06294575

Farley, A. N., Childs, J., & Johnson, O. A. (2019). Preparing school leaders for America's wicked problems? How the revised PSEL and NELP standards address equity and justice. Education Policy Analysis Archives, 27(115). https://doi.org/10.14507/ epaa.27.4229

Fendler, L. (2006). Others and the Problem of Community. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *36*(3), 303–326. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2006.00360.x

Fluehr-Lobban, C. (2019). *Race and racism: An introduction* (Second edition). Rowman & Littlefield.

Flores, O. J., & Gunzenhauser, M. G. (2019). The problems with colorblind leadership revealed: A call for race-conscious leaders. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *32*(8), 963–981.

Flores, O. J., & Gunzenhauser, M. G. (2021). Justice in the gaps: School leader dispositions and the use of data to address the opportunity gap. *Urban Education*, *56*(2), 261–288. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085918801431

Frankenberg, R. (1993). *White women, race matters: The social construction of whiteness*. University of Minnesota Press.

Freire, P. (2005). *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (M. B. Ramos, Trans.; 30th Anniversary ed.). Continuum International Publishing Group. (Original work published 1970).

Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (1995). A dialogue: Culture, language, and race. *Harvard Educational Review*, *65*, 377–402.

Furman, G. (2012). Social justice leadership as praxis: Developing capacities through preparation programs. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *48*(2), 191–229. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X11427394

Galloway, M. K., & Ishimaru, A. M. (2019). Leading equity teams: The role of formal leaders in building organizational capacity for equity. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk (JESPAR)*, *25*(2), 107–125. https://doi.org/10.1080/10824669.2019.1699413

Ganon-Shilon, S., & Schechter, C. (2017). Making sense of school leaders' sense-making. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *45*(4), 682–698. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143216628536

Gay, G. (2000). Power pedagogy through cultural responsiveness. In G. Gay & J. Banks, (Eds.), *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (pp. 21–44). Teachers College Press.

Gay, G. (2010). Acting on beliefs in teacher education for cultural diversity. *Journal of Teacher Education*, *61*(1–2), 143–152. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487109347320

Gilmore, R. W. (2007). *Golden Gulag: Prisons, surplus, crisis, and opposition in globalizing California*. University of California Press.

Giroux, H. A. (1992). Literacy, pedagogy, and the politics of difference. *The Johns Hopkins University Press*, *19*(1), 1–11.

Gooden, M. A. (2012). What does racism have to do with leadership? Countering the idea of color-blind leadership: A reflection on race and the growing pressures of the urban principalship. *Journal of Educational Foundations*, *26*, 67–84.

Gooden, M. A., & O'Doherty, A. (2015). Do you see what I see? Fostering aspiring leaders' racial awareness. *Urban Education*, *50*(2), 225–255. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085914534273

Gooden, M. A., Davis, B. W., Spikes, D. D., Hall, D. L., & Lee, L. (2018). Leaders changing how they Act by changing how they think: Applying principles of an anti-racist principal preparation program. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, *120*(14), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811812001409

Gray, D. L., Hope, E. C., & Matthews, J. S. (2018). Black and belonging at school: A case for interpersonal, instructional, and institutional opportunity structures. *Educational Psychologist*, *53*(2), 97–113. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2017.1421466

Green, T. L. (2017a). Community-based equity audits: A practical approach for educational leaders to support equitable community-school improvements. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *53*(1), 3-39. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X16672513

Green, T. L. (2017b). "We felt they took the heart out of the community": Examining a community-based response to urban school closure. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *25*(21), 1–30. https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.25.2549

Grissom, J. A., Egalite, A. J., & Lindsay, C. A. (2021). How principals affect students and schools: A systematic synthesis of two decades of research. New York: The Wallace Foundation. Available at http://www.wallacefoundation.org/principalsynthesis.

Grosfoguel, R. (2012). Decolonizing Western uni-versalisms: Decolonial pluri-versalism from Aimé Césaire to the Zapatistas. *TRANSMODERNITY: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World*, *1*(3), 88-104.

Guinier, L. (2004). From racial liberalism to racial literacy: Brown v. Board of Education and the interest-divergence dilemma. *The Journal of American History*, *91*(1):92-118.

Gunzenhauser, M. G., Flores, O. J., & Quigley, M. (2021). Race-conscious ethics in school leadership: From personal caring to critical responsibility. *Teachers College Record*. https://experts.illinois.edu/en/publications/race-conscious-ethics-in-school-leadership-fromimpersonal-caring

Gutiérrez, K. D., & Rogoff, B. (2003). Cultural ways of learning: Individual traits or repertoires of practice. *Educational Researcher*, *32*(5), 19–25. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X032005019

Hall, S. (1997). Representation and the media transcript. *Media Education Foundation*.

Haney López, I. F. (1995). The social construction of race. In R. Delgado (Ed)., *Critical Race Theory* (pp. 191–203). Temple University Press.

Harris, A., & Spillane, J. (2008). Distributed leadership through the looking glass. *Management in Education*, *22*(1), 31–34. https://doi.org/10.1177/0892020607085623

Harris, L. S., & Kuhnert, K. W. (2008). Looking through the lens of leadership: A constructive developmental approach. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, *29*(1), 47–67. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437730810845298

Henze, R., Katz, A., & Norte, E. (2000). Rethinking the concept of racial or ethnic conflict in schools: A leadership perspective. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *3*(2), 195–206. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320050074032

Hesse-Biber, S. (2010). Qualitative approaches to mixed methods practice. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *16*(6), 455–468. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800410364611

Hodgkinson, C. (1991), *Educational Leadership: The Moral Art*, SUNY Press, Albany, NY.

Hollingworth, L. (2009). Complicated conversations: Exploring race and ideology in an elementary classroom. *Urban Education*, *44*(1), 30–58. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085907312496

Holst, J. D. (2020). Toward a theory of race, change, and antiracist education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *70*(2), 175–192. https://doi.org/10.1177/0741713619884580

hooks, b. (1994). *Teaching to transgress: Education as the practice of freedom*. Routledge.

Howard, T. (2010). *Why race and culture matter in schools*. (1st ed.). Teachers College Press.

Interaction Institute for Social Change. (2016). Equity equality reality [Online image]. Interaction Institute for Social Change. https://interactioninstitute.org/equality-equality-cartoon-gallery/

Irby, D. J. (2018). Mo' data, mo' problems: Making sense of racial discipline disparities in a large diversifying suburban high school. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *54*(5), 693–722. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X18769051

Irby, D. J. (2021). *Stuck improving: Racial equity and school leadership*. Harvard Education Press.

Irby, D. J., & Clark, S. P. (2018). Talk it (Racism) out: Race talk and organizational learning. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *56*(5), 504–518. https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-01-2018-0015

Irby, D. J., Drame, E., Clough, C. & Croom, M. (2019). Sometimes things get worse before they get better: A counter-narrative of white suburban school leadership for racial equity. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, *18*(2), 195-209. https://doi.org/10.1080/15700763.2019.1611869

Ishimaru, A. (2013). From heroes to organizers: Principals and education organizing in urban school reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *49*(1), 3–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X12448250

Ishimaru, A. (2014). Rewriting the rules of engagement: Elaborating a model of district-community collaboration. *Harvard Educational Review*, *84*(2), 188–216. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.2.r2007u165m8207j5

Ishimaru, A. M., & Galloway, M. K. (2021). Hearts and minds first: Institutional logics in pursuit of educational equity. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *57*(3), 470–502. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X20947459

Jagers, R. J., Rivas-Drake, D., & Williams, B. (2019). Transformative social and emotional learning (SEL): Toward SEL in service of educational equity and excellence. *Educational Psychologist*, 54(3), 162-184. https://doi.org/10.1080/00461520.2019.1623032

Jardina, A. (2019). *White identity politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Jean-Marie, G., & Mansfield, K. C. (2013). School leaders' courageous conversations about race: Race and racial discrimination in schools. In J. S. Brooks & N. Witherspoon Arnold (Eds.), *Anti-racist school leadership: Toward equity in education for America's students* (pp. 19–36). Information Age Publishing.

Jennings, M. E., & Lynn, M. (2005). The house that race built: Critical pedagogy, African-American education, and the re-conceptualization of a critical race pedagogy. *Educational Foundations*, *19*(3–4), 15–32.

Jennings, P. A., & Greenberg, M. T. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research*, *79*(1), 491–525. https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654308325693

Jennings, P., Frank, J., & Montgomery, M. (2020). Social and emotional learning for educators. *Rethinking learning: A review of social and emotional learning for education systems*, 127-153.

Kegan, R. (1980). Making meaning: The constructive-developmental approach to persons and practice. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal*, *58*, 373–380.

Kegan, R. (2009). What "form" transforms? A constructive-developmental approach to transformative learning. In K. Illeris (Ed), *Contemporary learning theories* (pp. 35–52). Routledge.

Kegan, R., & Lahey, L. L. (2010). From subject to object: A constructive-developmental approach to reflective practice. In N. Lyons (Ed.), *Handbook of Reflection and Reflective Inquiry: Mapping a Way of Knowing for Professional Reflective Inquiry* (pp. 433–449). Springer US. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-85744-2

Khalifa, M. (2015). Can Blacks be racists? Black-on-Black principal abuse in an urban school setting. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *28*(2), 259–282. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2014.916002

Khalifa, M. (2018). *Culturally Responsive School Leadership*. Harvard Education Press.

Khalifa, M. A., Jennings, M. E., Briscoe, F., Oleszweski, A. M., & Abdi, N. (2014). Racism? Administrative and community perspectives in data-driven decision making: Systemic perspectives versus technical-rational perspectives. *Urban Education*, *49*(2), 147–181. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085913475635

Khalifa, M. A., Gooden, M. A., & Davis, J. E. (2016). Culturally responsive school leadership: A synthesis of the literature. *Review of Educational Research*, *86*, 1272-1311. doi:10.3102/0034654316630383

King, J. E. (1991). Dysconscious racism: Ideology, identity, and the miseducation of teachers. *The Journal of Negro Education*, *60*(2), 133. https://doi.org/10.2307/2295605

King, L. J. (2016). Teaching black history as a racial literacy project. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *19*(6), 1303–1318. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2016.1150822

King, P. M., & Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2005). A developmental model of intercultural maturity. *Journal of College Student Development*, *46*(6), 571–592. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2005.0060

Kohli, R., Nevárez, A., & Arteaga, N. (2018). Public pedagogy for racial justice teaching: Supporting the racial literacy development of teachers of color. *The Assembly: A Journal for Public Scholarship on Education*, *1*(1), 17–27.

Kose, B. W. (2009). The principal's role in professional development for social justice: An empirically-based transformative framework. *Urban Education*, *44*(6), 628–663. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085908322707

Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). But that's just good teaching! The case for culturally relevant pedagogy. *Taylor & Francis, Ltd.*, *34*(3), 159–165. JSTOR. https://www.jstor.org/stable/1476635

Ladson-Billings, G. (2006). From the achievement gap to the education debt: Understanding achievement in U.S. schools. *Educational Researcher*, *35*(7), 3–12. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X035007003

Ladson-Billings, G. (2014). Culturally relevant pedagogy 2.0: A.k.a. the remix. *Harvard Educational Review*, *84*(1), 74–84. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.p2rj131485484751

Lahey, L., Souvaine, E., Kegan, R., Goodman, R., & Felix, S. (2011). A guide to the Subject-Object Interview: Its administration and interpretation. Minds at Work. (Original work published 1988).

Larson, C. L., & Murtadha, K. (2005). Leadership for social justice. *Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, *101*(1), 134–161. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-7984.2002.tb00007.x

Lash, C. L., & Sanchez, J. E. (2022). Leading for equity with critical consciousness: How school leaders can cultivate awareness, efficacy, and critical action. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, *95*(1), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2021.2007833

Laughter, J., Pellegrino, A., Waters, S., & Smith, M. (2021). Toward a framework for critical racial literacy. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2021.1924130

Leonardo, Z. (2005). Through the multicultural glass: Althusser, ideology and race relations in post-civil rights America. *Policy Futures in Education*, *3*(4), 400–412. https://doi.org/10.2304/pfie.2005.3.4.400

Leonardo, Z. (2009). *Race, whiteness, and education*. Routledge

Leonardo, Z. (2013). *Race frameworks: A multidimensional theory of racism and education*. Teachers College.

Lewis, A. E. (2001). There is no "race" in the schoolyard: Color-blind ideology in an (almost) all-White school. *American Educational Research Journal, 38*(4), 781–811. https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312038004781

Lomotey, K. (1993). African-American principals: Bureaucrat/administrators and ethno-humanists. *Urban Education*, *27*(4), 395–412.

López, G. R. (2003). The (racially neutral) politics of education: A critical race theory perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *39*(1), 68–94. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X02239761

Love, B. L. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of educational freedom*. Beacon Press.

Lowery, C. (2020) Moral literacy and school leadership: perceptions of principals in southeast Ohio on the ethics of decision-making. *Journal of Educational Administration, 58*(1): 112–127.

Ludwig, E., & Suedbeck, J. (2023). Colour-blind racial attitudes in entry-level dental hygiene students in Virginia. *International Journal of Dental Hygiene*, *21*(4), 682–690. https://doi.org/10.1111/idh.12729

Luke, A. (2012). Critical literacy: Foundational notes. *Theory Into Practice*, *51*(1), 4–11. https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2012.636324

Mahfouz, J., & Anthony-Stevens, V. (2020). Why trouble SEL? The need for cultural relevance in SEL. *Occasional Paper Series, 43*(6). https://educate.bankstreet.edu/occasional-paperseries/vol2020/iss43/6

Mansfield, K. C., & Jean-Marie, G. (2015). Courageous conversations about race, class, and gender: Voices and lessons from the field. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *28*(7), 819–841. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2015.1036950

Markowitz, N., & Bouffard, S. (2020). *Teaching with a social, emotional, and cultural lens: A framework for educators and teacher educators*. Harvard Education Press.

Matsuda, M. (1989). When the first quail calls: Multiple consciousness as jurisprudential method. *Women's Rights Law Reporter*, *11*(1), 7–10.

McCauley, C. D., Drath, W. H., Palus, C. J., O'Connor, P. M. G., & Baker, B. (2006). The use of constructive-developmental theory to advance the understanding of leadership. *Leadership Quarterly, 17*, 634−653.

McClendon, J. H. (2002). Black and White contra Left and Right? The dialectics of ideological critique in African American studies. *APA Newsletters*, *02*(1), 47–56.

McGhee, H. C. (2021). *The sum of us: What racism costs everyone and how we can prosper together* (First edition). One World.

McKenzie, K. B. & Phillips, G. A. (2016). Equity traps then and now: deficit thinking, racial erasure and naïve acceptance of meritocracy, *Whiteness and Education, 1*:1, 26-38. https://doi.org/10.1080/23793406.2016.1159600

McMahon, B. (2007). Educational administrators' conceptions of whiteness, anti-racism and social justice. *Journal of Educational Administration*, *45*(6), 684–696. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230710829874

Melamed, J. (2015). Racial capitalism. *Critical Ethnic Studies, 1*(1), 76–85.

Merriam, S. B. & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Mezirow, J. (1978). Perspective transformation. *Adult Education Quarterly, 28*, 100–110.

Mezirow, J. (1998). On critical reflection. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *48*(3), 185–198.

Mezirow, J. (2009). An overview of transformative learning. In K. Illeris (Ed.), *Contemporary theories of learning: learning theorists...in their own words* (pp. 90–105). Routledge.

Milner, H. R. (2007). Race, culture, and researcher positionality: Working through dangers seen, unseen, and unforeseen. *Educational Researcher*, *36*(7), 388–400. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X07309471

Molina, N. (2014). *How race is made in America: Immigration, citizenship, and the historical power of racial scripts*. University of California Press.

Murphy, J. F., Goldring, E. G., Cravens, X. C., & Elliott, S. N. (2007). The Vanderbilt assessment of leadership in education: Measuring learning-centered leadership. *East China Normal University Journal*, *29*(1), 1–10. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Joseph-Murphy/publication/254300402_The_Vanderbilt_Assessment_of_Leadership_in_Education_Measuring_Learning-Centered_Leadership/links/0deec53bed3af323c1000000/The-Vanderbilt-Assessment-of-Leadership-in-Education-Measuring-Learning-Centered-Leadership.pdf

Nash, K., Howard, J., Miller, E., Boutte, G., Johnson, G., & Reid, L. (2018). Critical racial literacy in homes, schools, and communities: Propositions for early childhood contexts. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, *19*(3), 256–273. https://doi.org/10.1177/1463949117717293

Nasir, N. S., & Hand, V. H. (2006). Exploring sociocultural perspectives on race, culture, and learning. *Review of Educational Research*, 76, 449-475.

National Policy Board for Educational Administration. (2015). *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders*. Reston, VA: Author. Retrieved from https://www.npbea.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Professional-Standards-for-Educational-Leaders_2015.pdf

Neville, H. A., Lilly, R. L., Duran, G., Lee, R. M., & Browne, L. (2000). Construction and initial validation of the Color-Blind Racial Attitudes Scale (CoBRAS). *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 47*(1), 59–70. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0167.47.1.59

Neville, H. A., Coleman, M. N., Falconer, J. W., & Holmes, D. (2005). Color-blind racial ideology and psychological false consciousness among African Americans. *Journal of Black Psychology*, *31*(1), 27–45. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798404268287

Neville, H. A., Awad, G. H., Brooks, J. E., Flores, M. P., & Bluemel, J. (2013). Color-blind racial ideology: Theory, training, and measurement implications in psychology. *American Psychologist, 68*(6), 455–466. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0033282

New York State Education Department. (n.d.). *NYC Public Schools Data*. NYSED Data Site. https://data.nysed.gov/profile.php?instid=7889678368

Nieto, S. (1992). *Affirming diversity: the sociopolitical context of multicultural education*. Longman.

Noddings, N. (1984). *Caring: A Feminine Approach to Ethics and Moral Education*. University of California Press.

Omi, M., & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s* (2nd ed). Routledge.

Othering & Belonging Institute. (n.d.). *Our story*. https://belonging.berkeley.edu/our-story

Oto, R., Rombalski, A., & Grinage, J. (2022). The role of racial literacy in u.s. k-12 education research: A review of the literature. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2022.2047635

Pajares, M. F. (1992). Teachers' beliefs and educational research: Cleaning up a messy construct. *Review of Educational Research, 62*(3), 307–332.

Palmer, E. L., & Louis, K. S. (2017). Talking about race: Overcoming fear in the process of change. *Journal of School Leadership*, *27*(4), 581–610. https://doi.org/10.1177/105268461702700405

Paris, D., & Alim, H. S. (2014). What are we seeking to sustain through culturally sustaining pedagogy? A loving critique forward. *Harvard Educational Review*, *84*(1), 85–100. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.84.1.982l873k2ht16m77

Park, C. L. (2010). Making sense of the meaning literature: An integrative review of meaning making and its effects on adjustment to stressful life events. *Psychological Bulletin, 136*(2), 257–301. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018301

Patel, L. (Leigh). (2014). Countering coloniality in educational research: From ownership to answerability. *Educational Studies*, *50*(4), 357–377. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2014.924942

Perez, R. J., Shim, W., King, P. M., & Baxter Magolda, M. B. (2015). Refining King and Baxter Magolda's model of intercultural maturity. *Journal of College Student Development, 56*(8), 759–776. https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2015.0085

Philip, T. M. (2011). An “Ideology in Pieces” approach to studying change in teachers’ sensemaking about race, racism, and racial justice. *Cognition and Instruction, 29*(3), 297–329. https://doi.org/10.1080/07370008.2011.583369

Philip, T. M., Olivares-Pasillas, M. C., & Rocha, J. (2016). Becoming racially literate about data and data-literate about race: Data visualizations in the classroom as a site of racial-ideological micro-contestations. *Cognition and Instruction, 34*(4), 361–388. https://doi.org/10.1080/07370008.2016.1210418

Piaget, J. (2000). Piaget’s theory. In K. Lee (Ed.), *Childhood Cognitive Development: The Essential Readings* (pp. 33–47). Blackwell Publishers.

Pilgrim, D. (2004). *Blacks, picnics and lynchings*. Jim Crow Museum. https://jimcrowmuseum.ferris.edu/question/2004/january.htm

Pollock, K., & Briscoe, P. (2019). School principals’ understandings of student difference and diversity and how these understandings influence their work. International Journal of Educational Management, 34(3), 518-534. doi:10.1108/IJEM-07-2019-0243

Quinn, D. M., & Stewart, A. M. (2019). Examining the racial Attitudes of White Pre-K–12 educators. *The Elementary School Journal, 120*(2), 272–299. https://doi.org/10.1086/705899

Radd, S. I., & Grosland, T. J. (2018). Desegregation policy as social justice leadership?: The case for critical consciousness and racial literacy. *Educational Policy, 32*(3), 395–422. https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904816637686

Radd, S. I., & Kramer, B. H. (2016). Dis eased: Critical consciousness in school leadership for social justice. *Journal of School Leadership, 26*(4), 580–606. https://doi.org/10.1177/105268461602600402

Reed, L. C., & Swaminathan, R. (2016). An urban school leader’s approach to school improvement: Toward contextually responsive leadership. *Urban Education, 51*(9), 1096–1125. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085914553675

Rogers, R., & Mosley, M. (2008). A critical discourse analysis of racial literacy in teacher education. *Linguistics and Education, 19*(2), 107–131. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.linged.2008.02.002

Rooks, N. (2020). *Cutting school: The segrenomics of American education*. The New Press.

Rothstein, R. (2017). *The color of law: A forgotten history of how our government segregated America* (First edition). Liveright Publishing Corporation, a division of W. W. Norton & Company.

Ryan, J. (2003). Educational administrators' perceptions of racism in diverse school contexts. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *6*(2), 145–164. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613320308197

Sabzalian, L. (2019). *Indigenous children's survivance in public schools*. Routledge.

Said, E. W. (1978). *Orientalism*. Pantheon Books.

Said, E. W. (1994). *Culture and imperialism*. Vintage Books.

Santamaría, L. J. (2014). Critical change for the greater good: Multicultural perceptions in educational leadership toward social justice and equity. Educational Administration Quarterly, 50, 347–391. doi:10.1177/0013161X13505287

Schiller, N. G. (2016). Positioning theory: An introduction. *Anthropological Theory*, *16*(2–3), 133–145. https://doi.org/10.1177/1463499616663792

Scott, B., & Quinn, R. (2015). The politics of educational leadership: Political context and the use of power. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 51*(2), 234-266. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X14551983

Sealey-Ruiz, Y. (2011). Learning to talk and write about race: Developing racial literacy in a college English classroom. *English Quarterly, 42*(1), 24–42.

Sealey-Ruiz, Y. (2021). The critical literacy of race: Toward racial literacy in urban teacher education. In R. Milner & K. Lomotey (Eds.), *Handbook of Urban Education* (2nd Edition, pp. 281-295). Routledge.

Sealey-Ruiz, Y., & Greene, P. (2015). Popular visual images and the (mis)reading of Black male youth: A case for racial literacy in urban preservice teacher education. *Teaching Education*, *26*(1), 55–76. https://doi.org/10.1080/10476210.2014.997702

Shapiro, J. P., & Stefkovich, J. A. (2011). *Ethical leadership and decision making in education: Applying theoretical perspectives to complex dilemmas* (3rd ed.). Routledge.

Shields, C. M. (2009). Transformative leadership: A call for difficult dialogue and courageous action in racialized contexts. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, *37*(3), 53-66.

Shields, C. M. (2010). Transformative leadership: Working for equity in diverse contexts. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *46*(4), 558–589. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X10375609

Shrider, E. A., & Creamer, J. (2023). *Poverty in the United States: 2022*. U.S. Census Bureau. https://www.census.gov/content/ dam/Census/library/publications/2023/demo/p60-280.pdf

Siddiqi, A., Sod-Erdene, O., Hamilton, D., McMillan Cottom, T., & Darity, W. Jr. (2019). Growing sense of social status threat and concomitant deaths of despair among whites. *SSM - Population Health*, *9*, 100449. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssmph.2019.100449

Skerrett, A. (2011). English teachers' racial literacy knowledge and practice. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, *14*(3), 313–330. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2010.543391

Skrla, L., Scheurich, J. J., Garcia, J., & Nolly, G. (2004). Equity audits: A practical leadership tool for developing equitable and excellent schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *40*(1), 133–161. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X03259148

Sleeter, C. E. (2012). Confronting the marginalization of culturally responsive pedagogy. *Urban Education*, *47*(3), 562–584. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085911431472

Sleeter, C. E. & McLaren, P. (1995). *Multicultural education, critical pedagogy, and the politics of difference*. State University of New York Press.

Solomon, R. P. (2002). School leaders and antiracism: Overcoming pedagogical and political obstacles. *Journal of School Leadership*, *12*(2), 174–197. https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460201200205

Solórzano, D. G., & Yosso, T. J. (2001). Critical race and LatCrit theory and method: Counter-storytelling. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *14*(4), 471–495. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390110063365

Souto-Manning, M. (2009). Negotiating culturally responsive pedagogy through multicultural children's literature: Towards critical democratic literacy practices in a first grade classroom. *Journal of Early Childhood Literacy*, *9*(1), 50–74. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468798408101105

Spillane, J. P., & Diamond, J. B. (2015). Taking a distributed perspective. In J. P. Spillane & J. B. Diamond (Eds.), *Distributed Leadership in Practice* (pp. 1–5). Hawker Brownlow Education.

Spillane, J. P., Reiser, B. J., & Reimer, T. (2002). Policy implementation and cognition: Reframing and refocusing implementation research. *Review of Educational Research*, *72*(3), 387–431.

Stewart, C., & Wolodko, B. (2016). University educator mindsets: How might adult constructive-developmental theory support design of adaptive learning? *Mind, Brain, and Education*, *10*(4), 247–255. https://doi.org/10.1111/mbe.12126

Stovall, D. (2014). Towards accountability and responsibility: Meditations on engaging the uneven, murky and messy path towards justice with youth and community. In A. D. Reid, P. E., Hart, & M. A. Peters. (Eds.), *A companion to research in education* (pp. 315-317). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-6809-3_43

Swanson, J., & Welton, A. (2019). When good intentions only go so far: White principals leading discussions about race. *Urban Education, 54*(5), 732–759. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085918783825

Theoharis, G. (2007). Social justice educational leaders and resistance: Toward a theory of social justice leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *43*(2), 221–258. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X06293717

Theoharis, G. (2008). "At Every Turn": The resistance that principals face in their pursuit of equity and justice. *Journal of School Leadership*, *18*(3), 303–343. https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460801800304

Theoharis, G. (2010). Disrupting injustice: Principals narrate the strategies they use to improve their schools and advance social justice. *Teachers College Record: The Voice of Scholarship in Education*, *112*(1), 331–373. https://doi.org/10.1177/016146811011200105

Theoharis, G., & Haddix, M. (2011). Undermining racism and a whiteness ideology: White principals living a commitment to equitable and excellent schools. *Urban Education, 46*(6), 1332–1351. https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085911416012

TIBCO Software Inc. (n.d.). What is binning? [Webpage]. TIBCO Spotfire Documentation. https://docs.tibco.com/pub/spotfire/7.0.1/doc/html/bin/bin_what_is_binning.htm

Tillman, L. C. (2004). Chapter 4: African American principals and the legacy of *Brown*. *Review of Research in Education*, *28*(1), 101–146. https://doi.org/10.3102/0091732X028001101

Torre, D., & Murphy, J. (2015). A different lens: Changing perspectives using photo-elicitation interviews. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, *23*, 111. https://doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v23.2051

Touré, J., & Dorsey, D. N. T. (2018). Stereotypes, images, and inclination to discriminatory Action: The White racial frame in the practice of school leadership. *Teachers College Record*, 38.

Turner, E. O. (2015). Districts' responses to demographic change: Making sense of race, class, and immigration in political and organizational context. *American Educational Research Journal*, *52*(1), 4–39. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831214561469

United States. Kerner Commission. (1968). *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. Pantheon Books.

Valenzuela, A. (1999). *Subtractive schooling: U.S.-Mexican youth and the politics of caring*. State University of New York Press

Vetter, A., & Hungerford-Kressor, H. (2014). “We gotta change first”: Racial literacy in a high school English classroom. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, *10*(1), 82–99.

Warren, J. (2014). After colorblindness: Teaching antiracism to White progressives in the U.S. In K. Haltinner (Ed.), *Teaching Race and Anti-Racism in Contemporary America* (pp. 109–121). Springer Netherlands. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-7101-7_12

Warren, J., & Sue, C. A. (2011). Comparative racisms: What anti-racists can learn from Latin America. *Ethnicities*, *11*(1), 32–58. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468796810388699

Watts, R. J., Diemer, M. A., & Voight, A. M. (2011). Critical consciousness: Current status and future directions. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, *2011*(134), 43–57. https://doi.org/10.1002/cd.310

Wells-Barnett, I. B. (2005). *Southern horrors: Lynch law in all its phases*. Project Gutenberg. (Original work published 1892). http://www.gutenberg.net/ebooks/14975

Welton, A. D., Harris, T. O., La Londe, P. G., & Moyer, R. T. (2015). Social justice education in a diverse classroom: Examining high school discussions about race, power, and privilege. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, *48*(4), 549–570. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2015.1083839

Wenger, E. (2009). A social theory of learning. In K. Illeris (Ed.), *Contemporary learning theories: Learning theorists...in their own words* (pp. 209–218). Routledge.

Winans, A. E. (2010). Cultivating racial literacy in White, segregated Settings: Emotions as site of ethical engagement and inquiry. *Curriculum Inquiry*, *40*(3), 475–491. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2010.00494.x

Wing, A. K. (2003). Introduction. In A. K. Wing (Ed.), In *Critical race feminism: A reader, 2nd edition* (pp.1-19). New York: New York University Press.

Worthington, R. L., Navarro, R. L., Loewy, M., & Hart, J. (2008). Color-blind racial attitudes, social dominance orientation, racial ethnic group membership and college students’ perceptions of campus climate. *Journal of Diversity in Higher Education, 1*, 8 –19. doi:10.1037/ 1938-8926.1.1.8

Wright, J. (2022). The deep roots of inequity: Coloniality, racial capitalism, educational leadership, and reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *58*(5), 693–717. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X211029483

Young, M. D., & Laible, J. (2000). White racism, antiracism, and school leadership preparation. *Journal of School Leadership*, *10*(5), 374–415. https://doi.org/10.1177/105268460001000501

Zagaris, M. (2016). [Online image of Colin Kaepernick kneeling]. TIME. https://time.com/magazine/us/4503993/october-3rd-2016-vol-188-no-13-u-s/

APPENDIX A | ADMINISTERING THE SUBJECT-OBJECT INTERVIEW (SOI)

Dear Participant,

You will be participating in a 90-minute interview. The goal of this interview is to learn how you think about things; how you make sense of your own experience and so forth. You do not have to discuss or share anything you do not want to. The interview is organized into two parts: Part 1 will last approximately 15-20 minutes; and Part II will last approximately 60 minutes. What follows is a description of the expectations of each part of the interview.

PART I (~ 15-20 minutes)

You will be presented with ten (3" x 7") index cards and a pencil. Each card has a title printed on it as follows:

1. Angry
2. Anxious, nervous
3. Success
4. Strong strand, conviction
5. Sad
6. Torn
7. Moved, touched
8. Lost something
9. Change
10. Important to me

Each card is for your use only. I will not look at them and you are free to take them with you or discard them after the interview. The purpose of the cards is to help you jot things down that we might want to talk about during our interview.

We will spend the first 15-20 minutes of our time together with the cards; and then we will talk together for an hour or so about the things you jotted down on the cards, and which you choose to discuss. I want to reiterate that we do not have to talk about anything you don't want to discuss.

For each index card, there is a corresponding prompt that I will read to you to generate your thoughts.

The prompts are as follows:

Angry: If you were to think over the last several weeks, even the last couple of months, and you had to think about times you felt really angry about something, or times you really mad or felt a sense of outrage or violation, are there 2 or 3 things that come to mind? Take a minute to think about it, if you like, and just jot down on the card whatever you need to remind you of what they were (if nothing comes to mind, you can skip it and move on the next card) need to remind you of what they were (if nothing comes to mind, you can skip it and move on the next card)

Anxious, nervous: If you were to think of certain times when you found yourself being really scared about something, nervous, anxious about something, are there 2 or 3 things that come to mind?

Success: If you were to think of certain times when you felt kind of triumphant, or that you had achieved something that was difficult for you, or especially satisfying that you were

afraid might come out another way, or a sense that you had overcome something, are there 2 or 3 things that come to mind?

Strong strand, conviction: If you were to think of certain times when you had to take a strong stand, or felt very deeply that "this is what I think should or shouldn't be done about this" way, or times when you became aware of a particular conviction you held, are there 2 or 3 things that come to mind?

Sad: If you were to think of certain times when you felt really sad about something, perhaps something that even made you cry, or left you feeling on the verge of tears, are there 2 or 3 things that come to mind?

Torn: If you were to think of certain times when you felt really in conflict about something, where someone or some part of you felt one way or was urging you on in one direction, and some other part was feeling another way or was taking you in another direction, are there 2 or 3 things that come to mind?

Moved, touched: If you were to think of certain times when you felt quite touched by something you saw, or thought or heard, perhaps something that caused your eyes to tear up, something that moved you; are there 2 or 3 things that come to mind?

Lost something: If you were to think of certain times when you had to leave something behind, or were worried that you might lose something or someone; "goodbye experiences, the conclusions of something important or valuable; losses you have experienced; are there 2 or 3 things that come to mind?

Change: As you look back at your past, if you had to think of some ways in which you think you have changed over the last few years –or even months – if that seems more fitting; are there some ways that come to mind?

Important to me: If I were to ask you: "What is it that is most important to you?" or "What do you care deepest about?" or "What matters most"; are there 1 or 2 things that come to mind?

PART II (~ 60 minutes)

For this portion of our time together, we have an hour or so to talk about some of the things you've recalled or jotted down. You can decide where we start. Is there one card (or a few cards) you felt more strongly about than the other others?

APPENDIX B | RATIONALE FOR REMOVAL OF SEVEN COBRAS QUESTIONS

The following seven statements were removed and the rationale for removal is as follows:

Subscale: Denial of White Racial Privilege

1. Everyone who works hard, no matter what race they are, has an equal chance to become rich
2. Racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as White people in the U.S.
3. White people in the U.S. have certain advantages because of the color of their skin.
4. White people are more to blame for racial discrimination in the U.S. than racial and ethnic minorities.

Given that these are school leaders from New York where there is a state-sponsored framework for culturally responsive-sustaining education, it is reasonable to assume that school leaders, including White school leaders, have been exposed to professional development or resources that explore white racial privilege. As such, I removed statements that explicitly mentioned "White people" to avoid socially desirable responses among White-identifying school leaders. Further, I decided to prompt deeper reflection of racial beliefs qualitatively through photo-elicitation methods – which elicited racial appraisals revealing racial beliefs rooted in white privilege.

Subscale: Denial of Blatant Racial Issues

5. White people in the U.S. are discriminated against because of the color their skin.
6. Social policies, such as affirmative action, discriminate unfairly against White people.

Given that these are school leaders from New York where there is a state-sponsored framework for culturally responsive-sustaining education, it is reasonable to assume that school leaders, including White school leaders, have been exposed to professional development or resources that explore white racial privilege. As such, I removed statements that explicitly mentioned "White people" to avoid socially desirable responses among White-identifying school leaders. Further, I decided to prompt deeper reflection of racial beliefs qualitatively through photo-elicitation methods – which elicited racial interpretations revealing racial beliefs rooted in white privilege.

Subscale: Denial of Blatant Racial Issues

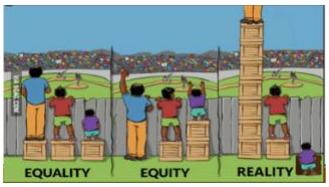
7. Racism is a major problem in the U.S.

Because racism is framed culturally and morally as a "wicked problem" (Farley et al., 2019) that degrades human flourishing, it is reasonable to assume that, at minimum, participating school principals view racism as a problem in the U.S.. Additionally, because school leadership must be learning-focused to be effective and because racism runs counter to the goals of learning (see Brooks & Watson, 2019), it is reasonable to assume that, at minimum, participating school principals view racism as a problem in the U.S..

APPENDIX C | IMAGES AND PROMPTS FOR PHOTO-ELICITATION (RACIAL PERCEPTIONS)

Figure C1

Equity, Equality, Reality (Interaction Institute for Social Change, 2016)



- What does this image mean to you?
- How might it connect with your professional or personal experience?

Figure C2

Image of TIME magazine cover featuring Colin Kaepernick kneeling (Zagaris, 2016)

- What does this image mean to you?
- How might it connect with your professional or personal experience?

Figure C3

Image of Trump supporters holding "Stop the Steal" rally on January 6, 2021 in DC amid ratification of presidential election leading to insurrection/attack on U.S. Capitol (Corum, 2021)

- What does this image mean to you?
- How might it connect with your professional or personal experience?

APPENDIX D | INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR FOCAL PARTICIPANTS AND FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Small Story 1—Background/Lived Experience (Story of Pretext)

- Can you talk a bit about your own experience in school or with school as a student?
- If not mentioned, ask: where did you grow up?
- Was racism discussed in your family? Tell me more about that
- How would you describe your neighborhood's racial composition?
- Can you describe your earliest memory of learning about racism?
- What were some barriers to learning about racism?

Small Story 2—Culturally Responsive School Leadership Practice (Story of Context)

- Which student groups do you identify as the most underserved/marginalized in your school?
- What factors have contributed to these designations?
- What are some activities you (and your team) have implemented to reduce marginalization among those student groups?
- What does racism mean to you today?
- What are some barriers to learning about racism today? As you think back to your own training and professional development, were there opportunities for you to learn about racism; practice discussing racism?
- Tell me more about that
- Discuss survey responses more in-depth including photo-elicitation responses Images 1, 2 & 3

Small Story 3—Visioning Racism's Future (Story of Posttext)

- Discuss survey responses more in-depth
- Some people would say it's inappropriate to discuss or learn about racism in general; that it may be too messy. What would say to folks who say that?
- Imagine you are now retired from your current role at your school. What stories about racism do you imagine are being told/expressed at your school?
- In what ways do those stories of racism's future affect your current school leadership practice?