

Working Paper Draft*

**Knowing Their Lines:
How Social Boundaries Undermine Equity-based Integration Policies in
U.S. and South African Schools**

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Introduction

More than fifty years after the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*, the United States continues to face the challenge of equalizing educational outcomes and life chances for its racial and ethnic minority students. Across the world, South Africa, a relatively new democracy in the wake of apartheid's demise, confronts the challenges of social integration that have long characterized the United States. The task of redefining schools as resources for the social and economic advancement of racialized groups is a key aspect of the social change that is now underway in post-apartheid South Africa. South African citizens are reframing schools as institutions designed to remedy the subordinate status of Blacks and other non-White racial/ethnic groups. Because of the *Brown* decision, much of the knowledge we have about school desegregation comes from U.S.-based research. And many researchers and social scientists are puzzled as to why the experiment with desegregation has produced very mixed results, and in some cases failed, in the United States (Linn & Welner, 2007). Meanwhile, South Africa, long considered a sociological outlier in issues pertaining to racial inequality because of apartheid's rigid grip (Seidman, 1999), aims to accomplish goals where students of all races may peaceably co-exist, share educational resources, and invest their human capital in a democratic nation's development.

School desegregation constitutes a proactive, state-supported practice to permeate boundaries, to mitigate the extent, intensity, or level of exclusion of historically disadvantaged groups in the educational sphere. Nowadays, South African schools aim to serve as conduits of mobility and access to resources for Blacks, Coloureds, and Indians, as well as Whites. Yet, several reports and studies that have arisen within only a few years of the South African experiment with desegregation find slow and incremental, reformist and non-reconstructive responses to the dismantling of apartheid by mostly White educators in former white-only schools (Chisholm, 1999,

Carter, Forthcoming 2009, Cross et al., 1998, Vally & Dalamba, 1999, Soudien, 1998). In the United States, the historic Brown vs. Board of Education decision was implemented by no means with all deliberate speed; it would take nearly two decades for many districts to comply. And while some schools dabbled in the policy of racial mixing, by the close of the twentieth century, the courts began to systematically dismantle integrationist efforts. Over the decades, White parents have sued school districts to eliminate their racial equity assignments and financing policies (Chemerinsky, 2008). Most recently in 2007, the Supreme Court, by a margin of five to four, outlawed school assignment plans that districts in Seattle and Louisville—referred to as the “PICS” cases—used to maintain some semblance of racial balance.

In what follows, we will argue that despite the disparate discourses and educational policies about equity and the inclusion of disadvantaged students between the United States and South Africa, (non)integrationist actions converge in these two nations as micro-level interactions between students and teachers of different backgrounds are decoupled (Meyer & Rowan, 1978 2007) from aims of racial integration. Using data from four desegregated and mixed race schools in South Africa and the United States, we discuss how students’ and school officials’ actions, informed by deeply embedded racialized meanings, reinforce the strength and rigidity of racial boundaries. Observations, interviews, and survey data suggest that while desegregation enables learners to traverse a particular spatial boundary (namely, proximity in school), racial and cultural differentiation in these schools continues to engender strong boundaries that undermine the intentions of the United States’ and South Africa’s democratic and non-racialist agendas. These findings highlight a macro-micro tension in society: how national policy and values about equity and democratic inclusion become suspended when they are imposed upon principal actors, such as educators and students who have not yet been converted. Though educators may follow the laws,

the power imbued in them within the sociocultural realms of schooling can be utilized—either intentionally or not—to undermine the project of integration.

We show that even in the face of qualitatively different discourses about the need and requisite of school integration in South Africa and the United States, the disjuncture between the policy context and micro-level school interactions converge between these two nations. Additionally, we discuss some factors that sustain the equity-minded policy and full implementation divide. We suggest that largely ignored, mediating socio-cultural factors, informed by deeply embedded racialized meanings and economic conditions, maintain the chasm between the aims of equity-minded policy and educators' and students' behaviors.

Conceptual Arguments

Numerous studies show that, at the policy level, efforts toward educational reform are value-oriented and hardly neutral (Tyack & Cuban, 1997). Instead, they are often contentious and resisted, even if not publicly or officially, producing a discrepancy between macro-level values, intentions and policies and organizational-level implementation. According to sociologists Jeannie Oakes, Kevin Welner, Susan Yonezawa and Ricky Lee Allen (1998), school systems subjected to equity-minded reforms act as institutions that are situated within and mediate between normative and political zones. That is, educational systems channel cultural and political forces at the local, regional, national and global levels via organizational “sites” (namely, schools) that mediate (i.e., shape, structure, and constrain) the interactions between individuals within the site (1998: 288).

Oakes et al argue that the cultural and political forces operating both within and on schools serve to undermine the stability or success of policies that challenge the ideologies and values of students, parents, and educators. An individual's or group's tolerance of and behaviors toward

equity—specifically, racially-minded policies--depends on their social location(s). In other words, the “boundaries of the mediation zone” differ by individual, racial group, social class, and other identities, which pose a considerable challenge to educators who must address either ideological differences or cultural resistance to equity-minded policies, especially if they are to succeed (pp. 1998: 289). This challenge is particularly great in the case of desegregation policies because as a social organizing principle, racial formations constitute such a critical and deeply ingrained component of an individual’s, group’s, or society’s belief systems (Omi & Winant, 1994, Myrdal, 1944, Winant, 2002).

While Oakes and colleagues have written specifically about the convergence of political, economic, and social forces that challenge the equity-minded policy of de-tracking, here we apply their “zones of normative and political mediation” concept to the practices within desegregated and mixed race schooling, which, in principle, are perceived to be channels of equity. We suggest, however, that schools can be situated within *varying* zones of normative and political mediation in terms of either their breadth of reach to different social groups or in terms of the degree of “social closure” (or rather the extent to which a group’s inclusion is limited) within these zones. Chisholm (1999), for instance, documents how educators in desegregated South African schools generally gravitated toward one of three cultural-political approaches after Black students were admitted : 1) *cultural difference* in which educators acquiesce to the inclusion of different ethno-racial groups in a school but do not advocate for integration or a deeper inclusion in terms intimate mixing and cross-cultural communication among students and teachers of different races; 2) *equal treatment* or *opportunity* in which educators ignore the vastly different material or historical realities of students—despite disparate outcomes because of these varied conditions, expect assimilation by the previously disadvantaged group(s) and therefore attempt to treat all students in the same

manner; and 3) *radical egalitarianism* in which educators aim intentionally to hold fellow educators, students, and school governing bodies accountable for mechanisms that perpetuate the racial divide in schools. Research such as Chisholm's not only implicates ideological areas where boundary maintenance and reproduction (Lamont & Molnár, 2002) occur but also it illuminates a potentially diverse spectrum of the zones of normative and political mediation for integration between previously disadvantaged and advantaged social groups.

Moreover, we provide further empirical evidence here to illuminate a disjuncture between policy and practice that mirrors a related incongruence between the normative attitudes and the cognitive attitudes of organizational actors. That is, one the one hand, contemporary educational policy efforts – at the macro-level – may engender egalitarian principles about fairness and justice. Yet, at the micro-level, despite social actors' normative understanding of why exclusionary practices are either unfair or unjust, that abstract knowledge can be and, as the data show, very often is suspended, giving way to behaviors that undermine and contradict their beliefs in these values. Social scientists across various disciplinary lines have documented in multiple studies the values-behavior disjuncture across myriad facets of society (Merton, 1968; Kinder and Sears 1981; Mickelson 1990; Gould 1999). Some scholars document how most groups within an educated, democratic society share ideals about the values of education, yet based on individuals' own schooling experiences, actual educational practices may belie their beliefs (see also Carter, 2005, Mickelson, 1990). Other research reveals that in the relatively more progressive post-Civil Rights era, formerly rigid racial attitudes among Whites have changed drastically in accepting interracial marriage or school and residential integration; yet, extensive engagement in these behaviors and even “white flight” from schools and neighborhoods contradict avowed beliefs (Bobo et al., 1997, Farley & Frey, 1994). In other words, while individuals may not reject certain normative beliefs and

mainstream aspirations on an abstract level; it is highly probable that when considering their objective and material realities—situationally- specific meanings and attitudes, they may maintain a qualitatively and markedly different belief systems—or cognitive expectations—that dictate variable social behavior (Gould, 1999, Mickelson, 1990).

Local actors (educators and students), operating according to deeply rooted perceptions of social difference, act on a more immediate, experiential set of “concrete” beliefs (Mickelson 1990). In the case of equity-minded reform, the “concrete” experience from the perspective of the historically privileged group is more reflective of a perception of loss within the opportunity structure and of “problematic” socio-political and cultural change. Additionally, once groups dubbed as “formerly disadvantaged” attain access to schools from which they were previously excluded, dominant group members may perceive that the proverbial score card has been evened. In the case of affluent, desegregated schools, the perception is that both spatial proximity and the emergence of relatively higher status for some members of the historically disadvantaged groups signal the achievement of equity. Yet, inequity endures within the subtle, harder-to-measure and harder-to-reach-via-policy arenas of school life.

To understand how school practices undermine the goals of an equity-minded practice such as integration, we argue that it is necessary to know what occurs on the “ground” in schools at both the micro- and organizational-levels. Indeed, as classic social science studies of schools have shown, major structure-agency divides exist in the educational sphere (e.g., Bowles & Gintis, 1976, MacLeod, 1995, Willis, 1977). On the one hand, schools can be “opened” (South African parlance for desegregation) to previously disadvantaged groups in terms of access to their academic resources (e.g., teacher quality, computers, books, rigorous curriculum and so forth). On the other

hand, students' and school officials' daily practices and actions reinforce the strength and rigidity of racial boundaries.

Most of the sociological and educational research on the cultural impact of student movement across physical boundaries has focused on the adaptation processes of the immigrant or newcomer students moving into new schools (e.g., Gibson, 1988, Soudien, 2001, Valenzuela, 1999). Conceptually speaking, a social group's incorporation within a school entails more than how its members participate in classes and activities and reaches beyond a student's propensity to either stay in school or dropout. A study of historically disadvantaged students' incorporation also directs our attention to how organizations receive different social groups' movement, whether it is towards the organization's center or near its margins. As Fine, Weis, and Powell (1997) have argued, when examining different school communities, the standard equal status approach to intergroup relations tends to overemphasize commonalities; and the failure to deal with the differences that most social groups face in the world can lead to the reproduction of privilege within schools in the guise of neutrality or color-blindness.

Findings presented here show that the actors most empowered to be "change agents," driven by competition and the perceived potential of lost resources, local contextual norms, and who often belong to dominant racial groups, are often situated within and maintain organizational structures that reinforce their status, power, and interests, although educational leaders may espouse discursively the idea of a stable, diverse, racialized social order. After a brief discussion of the two very different national frames regarding school integration in the United States and South Africa, we present evidence of social dynamics that impede the schools' flexibility in fully incorporating different groups of learners and increase the strength of boundaries among status groups in these schools. This study's results suggest that we can only comprehend fully the impact

of school desegregation on diminishing inequality—and, paradoxically, the extent to which some desegregated schools perpetuate existing inequalities—if we understand the cultural processes at work in these schools.

Societal Development versus Group Harm: Different National Frames for School Racial Integration

While South Africa and the United States share a similar history of legalized racial discrimination, they have differed in their stances on desegregation/integration. In 1954, the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision called for the racial integration of American public schools based primarily on testimonies regarding the psychological impact of segregation on Black students. The Court argued, “To separate them [Blacks] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone” (U.S. Supreme Court, 1954; see also Wells 2000). Rather than addressing the consequences of segregation on society as a whole, the Court solely focused on the detrimental effects on the “hearts and minds” of Black students. The Court felt that segregation was putting the emotional and mental development of the Black individual at risk. In contrast, the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 saw an integrated educational system as addressing the collective needs of a fledgling democracy. Given that the apartheid government had used inequitable educational policies to sustain racial stratification, the SASA called for a deracialized and unified national system of education. The act states:

“WHEREAS this country requires a new national system for schools which will redress past injustices in educational provision, provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners and in so doing lay a strong foundation for

the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advance the democratic transformation of society, combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contribute to the eradication of poverty and the economic well-being of society, protect and advance our diverse cultures and languages, uphold the rights of all learners, parents and educators, and promote their acceptance of responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools in partnership with the State" (emphasis added, South African Schools Act, p. 1)

South Africa's national approach to school integration has differed from the U.S. because it explicitly aims to use education to unify society as opposed to providing equal opportunities to marginalized groups. The SASA used inclusive language, such as "all learners" and "all our people's talents and capabilities," which signaled the government's recognition that the foundation of a strong democracy is social unification. Similarly, South Africa's 1997 Language in Education Policy relied on this notion that the people of society have an inherent value. The document states, "The new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the government, and thus the Department of Education, recognises that *our cultural diversity is a valuable national asset* and hence is tasked, amongst other things, to promote multilingualism" (emphasis added, Language in Education Policy, 1997). This policy, which supports the instruction of the nation's eleven official languages, addressed segregation from a linguistic standpoint and continued a trend of inclusivity found throughout post-apartheid legislation.

Clearly, there are vast contextual and cultural differences between the U.S. and South Africa that might explain their different discourses surrounding desegregation. However, these two countries share a legacy of oppression and racial inequality that is deeply rooted within their social structures. As such, both countries have used the educational system as a means to create a more

equitable society. It is clear after 55 years that the goal of *Brown* has yet to be fully realized in the U.S, and even though South Africa's desegregation efforts span less than two decades, integration also is far from being achieved. Although both countries struggle to achieve the goals behind desegregation legislation, each still holds strong to the notion that policy changes at the macro level actually will achieve integration.

Description of the Study

Data for the analyses of the findings discussed come from a multi-method, purposive case study of four public, multiracial and “white-dominant” high schools in four cities in the United States and South Africa.¹ For the sake of confidentiality, we use pseudonyms and refer to these cities as “Northern Capital City” (NCC) and “Southern Capital City” (SCC) in the United States and “Letisi” and “Coast City” in South Africa. These four high schools are a part of a larger study about group dynamics in eight high schools—the remaining three are comparison cases of multiethnic, black-majority schools—conducted from 2004-2008. These two U.S. metropolitan areas are comparable to the two South African metropolitan areas on a few key dimensions: Southern Capital City (2007 MSA Census estimate pop. 476,906) and “Letisi” (2001 Census pop. 2,478,631) are both urban locales abutting rural areas, and in terms of the racial structure, these two cities and their metropolitan areas are characterized more by the black-white representation of their

¹ The levels of resegregation and White flight from urban schools in the both the United States and South Africa (Orfield 2001; Vally and Dalamba 1999) challenge the process of a random selection of multiracial schools from the universe of available high schools in both nations. Furthermore, in South Africa, the provincial governments do not keep detailed statistics of the racial demographics of their schools, which many attribute to the “non-racialist” state policy formulated in the aftermath of apartheid. For the selection of the multiracial school in both areas, we began by listing all of the high schools in metropolitan areas perceived to have a significant population of White students (approximately twenty-five percent), as well as Black and Coloured students. Fortunately, the first schools of this type that we contacted in both areas agreed to participate in South Africa. In the U.S., we were able to obtain the second schools that we contacted in each city after initial refusals by school principals in the first round of contact.

residents.² Southern Capital City and Letisi have significantly large percentages of Black and White residents from mixed socioeconomic backgrounds. Both coastal cities, Northern Capital City (2007 Census estimate pop. 3,461,725) and Coast City (2001 Census 2,892,243) are large metropolises and have significant percentages of Blacks and Whites, as well as a sizable percentage of racial-ethnic groups that are not classified as either Black or White. Almost one-third of the students in the Northern Capital City Public Schools identify as Latino or Hispanic, while Coast City boasts a sizable percentage of Coloured students in its schools.

The first author conducted research at the three South African schools over the course of six months from January-June 2004 and again in August 2008. These schools run during the calendar year from January to December and are broken up into quarters with short one- to two-week breaks interspersed. The researcher spent the first quarter in the Coast City metropolitan area at "Palmer High School," and the second quarter in the Gauteng Province in Letisi at "Williston High School." Palmer High School, a former white school in Coast City has a learner population of approximately 1000 learners, forty percent of whom were White learners and sixty percent Black, Coloured, and Indian.³ The multiracial and former white-only school, "Williston" has approximately 980 learners, over half of which are racially identified as Black. Approximately thirty percent of the learners at Williston are White, seventeen percent Indian and three percent Coloured. Ninety-eight percent of the teachers are White and two percent are Black and Coloured

² Pseudonyms are used throughout this paper to protect the identities of the schools, students, and staff and to mask their locations.

³ These estimates are approximate since most South African schools refuse to maintain racial statistics in keeping with the non-racial ideology that pervades there.

(Refer to Table 1).⁴ Similar to Palmer, Williston High School teaches primarily in English and Afrikaans is offered as the primary second language (see discussion below).

The schools in the two selected U.S. cities represent areas where desegregation struggles were fraught with racial and ethnic strife (Dalbey&Harris, 2001, Eaton, 2001), yet they constitute different areas of the country where regional history suggests that the extent of interracial and inter-ethnic contact and the permeability of group boundaries could vary (Farley&Frey, 1994). While they are not representative of all schools in their respective districts, they are typical of schools that can be classified as “mixed-race” (nominally, at least) in their respective districts and metropolitan areas. A team of four (including three research assistants and the first author) visited these two schools almost daily for six months from January though June 2007. The research team comprised two African Americans and two European Americans.

The data collection began in Southern Capital City (SCC) in January 2007 at “South County Prep High School,” a school of grades 9-12 comprised of 1389 students located at the fringe of Southern Capital City. At South County Prep High School, about 77% percent of the students are racially classified as White, 21% Black, and 1% Asian and 1 % Hispanic.⁵ South County Prep’s student-teacher ratio is 17.3, and with the exception of three, all of the teachers and staff are White. Northern Capital City (NCC) is a significantly larger urban center with a population that is 54% White, 25 % Black, 14 % Hispanic, and 8% Asian, and it serves a public school student population of 57, 279. The student racial demographics in NCC’s public schools, however, do not reflect the residential demographics. With the exception of three exam schools, an organizational

⁴ We should note that neither of the Black teachers in this school were native-born South Africans. Rather they were both male immigrants from Ghana and Zimbabwe.

⁵ Source: National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core Public School Data 2005-2006 academic year.

structure that attracts a critical percentage of White students, NCC's public schools are highly segregated. Forty-two percent of students are Black, 14% White, 9% Asian, and 35% Hispanic. To find a comparative, majority-white school with a critical mass of Black and Latino students, we had to turn to a suburban, upper middle-class school district that participates in Northern Capital City's metropolitan voluntary desegregation program (VDP).⁶

North Village Prep is located about twenty miles outside the center of NCC in an upper middle class, mostly white community. NVP has a student population of 1242, 84% are White, 6% Black, 5% Asian, and 3 % Latino. With the exception of one African American and one Asian American teacher, all of North Village Prep High School's eighty-eight teachers are White, and its student-teacher ratio is 14.1.

[Table 2 Here]

One of the best ways to become familiar with a school's culture is for the researchers to immerse themselves in the context. Over this time, the first author and research assistants attended classes daily, documenting the sights, sounds, and experiences encountered in the schools, as well as the social makeup of different academic classes, student social spaces, and extracurricular activities, to develop "thick" descriptions of the sociocultural milieu of the schools (Geertz, 1983). Also, we randomly surveyed a stratified sample of about twenty percent of each school's learner populations (refer to Table 1), asking questions about students' perceptions of school climate, teacher-student interactions, racial group dynamics, their aspirations and expectations, among a host of other questions; conducted twelve group interviews with learners about their learner-educator and learner-learner dynamics across race, class, and gender in these

⁶ VDP is a state-funded program designed to eliminate racial imbalance through the busing of children of color from NCC to public school systems in surrounding suburban communities.

three schools; formally interviewed principals and vice-principals about the school's history, their experiences and specific schools policies; informally interviewed a random sample of educators at each of the schools about their teaching experiences across the grades; and collected myriad school materials and brochures.

The Eradication of Apartheid Education and Residual Social Dynamics

Within the two South African high schools discussed here, we surveyed 477 students across grades 8 through 12 about their perceptions of educational and job opportunity in contemporary South Africa. We asked students in separate questions how much discrimination in education and in jobs did they perceive was occurring in South Africa, with answer categories ranging from "a lot," "some," "a little," to "none." The most striking pattern found across the three schools is that more than half of the White students at Williston (52 percent) believe that Whites experience "a lot" to "some" educational discrimination, and nearly three-quarters (73 percent) at Williston and two-thirds (66 percent) of the White students at Palmer believe that job discrimination against Whites is occurring in South Africa. White students in both schools are more than one and half times as likely to perceive some form of white job discrimination as Black, Coloured, or Indian students (refer to Figures 1a-2b). And at Williston, they are more than twice as likely as Black students and one and a half times as likely as Coloured and Indian students to perceive that educational discrimination occurs.

Although White students at both Williston and Palmer hail from middle class communities with unequivocally the best performing public schools in the nation and comprise a segment of the population which faced zero percent unemployment under apartheid—and 8.9% for those with a high school ("matric") degree in 2002, compared to 56% and 24% for the Black and Coloured South Africans with matric degrees, respectively—there are signs of obvious fear among these youth

about any equity-minded educational and economic policies in the country. In the fifteen years since apartheid's demise, the ANC-led government has implemented economic and educational policies to construct a black middle class in an enduring capitalist economy. This has included the development of policies such as the BEE (Black Economic Empowerment) Initiative, which provides incentives for white companies to hire black professionals and to outsource contracts to fledgling black businesses. Flagship institutions such as the University of Cape Town, the University of Pretoria, and the University of Witwatersrand have expanded their admission policies to cast the net wider to students from historically disadvantaged groups. As affirmative action policies, these programs no longer guarantee White South Africans an entitlement to jobs and elite educational spots, as was the case under apartheid.

For the beneficiaries of apartheid and their offspring, it is a scary matter not to be able to ensure that the latter will have the same privileges and entitlements that their parents possessed (Jansen, 2009). One afternoon, the first author met and asked a group of Palmer students who had voluntarily participated in an overnight retreat program, the "Diversity Trippers," which one of the school's counsellors created to encourage students to meet and discuss issues with one another across lines of social difference. When the researcher asked the learners whether they believed that race and gender differences would continue to matter in their future, a male Diversity Tripper responded, "I think it's sort of ... unfair because I think perhaps it was - you can't blame Melissa for things her parents have done, you can't blame Shannon for things her parents have done. So by giving people who haven't had opportunities you could be taking them away from people who haven't done anything wrong. But it's a very difficult situation," After a pause, this student continued: "I mean, people do deserve chances. But I think that the problem - my problem with affirmative action is that it's almost setting up previously disadvantaged people for failure because

there are so many people in high positions that they are untrained for, just to fill the racial quota and when they do badly, it's because they're stupid, it's because they're Black, because they're Coloured. You know what I mean?"

This "Diversity Tripper" possessed, at the least, a cursory understanding of the past injustices that occurred prior to his birth and that was legally dissolved during his toddler years. At the same time, his comments exemplified a central tension we witnessed repeatedly in our observations and interviews. Students—whose ideas were likely informed by the adults in their lives, including parents and educators—continually asserted and acted according to entrenched racial ideologies and interests that were more immediately and concretely "experienced" (or perceived) and consequently contradicted their buy-in into a larger, abstract public attitude and equity-oriented policy agenda.

Although some White students voiced a desire to move past the apartheid legacy, this was not an opinion shared by all students. For many, the recency of apartheid perpetuated some awareness of the devastation and suffering that occurred under that system. In that same group of "Diversity Trippers," another student responded, "Racism, you just can't get rid of it. It's still here. We're only ten years out of democracy. You can't just expect, hey, apartheid's finished, let's all forget what's just happened for the last 60, 70 years. So many people have died to bring this country to freedom, let's just forget about it. You can't say that." This response highlights a crucial distinction between South Africa and the United States, which explains why the intensity of reactions to integration differs slightly between the students of the two countries in our study (see more discussion below). South African students are much closer to their history of legalized racism than those in the United States.

Challenging racial sentiments have endured across the years at Palmer, nonetheless.

Four years later after the above-mentioned interview with the “Diversity Trippers,” a group of high school seniors (eighth graders in 2004) were asked what a policymaker might do to redress past legacies of apartheid, a White male Palmer student responded, “*You wouldn’t, would you?*” The student goes on to suggest that schools should no longer teach about the history or persistent legacies of apartheid, and should recognize, that as times have changed, it’s no longer White South Africans who are “doing it anymore” but “greedy people.” We heard similar sentiments at Williston during a multiracial group interview: White students had just about had it with the teaching of apartheid history, though it was not ancient history (for a more thorough and incisive analyses of this racial “fatigue,” see Jansen 2009). Meanwhile, Black students, reflecting the views of their parents and communities which also undoubtedly influence their cross-cultural relations in school and society, add a counter-narrative that proceeds from a similar position of societal fear. One Black male senior at Williston, affirming that in the context of racial politics, there is fear shares: “Okay, my dad told me that it’s most Black people right now are voting for like you said Jacob Zuma and Thabo Mbeki, another Black person, because they’re scared if they vote for a White person, what will happen is that apartheid will come back.

A fear associated with their history is present among African, Coloured, and White students. As was voiced by the senior at Williston, some Blacks fear apartheid’s return, whereas, Whites are afraid that they are being disadvantaged under the current system. Although the organization of schooling and concomitant educational policies have changed, students have not transitioned as quickly because the social chasm left by apartheid’s history is slow to diminish in size. Furthermore, the policies of the ANC government to redress to

pernicious effects of racial exclusion foment the divide from the perceptions of those who are required to shift their understandings of what is fair and just the furthest. Meanwhile, Black students are not ready to forget and White students want a clean slate; this tension and the ability to address it adequately undermines integration efforts by reinforcing racial identities and interests that are at odds with one another.

Guided by beliefs of government incompetence and fears (including that of high crime rates) of being excluded, a critical mass of the White youth from Palmer and Williston will migrate to other countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States—white majority countries—to either take a “gap” year or two from college or to settle there permanently. One assembly day in the fall of 2004 at Williston, Principal Caryn Billups, a stern disciplinarian and national Girl Guide leader, who has led this school for over a decade, beseeches her (White) learners to remember that “South Africa is all of our country” and that although it was fine for students to consider leaving for a year or so, they should return. “I’m proud to be a South African and would never think of leaving it,” Billups proclaims before her assembly of more than 950 students. The principal was joined on stage by representatives from the ANC and the Democratic Alliance (DA), one of the fledging oppositional parties to the ANC. Both politicos gave their assessment of what had occurred within the democracy at this point in his ten-year history, but like Mrs. Billups, Matthew, the DA’s young 32-year old representative similarly discouraged learners from leaving South Africa. Apparently, many White learners were not listening. When the first author returned to Williston fours years later and met with the group of seniors, all seven of the White learners in the room of eighteen raised their hands when asked who was considering leaving South Africa.

Mrs. Billups spoke further about the emigration of White students during a formal interview days after the assembly. She primarily attributed the “brain drain” to White students’ fears of the

high “crime rate” and “poverty,” yet she acknowledges that there is a problem of how White students’ perceive their opportunities for upward social mobility. “Look, I hope eventually, there's going to be a balance, if you're a South African, regardless of what color you are. I think it will take us a bit of time to get to that. And I think any child whose attitude is right will always get a job here. I don't care what your color is... Kids whose attitude is right will find work here, regardless if they're male and White. I think it's a myth, you know, if you're male and pale you're not going to get a job. I don't believe that, I believe you can get jobs. But your attitude has got to be right.”

Although she perceives that “attitude” is a more influential predictor of job attainment, Principal Billups believed that a “balance” has not yet been attained because skin color does matter to a certain extent, whether it comes to securing a job or gaining admission to university. She refers to this white fear as a “myth,” but clearly there is still a perception of unfairness among White students based on the school surveys, which found such a high percentage of affirmative responses regarding whether White students’ felt they had experienced job or academic discrimination. Even if Mrs. Billups perceived a disconnection between the White students’ fear and actual educational and job mobility practices, the students did not seem to share her conveyed optimism. Again, their perception of a palpable threat to their social status reinforced a rigid racial boundary.

Principal John Dalton at Palmer High School remarked similarly to Mrs. Billups during a discussion of whether he had observed competition between the different races within the school. “Some of the White kids are a little bit tense about it and they say, “You know, why must we get punished effectively or get shut up?” And the message I keep saying to them is that I have never known a White kid in all of the years that I’ve been teaching when the whole question of affirmative action came in and you got extra points if you were Black or Coloured or female...I said, you know, I’ve never known a White male not to be able to get in if they were absolutely determined to do so.

It's just a question of motivation, will, desire – all those things and to say, "I am going to become a doctor," he responds. Like Mrs. Billups, Mr. Dalton pointed to the importance of a student's attitude or "motivation" in gaining access to university, but he also openly acknowledged that White students' perceive themselves as being at a considerable disadvantage. Moreover, his response suggested that he tries to allay the fears of these students by discounting the ultimate effects of affirmative action. He took the position that regardless of the benefit provided by affirmative action policies, he has never known of a White student who did not get into a university if so desired.

At the same time, Mr. Dalton conveyed his feeling that some students of color do not necessarily deserve the advantages they receive. In fact, both at Palmer and Williston, neither students nor educators minced their words about these equity-minded policies. They perceived that their fellow Black and Coloured classmates, who are likely lower-middle to upper-middle class, were the main competitors; and because of the quality education that they received at these two schools, had a higher probability of earning admittance to the flagship universities than their poorer counterparts in the township schools. They lamented the "unfair" advantage given to the historically unprivileged Black population: "I don't regard ...a lot of our kids, Black or Coloured kids at the school who are here, as being disadvantaged at all because they've had the most incredible education at primary school and now. They're coming from middle class...a lot of them come from middle class homes where there's no want or need for anything. But they get the advantage because of their racial grouping that they're in. So that also raises a few concerns," said Mr. Dalton. His response elucidated how an educator's opinions and beliefs regarding equity-minded policies could complicate their implementation, specifically in terms of the messages they may be conveying to students. On the one hand, Mr. Dalton tried to send the message to his White students that

“desire,” “will,” and “motivation” matter more than skin color. On the other hand, he considered advantages to middle and upper-class Black students as “unfair.” As Oakes and colleagues have stated, reforms aimed at “parity in opportunity and achievement across diverse groups of students” are different than other types of reform because, “they create a struggle between individuals over resources that are perceived to be scarce” (1998: 283).

Clearly, White educators had concerns, too, especially when it came to the potential restructuring of the school administrations. In an interview four years after her declarations in the student assembly, Caryn Billups reflected on Williston High School’s future and her imminent retirement in a few years and made the following comments when asked her potential successor:

Prudence: Would one of your deputy principals then become the principal?

Billups: I don’t know. They might put a Black principal here. I mean we can interview and give them [the higher up school district officials] a list of our 1-2-3 ranks but they can disregard our recommendation. Funny thing is that the Black learners come here because we have a White principal. They know that we work hard, that we have discipline. They won’t get that with a Black principal.

Billups’ position had changed conspicuously in the four years. Her optimism about “motivation” and having the “right attitude” regarding work in the future had waned. Furthermore, Billups’ language converged with those of her students, who had made almost the same remarks verbatim to the researcher in an earlier conversation. Finally, Billups’ apprehensive comments unveiled an entrenched racial logic to which she and her learners subscribed about the worthiness of their fellow African citizens. Overall, Billups’ and her students’ comments appear to confirm Blumer’s (1958) argument “race prejudice as a sense of group position” in South African society. Having resided in a society that for so long was steeped in a racial logic that reinforced ideas of white superiority with strong beliefs about black intelligence and subordinance, these particular South

African educators and students have trouble distributing resources and conceding fuller educational opportunity to the nation's black majority.

Knowing Their Lines: The Persistence of Social Boundaries

Daily school observations also showed that palpable social divisions between White and Non-White learners at both Palmer and Williston endured as perceptions of increased privilege for Black and Coloured students in the “new” South Africa have grown. On any given day at either of these schools, the casual observer would note that during the two thirty-minute breaks built into the school’s schedule, learners would immediately disperse from their multiracial classroom settings and separate into conspicuously homogeneous racial groups, in some instances co-ed, and in other instances not. In the first author’s second day at Williston, she shadowed a soft-spoken, tenth grader named Reema who allowed her to hang out with her and her friends at break time. Reema is a member of South Africa’s modest-sized Indian population, and on this sunny afternoon during one of the two daily school breaks, we met up with Reema’s fellow Indian learners, all girls, at the back of the school.

As many teenagers looked curiously observed the foreign visitor, the researcher took note of their social arrangements. Overt social boundaries endured. Groups of Black, Indian, Coloured, and White boys and girls—the former decked out in brown and gold school blazers, the latter in short brown skirts and brown v-neck sweaters—milled about separately from one another. They ranged in sizes and gender composition. At one point, the researcher excused herself from Reema and her friends and made her way towards a group of African female students seated a table in the middle of the school plaza, and she hears them speaking another language, Sesotho. Once she

greeted them, they switch to English and indulge the inquisitive researcher with answers to the questions about their names, grades, and whether they study SeSotho at Williston.

Occasionally the researcher voiced aloud her observations of both students' and educators' tendencies to self-segregate into ethno-racial, and even gender, groups. Matter-of-factly, some would respond that it had nothing to do with race but rather "taste" and "interests" and "activities:" Noma, one eleventh grade Black female at Williston, told the researcher that the in-school social segregation is because she and her African friends share the same customs. Similarly, two of her White male classmates, Will and Anthony, agreed by chiming in that it is standard for learners to hang out with those whom they consider friends and who speak their language. "It's not like we're racist or anything," Will says. "It's just that we respect their differences, and they respect what we do." Here Will uses language as one of the symbolic boundaries (Lamont 2000) that both normalize and perpetuate racial boundaries among his schoolmates. Based on her ethnographic work of a high school in Durban, South Africa, Nadine Dolby (2001) might agree with Noma's, Will's and Anthony's assessments that racial identities are about taste, and that youth carve out their identities along the lines of shared tastes and cultural expressions. Dolby also argues that the globalization and the diffusion of youth culture across national borders facilitate the shifting notions of "Black," "Coloured" "Indian," or "White." She writes: "Interpreting 'race' as taste does not diminish its force... [Instead] it points to the ever-changing dynamics of race and highlights the potentially potent configuration of race that responds to a changing global situation (p. 17).

Tastes, in the case of the students' in this study, however, generally tended to correlate to ascribed racial identity. Furthermore, when it came to specific tastes, such as hair styles and language, the school leaders took decidedly different and disproportionately adverse approaches to

“black” expressions of these forms. Principal Billups and her staff at Williston, for example, forbade (Black) learners from sporting “ethnic” hairstyles such as braids, twists, dreadlocks, or closely shorn haircuts (which often had cultural significance) with their school uniforms. At Palmer, initially while Black learners could wear such hairstyles, White learners could not, but as the years progressed, Principal John Dalton and his staff had a change of mind, recognizing the conspicuous form of cultural inequality such unilateral codes promoted (Carter, Forthcoming 2009).

Very frequently, we found students and educators expressing concrete beliefs and perceptions that also wielded a type of “laissez-faire” approach to the eradication of structures of oppression and inequity (see Bobo et al., 1997). White South African students and educators often maintained generalizing notions that contradicted the abstract narratives for success and rationales for change. Accordingly, these educational actors’ cognitive or concrete attitudes were borne from and contributed to distrust, skepticism and a resistance to the broader norms of egalitarianism facilitated through macro-level policies and pervasive public discourse. Perceiving themselves to no longer inhabit a solidly dominant, privileged and secure position in society, they did not trust the social order engendered by the current norms to respect what felt like a new vulnerability. Political theorist Danielle Allen’s work (2004) suggests that “fossilized distrust” among citizens and the failure to recognize the common stakes and benefits of citizenship within a collectivized political economy contribute to the failure of democratic ideals like equality and justice and efforts at cultural diversity. That type of “fossilized distrust” fuels the pervasive phenomenon of “white flight” from desegregated, de-tracked or other “equalized” educational contexts.

Does Longer Experience with Desegregation Create Difference? Inside the US Schools

U.S. schools have had longer experiences with multiracial student populations than South African schools—more than four decades for some, though significantly less for many if we start counting from the point at which most schools actually did begin to desegregate (Orfield 2009; Wells et al 2009). Since 1967, North Village Prep (NVP) has participated in the Voluntary Desegregation Program to attract African American and Hispanic students, most of whom entered a lottery to attend affluent suburban schools like North Village Prep High School. In comparison, South County Prep (SCP) was built in the early eighties. Nevertheless, most of SCP's students—both Black and White—have been attending school together since their elementary years, despite the fact that they are not neighbors. The residential segregation is high in metro South Capital City, as it is in metro North Capital City. Hence, students in both high schools continue to part ways after the school bell rings.

Patterns of residential social distance are reflected within intra-school relations and social organization. Exposure and social contact with one another compel students of different racial backgrounds to deal with the racial “stuff,” the baggage and emotions that past and extant social relations have fomented. Like their peers in South Africa, American students at North Village Prep and South County High Schools, the two multiracial, white-dominant (MRWD) schools, grappled with their emotions and the social and symbolic boundaries they endured behind school walls. At these two schools, students appeared to have significant physical and academic distance from one another across racial lines. In an explicit discussion of racial and ethnic boundaries, Ashley, a White female participating in a co-ed, all-white eleventh grade group at South County Prep, points out that the social organization of the students in academic and extracurricular activities facilitates the structuring of social relationships:

Interviewer: So what do your individual groups look like?

Ashley: We have like kind of blurry *lines* a lot of the times...but like, you know, you have that group and you can't really like relate to that group. You can individually, but like not as a whole group, but a lot of the other groups just like they've learned their lines a lot. Like we have a lot of people that are in the AP classes and they hang out together a lot and there's like theater groups and stuff like that and they hang out and just like random small groups from like different...just from being in high school together for so long and stuff like that.

Again, Ashley's views and that of others with whom we spoke confirm we know from the research on multiracial schools and sociability (Hallinan & Williams, 1989, Moody, 2002, Schofield, 1991, 1993, Hallinan & Teixeira, 1987). Differential levels of participation by groups can concretize the "lines," boundaries, or perceived differences to the point that they can endure throughout high school. At South County Prep, White students dominated not only the most academically rigorous courses but also the most visible, high-status extracurricular activities, including cheerleading, the Young Republicans Club, and baseball. In an informal poll we took, teachers designated only about five (out of 292) African American students considered bright enough to be enrolled in advanced classes. Meanwhile, survey data show that White students were more than one and a half times as likely to be enrolled in either an AP or honors courses as their Black school mates—62 percent and 38 percent, respectively.

Similarly, at majority-white North Village Prep High School hundreds of miles to the north, students commented similarly on how their schools might influence their ability to move across social boundaries more easily and frequently. Will, a graduating White senior, laments what he found one of the most negative aspects of his high school, which had participated in a voluntary desegregated school for decades:

Interviewer: If you were able to change one thing about your school, what would that be?

Will: I think one thing I would change is I would try to make this school more welcoming for...all people. I mean, as with any high school, probably, you tend to form...tend to breakdown into groups I mean, I hang out with people who do a lot of the same activities as me and, you know, get the same grades and are in the same classes, and I think that's one disadvantage of having kind of tracked classes. I'm glad that we don't have them in English or History. I think that helps a little bit but, yeah, I'm certainly glad that we have the...via the [Be the] Challenge program this year, I really think that will make a difference in the school.

Interviewer: You do?

Will: Yeah. I really do. I mean, I participated in one of the days and I thought it was an amazing experience but I think people... I think it's...if not already, then in the future it will help people to kind of recognize others and not just judge them. It will probably take a while for it to make a really big difference in the school.

Will informs the interviewer that homogeneous extracurricular activities and tracking preclude much student interaction across racial lines in school. At North Village Prep, 71 percent of White students were enrolled in at least either one honors or AP course, compared to 30 percent of their Black peers. Will's comments also reminded me of the buzz that in the air that spring, with the eager anticipation of students, and a few fortunate teachers, who were preparing to head to Japan on a band and orchestra trip for a two-week exchange. While one of the only two Black teachers, Mr. Moman, was going on the trip as a chaperon, *none* of the African American and Latino students who participated in the Voluntary Desegregation Program (VDP) at North Village Prep were headed

to Japan. Yearly students took trips abroad through Europe, Asia, Latin and Central America—after numerous car washes, bake sales, and parental financial support; but, North Village Prep’s Black and Latino students—the majority of whom are lower income and voluntarily bussed to the school via the VDP—either could not afford and were not financially subsidized by the school to participate in these trips.

Moreover, at various break times and free periods during the day, the VDP student participants socialized and took study breaks in two rooms where only they gathered. From completing paper assignments to getting tutorial assistance to playing chess and talking politics to merely hanging out with one another, most VDP spent at least some time in the “VDP” room, away and separate from their White peers. Beyond their class time with White peers in their general comprehensive and college preparatory classes, nearly all of the students of color at North Village Prep—namely, the VDP participants—had limited social contact with White students outside of class time.

As we mentioned earlier, almost all of North Village Prep High’s students are bussed into the district from the urban center and surrounding areas of Northern Capital City. The lack of residential and community proximity very likely impeded the narrowing of that social distance gap—the most frequent issue brought up Black students in our interviews at VHS. Angela, a graduating senior, tells one of the researchers: “It is hard to hang out with North Village Prep kids because I live so far away. Once, when I was playing basketball, I slept over at one of their houses. I stopped playing basketball because the practice is from 6-8 at night, and there is no bus. I don’t like staying there overnight.” Residential segregation impeded not only Angela’s ability to build relationships with her White peers outside of class but also it limited her ability to participate in extracurricular sports.

Nonetheless, Will, Angela, some of their peers (of various races), and some school administrators demonstrated their willingness to build relations across racial and ethnic lines through other conduits that, as Will says, could potentially “make a really big difference. We recall the first day at North Village Prep when we attended an assembly introducing the student body to a program (“Be the Challenge”) making its way across the country to motivate educators and students to deal with social difference.⁷ Prior to the assembly, as students walked into the auditorium, they were given randomly assigned, color-coded pieces of paper and told to sit in the area designated by its color. Being rebellious adolescents, students ignored the directions and chose not to, especially since color-coded random assignments would have taken them out of their comfort zone of sitting with their friends. During the assembly, students watched video excerpts of the Oprah Show, which featured “Be the Challenge,” and then were encouraged to participate in the upcoming program at North Village Prep by two senior co-facilitators, an African American female and a White male. North Village Prep had been participating in a voluntary desegregation program for nearly four decades, and they still hadn’t figured out a solution to their “race” problems. Would “Be the Challenge” work?

At the time, the data did not show that. Where the abstract rhetorical commitments fostered by programs like “Be the Challenge” are publicly espoused, they are countermanded on the ground. Asked about racial problems and his perspective on the success of the VDP program, North Village principal Stuart Beckman stated that in his six years at the school, he had not had any serious racial issues in the school. He commented, “I attribute a lot of that to the fact that it’s a pretty welcoming environment for the most part, that for the most part people are willing to let people be whoever

⁷ “Be the Challenge” is a program that was introduced nationally on the Oprah Winfrey show in recent years and developed by a husband-wife team of motivational speakers who traveled to high schools and had students and teachers to spend time in one-day retreats discussing and breaking through categories of social difference.

they are. It's just that it's not something that people voice as an issue, and so you don't get the racial issues, but overall, the VDP, overall I think it's done well."

Principal Beckman's stated views, though, are tempered by an acknowledgment of *some* problems. His stated reflections on the racial conditions at North Village Prep were directly contradicted by a group of Black and Latino girls, suggesting that perhaps Principal Beckman's perceptions reflect how things *ought* to be, rather than how they *are*:

Girl #1 : Just the whole like...the whole black and white like in like everything. Like, oh, something is stolen; it's always the black kid and all of that. Like it just was like...

Girl #2: (one of your) friends took something.

Girl #1: And it's always like, yeah, and it's like, we would get in trouble all the time but this [White] student could be doing that and it's like, oh, well, they won't notice them but because we're the Black kids and we all like to sit together or something, We stand out and it's like, well, we don't really feel like that comfortable around everybody else because it's not like they make the effort to say, "Oh, well, come sit with me" or something like that. It's just like you're separated, you know, like even if they say like, "Oh, well, you guys can sit here."

Overall, these snippets of life at both North Village Prep and South County High illuminate the confluence of forces that schools as "zones of mediation" face. Economic, racial, social, and cultural phenomena converge and create a complex set of social interactions—sustained by explicit organized school practices—that are limited in their impact to realize fully the objectives integrationist aims. Indeed, in her conceptual outlay of political friendship, Allen (2004) writes that friendship is not an emotion, but a practice: a set of hard-won, complicated habits used to bridge differences of personality, experience and aspiration. Friendship is not easy, nor is the attainment of educational equity.

Variable Zones of Mediation

The power to either reinforce or diminish boundaries particularly within communities and institutions is often within the hands of adults: parents and educators who control the school's resources and power (Oakes et al., 1998, Wells et al., 2009). Often, we find educational leaders and parents expressing concrete beliefs and perceptions that resist policies to eradicate structures of oppression and inequity (Wells & Serna, 1996). They frequently maintain generalizing notions that work to contradict the abstract narratives about the need for equity and rationale for change. Educational gatekeepers at the four schools in this study set the limits of the extent to which they would allow the values, sensibilities, practices, or cultural and material realities of other social groups or entities permeate the organizational boundary, the school culture, and the leadership's understanding of its educational context.

The schools' practices differed in their degrees of social closure from one another, depending on their cultural, political, or moral stance. One of the South African schools—Williston—took what Chisholm (1999) refers to as a “cultural difference” approach, in which educators acquiesce to the inclusion of different ethno-racial groups in a school but do not advocate for integration or a deeper inclusion in terms intimate mixing and cross-cultural communication among students and teachers of different races. Meanwhile, the other South African school—Palmer—leaned more towards a combination of equal opportunity treatment and egalitarianism than Williston. On the one hand, Principal Dalton and his students—unmindful of what Gloria Ladson-Billings (Ladson-Billings, 2006) refers to as the “education debt” accumulated from centuries of political, economic, and educational neglect—struggled with equity policies

implemented to open the doors to groups that had been historically denied access to the nation's universities. At the same time, Principal Dalton and his staff were vigilant about specific in-school policies or codes that unfairly targeted their Black students, specifically regarding language and ethnic hairstyles.

Finally, the American principals at South County Prep and North Village Prep shared varying degrees of ideology about how to incorporate their students and to address racial boundaries, though neither could be described as pro-actively egalitarian, according to Chisholm's framework. Principal Mary Jennings, a long-time educator at South County Prep who began teaching there the year the school opened nearly three decades ago, did not appear to have any concern that only two out of over 250 African American students at her school were enrolled in the most advanced college preparatory school. Nor was there any evidence that she cared. Elsewhere it is reported how the self-esteem of Black students at her school was the lowest of all of the Black students across the four schools (Carter, Forthcoming). Along with the Black students at North Village Prep, these students also reported the strongest inclination to not seek friends across different social and cultural lines. As Ashley mentioned earlier, the students at South County Prep had "learned their lines," and Tasha, her school mate and a senior at South County Prep agreed:

Like if you, like, easy going and can really decide to really get into anything, stuff like that, it's not gonna be hard, but if you like have like totally different, you come from like totally different background, then it's going to probably be a little different...little hard to get into...so we [the Black students] all just hang out together. That's how it is. We just all hang out together.

Tasha, Ashley, and many of their classmates had been attending school together since elementary school. Over the course of their years together, it appears, educators were not attuned to how social distance endured across racial groups, and certainly we witnessed no mechanisms put into

place. The messages signaled at this school were that the races were just different, including culturally and academically.

In comparison, North Village Prep's principal, Stuart Beckman, acknowledged the racial achievement and social gap at his school, and some of his staff held regular weekly discussions about this matter; our researchers attended several of their meetings. Teachers and VDP staff looked for ways to understand the VDP students' material or historical realities better, which included becoming "cultural tourists" and having teachers and students take tours of the urban environments where their VDP lived and incorporating a pilot "Be the Challenge" program during our time there. Still, academically the VDP students' participation rates in college preparatory courses, which are known to expand students' knowledge bases in significantly different ways than regular comprehensive high school course, and cultural activities such as band, orchestra, theater, and model UN (United Nations) were much lower than the participation rates of their counterparts students at the majority-black schools in the larger study (Carter Forthcoming).

Principal Jennings, one could argue, took the "cultural difference" approach in which she and her staff accepted the inclusion of African American students at South County Prep, but they did not advocate for integration or a deeper inclusion in terms intimate mixing and cross-cultural communication in the classroom and beyond. Principal Beckman and his staff, like Palmer High School in South Africa, took a different approach, not necessarily "cultural difference" and not nearly "egalitarian." Rather, North Village Prep staff observed the disparate backgrounds of their students, encouraged some discussions—generally among smaller groups—yet ignored the academic and extracurricular patterns that corresponded with racial (and class) backgrounds. The school's sociocultural realm constitutes "a social structure with an underlying logic of its own" (Hays, 1994), and both of the U.S. schools in this study, like their South African counterparts,

maintained sociocultural contexts in which students and educators created and reproduced in-group/out-group boundaries that are likely to be associated with the degrees to which students incorporated themselves into the academic context.

Conclusion

Although both countries continue to struggle to achieve the goals behind desegregation legislation, each still holds strong to the notion that policy changes at the macro level actually will achieve integration. Legal scholar, Morton J. Horwitz explains, “The schools—the weakest and most vulnerable of American institutions—have been forced to bear the brunt of social change required in the battle against racial discrimination” (quoted in Martin, 1998, pp. 35). As “zones of mediation,” South African schools have shouldered much of the responsibility for enacting social change post-apartheid. When the ANC took over the government in 1994, it faced widespread social problems including drastic racial disparities, a poverty rate of 35-55 percent, high unemployment, lack of running water and electricity, and the rapid spread of HIV/AIDS (Fiske & Ladd, 2004). The government felt it could solve these problems through an improved educational system primarily because of international research and policies that claim to find a link between education and development. That is, an equitable educational system would not only address the need for social unification, but also bolster the poor economic conditions within the country.

To a certain extent, the U.S. found itself in a similar position to South Africa during the 1970s and 1980s. According to historian, Waldo E. Martin, following World War II, “commitment to democracy in the United States demanded alignment with progressive struggles for self determination . . . postwar American apartheid was no longer domestically or geopolitically viable” (1998, pp. 6). Martin partly attributes the desegregation movement in the U.S. to the country’s inability to be an effective world leader due to its discriminatory treatment of its Black citizens.

Particularly in the Cold War era, it was important for the U.S. to present itself as a model nation. This notion of the model nation aligns with the modernization school of thought that was a product of the post-WWII era. Even the language of the *Brown* decision echoed the idea that the U.S. had modernized and transformed itself. The document states, “Whatever may have been the extent of psychological knowledge at the time of *Plessy v. Ferguson*, this finding is amply supported by *modern authority*” (emphasis added, *Brown vs. Board of Education*, 1954).

Of course, both the U.S. and South Africa looked towards education as a solution to social problems without considering how non-structural factors could undermine their drastic reforms. Just as Meyer and Rowan articulated years prior, it is the “street-level bureaucrats,” the principals and teachers in a school, who shape (and are shaped by) the local cultural and social climate. They set the example for the socio-cultural goals student should emulate and the limits of the extent to which they would allow the values, sensibilities, practices, or cultural and material realities of other social groups or entities permeate the organizational boundary, the school culture, and the leadership’s understanding of its educational context.

Without an “active and forthright confrontation” of students’ and educators’ belief systems, equity-minded policies have little chance to move beyond a symbolic form of integration, nonetheless (Oakes et al., 2005, pp. 301). One of the South African students, Cindy, poignantly stated, “I think that [apartheid] actually is still there. Somewhere it lies dormant, but, you know, it does affect everybody.” Cindy’s comment illustrates the complex dynamics faced by both South African and American students in this study. Although apartheid and Jim Crow traditions lay “dormant” (Cindy’s words) beneath equity-minded policies, students and educators still feel the residual results of their past presence. Cindy’s metaphor emphasizes the seething power of deeply rooted cultural and racial ideologies, which manifest as social and symbolic boundaries and also

undermine the aims of integration. Macro-level policies do not mollify this threat because they do not attempt to actively dissolve students' and educators' distrust across social boundaries nor do they address these dynamics that schools have to mediate. In echoing a vast body of social science scholarship on policy and race, literary scholar Michelle Cliff (1995:272), in quoting the work of an anti-racist Southern writer Lillian Smith, writes, "the character of racism as in a sense 'larger than life,' something which could not be removed by congressional legislation or Supreme Court decisions, unless these actions were the result of a completely radicalized mindset within the dominant culture." As is the case in both literature and social science, the implications from this small-scale schools' study is that unless educational and socio-political equity are understood to offer mutual benefits and accordingly foster and constitute new social and cultural habits, then the noble and abstract ideals wielded by broad public discourse will continue to avoid materialization in micro-level school interactions.

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Table 1. Demographics of the Three South African Schools in the Study

	Coast City Metro	Letisi
	Palmer (former White)	Williston (former White)
Number of Learners	1000	1000
Number of Educators	53	38
Educator: Learner Ratio	19:1	26:1
Learner Racial Diversity*	29% Black 36% Coloured 2% Indian 33% White	50% Black 6% Coloured 5% Indian 38% White
Educator Racial Diversity*	6% Black 13% Coloured 81% White	5% Black 3% Coloured 92% White
School Fees (in 2004 U.S.\$)	\$1050	\$550
Number of Students surveyed in this study, by Race	230	247

Table 2
Demographic Traits of U.S. Schools in Study

	“Northern Capital City” (NCC)	“Southern Capital City” (SCC)
	“North Village Prep” (majority-white)	“South County Prep” (majority-white)
Total # of Students	1265	1389
% Asian Students	3%	1%
% Black Students	6 %	21%
% Latino Students	1%	1%
% White Students	90 %	77%

Figure 1a

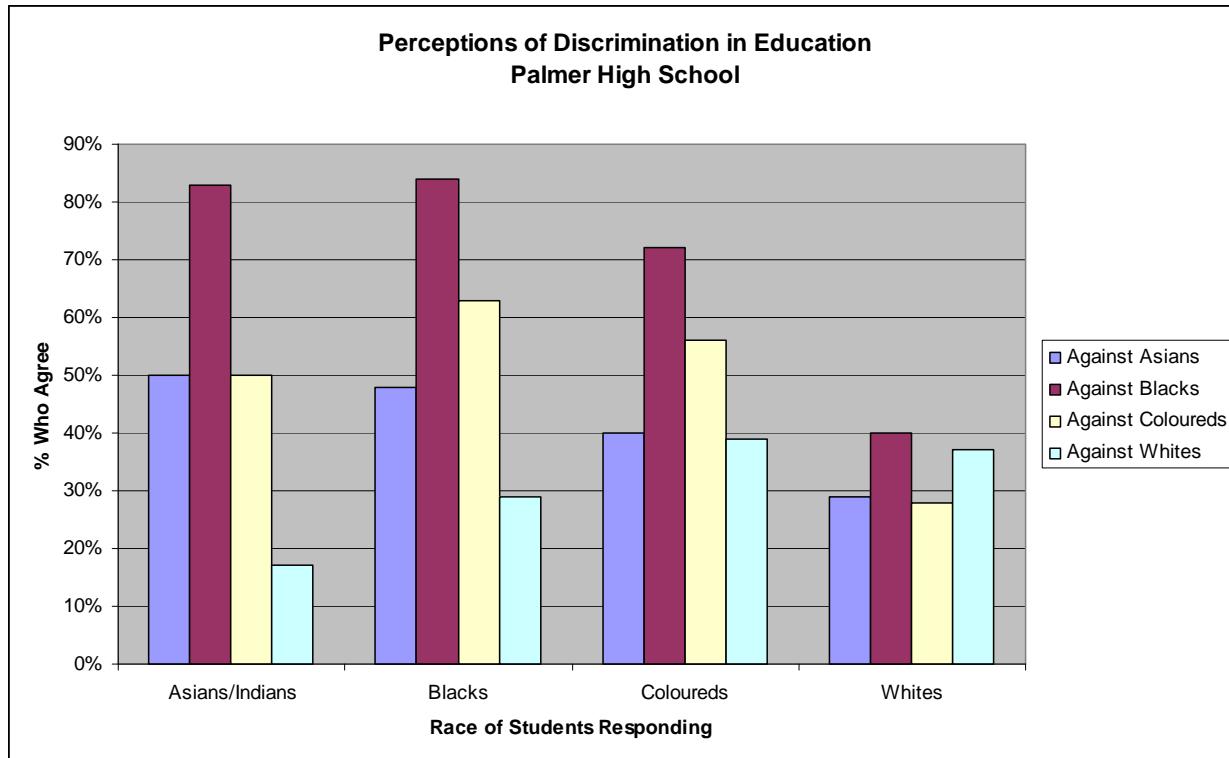


Figure 1b

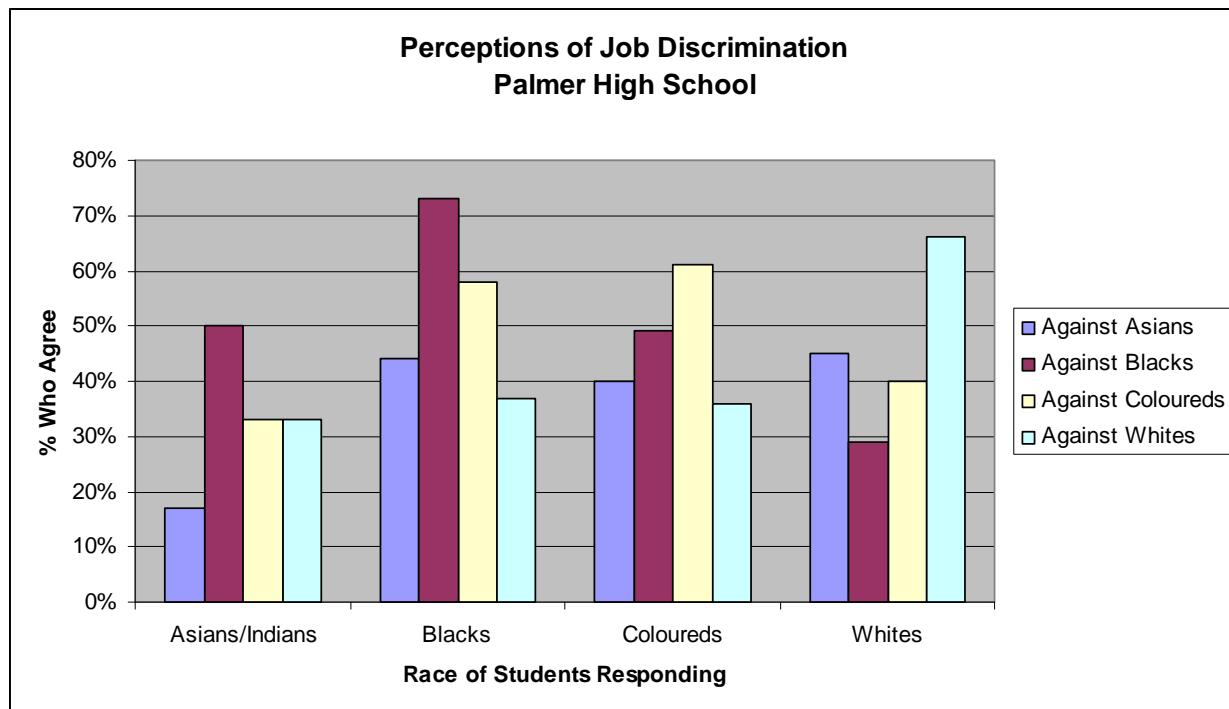


Figure 2a

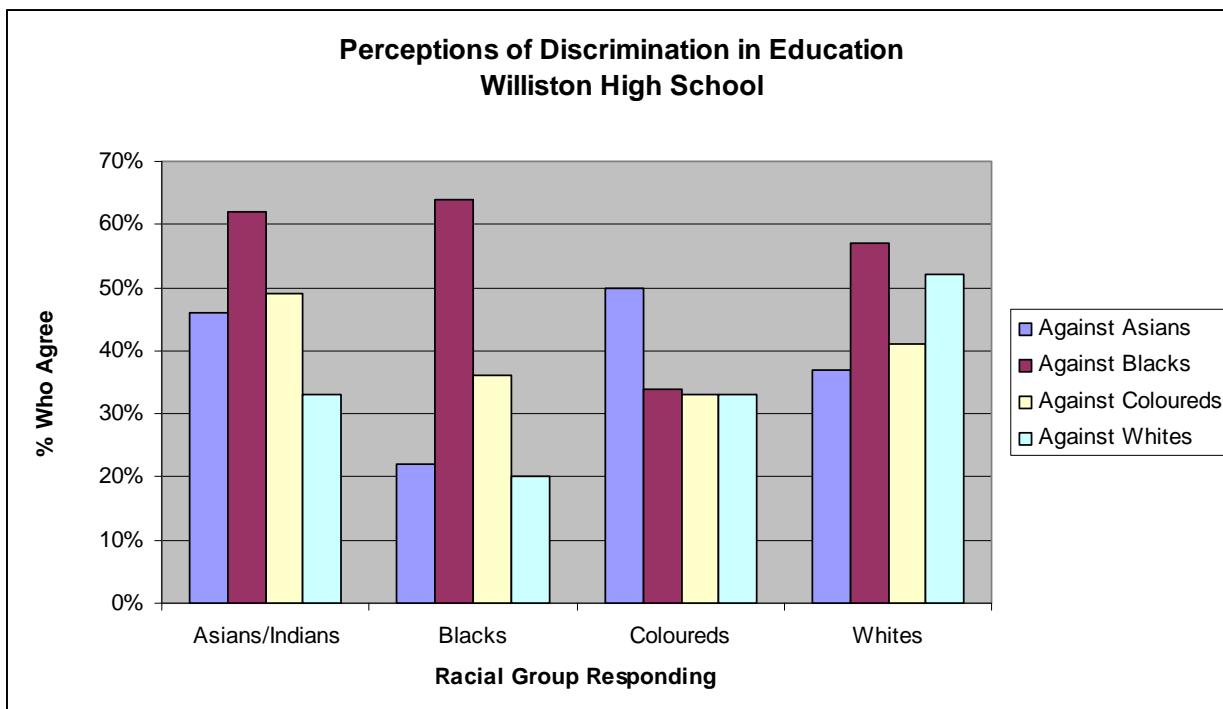


Figure 2b

