

Writing About Race in White Institutional Space

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outline of presentation

- part 1: my personal trajectory of writing on race
- part 2: our collaborative efforts writing the chapter
- part 3: conceptualizing racial-mathematical practice

part I

first possibility

mathematics education, as a domain of inquiry, is immune to the racial contestation, stratification, hierarchies, and ideologies that characterize most other societal contexts. the prevailing practices and structural arrangements in the field are truly democratic in nature, allowing mathematics education to remain above the fray of racial politics, racial ideologies, and racial subordination.

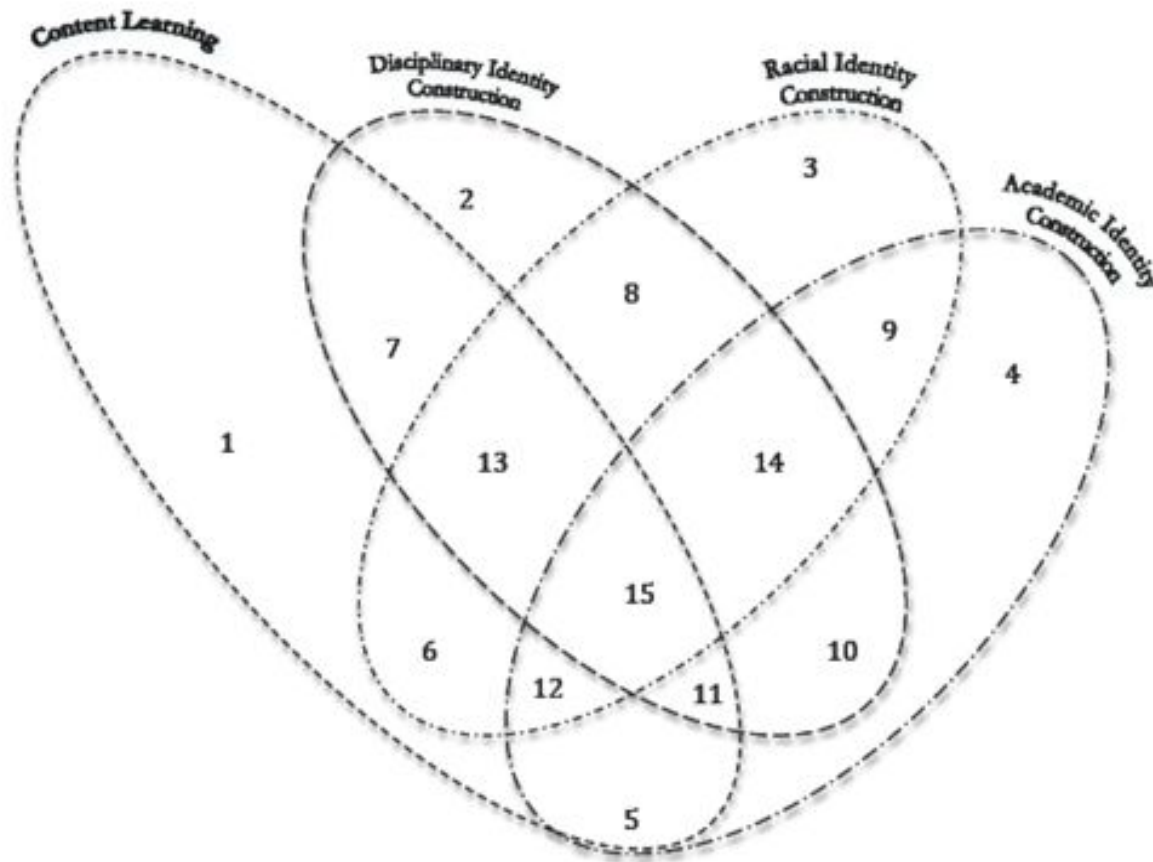
second possibility

the mathematics education enterprise is not unlike other racialized contexts in society. historically constructed and colloquial meanings for race emerge as highly salient in structuring norms and relations of power in the domain.

race and mathematics learning

mathematics learning and participation can be conceptualized as **racialized forms of experience**; that is, as experiences in which the socially and politically constructed meanings for race emerge as highly salient.

varelas, martin, & kane (2012): CLIC



race and knowledge construction

mathematics education research is deeply involved in the consumption, production, and reproduction of racial meanings, disparities, and hierarchies. not only do scholarly interpretations of children's mathematical behaviors serve to inform societal beliefs about race, racial categories, abilities, and competence, but race-based societal beliefs about children from various social groups also serve to inform the ways that mathematics education research is conceptualized and configured in relation to these children.

white institutional space

- ✧ mathematics education research as an instantiation of white institutional space.
- ✧ such spaces are characterized by (1) exclusion of non-whites from positions of power in various institutions, which results in the accumulation of white economic and political power, (2) the development of a white frame that organizes the logic of these institutions and normalizes white racial superiority, (3) the historical construction of a curricular model based on the thinking of white elites, and (4) the assertion of knowledge and knowledge production as a neutral and unconnected to power relations. (Moore, 2007)

what kind of project?

historically, mathematics education reform has been aligned with and put in service to a number of political projects promoting nationalism, xenophobia, assimilation and white racial privilege.

racial projects connect what race means in a particular discursive practice and the ways in which both social structures and everyday experiences are racially organized, based upon that meaning (Omi & Winant, 1994, p. 56)

advancing the agenda

- more complex theoretical approaches to conceptualizing race and mathematics education.
- different research designs and framings for studies of mathematics learning that don't minimize or simplify the racial context.
- extend the conversations to better understand how race, racism, and mathematics education interact in various global geopolitical contexts.

part 2

writing the chapter

- the initial charge
- authorship and collaborations
- goals and considerations for writing the chapter
- contents of the chapter
- next steps

initial charge

- initial request for a catch-all chapter
- proposal for a chapter on race and identity
- current chapter “focuses” on race

authorship

- work with new and mid-career scholars
- work with folks who write well
- work with folks who write well about race
- work with folks who bring both shared and different perspectives
- work with folks capable of alternately taking the lead

goals for the chapter

- serve an educative tool
- write for multiple audiences
- rigorous presentation and critique of extant research
- provide clear definitions and examples of race concepts
- highlight race across multiple levels and units of analysis
- provide some possibilities for future directions

chapter contents: guiding questions

- across different levels of analysis, how has race been conceptualized (theory) and studied (methods) in mathematics education, and how have those conceptualizations been used to inform studies of learning and achievement?
- what does extant research reveal about the racialized nature of mathematics learning and participation for students within and across racial categories?
- what are the prevailing racial discourses and stereotypes that inform student interactions and classroom practices?
- how does mathematics education research, as a knowledge-producing domain, consume and produce racial meanings ideologies, meanings, disparities, hierarchies, and identities?

section 1

- why study race in mathematics education?
 - marginalized topic of inquiry and under-conceptualized
 - we offer a conceptual primer

section 2

- extant conceptualizations
 - theme 1: race as a categorical variable
 - theme 2: race as interchangeable with culture
 - theme 3: racial identity and racialized experiences
 - theme 4: race as intersecting discourses and ideologies
 - theme 5: racialized character of mathematics education

section 3

- race in mathematics classrooms
 - achievement outcomes
 - structural barriers to opportunities to learn
 - instructional programs and students' cultural practices
 - racialized experiences of African American learners
 - math teacher identities and racial ideologies

section 4

- race, society, and mathematics education
 - racial-mathematical socialization
 - racialized discourses and stereotypes

section 5

- racialized character of mathematics education
 - mathematics education as a racial project
 - white institutional space

section 6

- recommendations
 - leveraging new theoretical perspectives
 - beyond the racialization of Black learners
 - teachers as racial actors and agents of racial-mathematical socialization
 - expanded methods of inquiry
 - from research to policy and practice
 - international contexts

chapter contents: reading guide

- how is race defined in this study?
- who or what is being racialized in study and why?
- what claims are being made about race in this study?
- how is the inclusion (or exclusion) of race consequential for mathematics learning?
- how does this study contribute to prevailing racial knowledge in the field and in the larger society?

part 3

conceptualizing racial-mathematical practice

The racialized practices involved in mathematics
teaching/learning

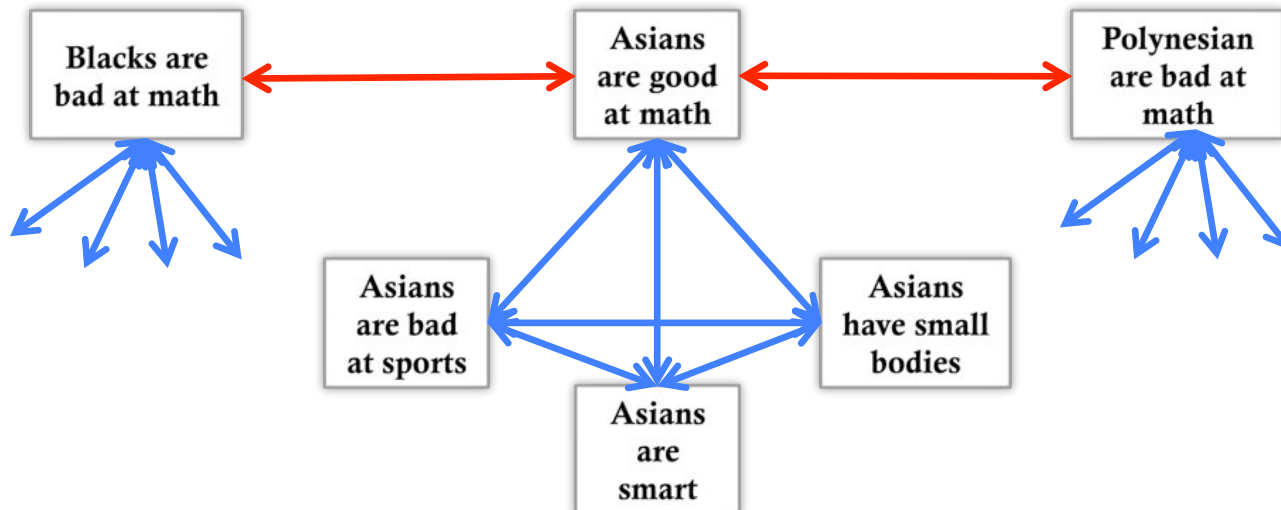
**How do issues of race enter the mathematics
classroom?**

Mathematics teaching/learning as a racialized practice

**How does what's happening in mathematics
classrooms contribute to societal discourses of race?**

racialized practices involved in mathematics teaching/learning

- Racial ideologies about mathematics learning: emphasis on *racial narratives*
- Relationality between racial narratives
- Racial-mathematical narratives AND racial narratives outside mathematics



racialized practices involved in mathematics teaching/learning

- Intersection with typical classroom practices
 - Which students are getting asked for help?
 - Who is perceived to participate in whole class discussion?
- Both explicit and implicit manifestations



conceptualizing racial-mathematical practice

The racialized practices involved in mathematics teaching/learning

How do issues of race enter the mathematics classroom?

Mathematics teaching/learning as a racialized practice

How does what's happening in mathematics classrooms contribute to societal discourses of race?

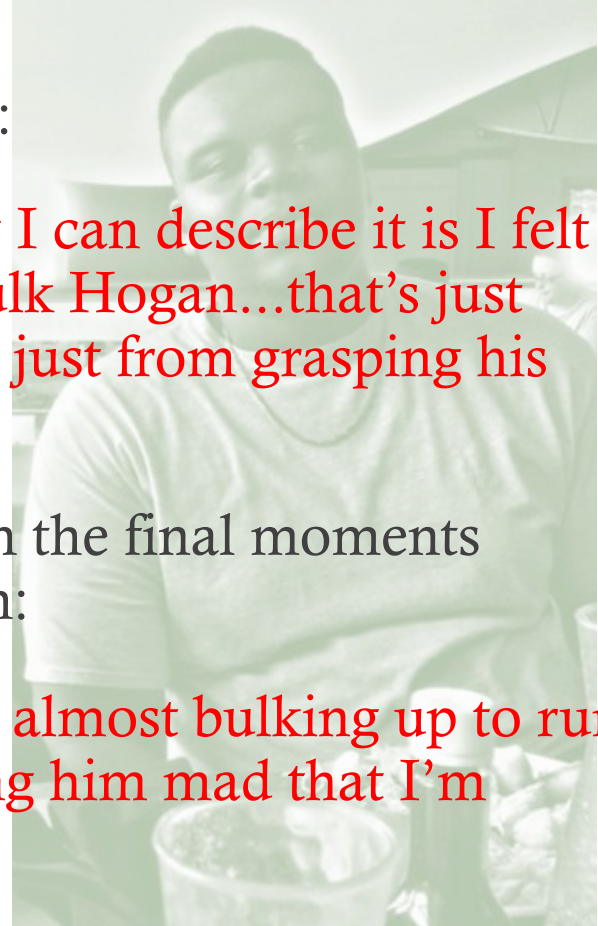
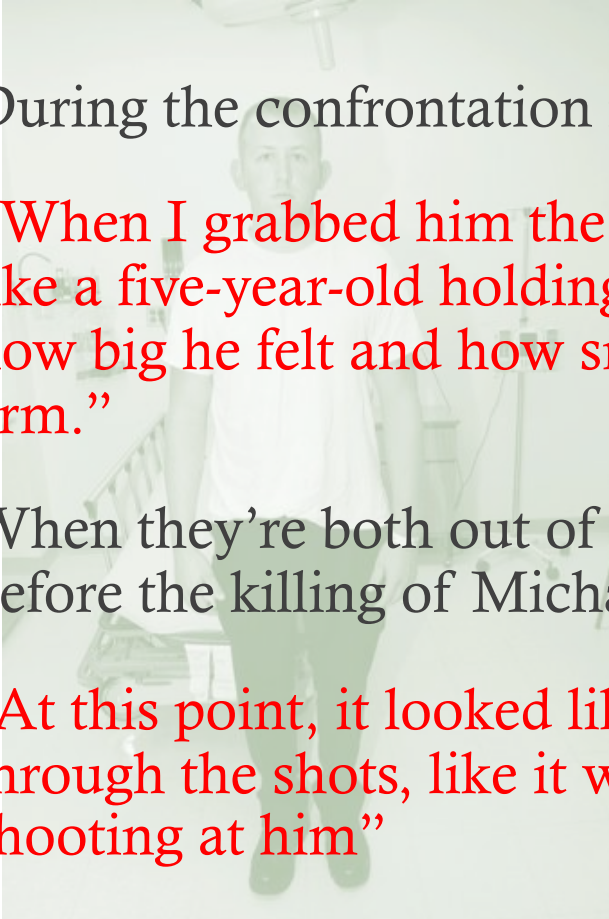
mathematics teaching/learning as a racialized practice

During the confrontation in the car:

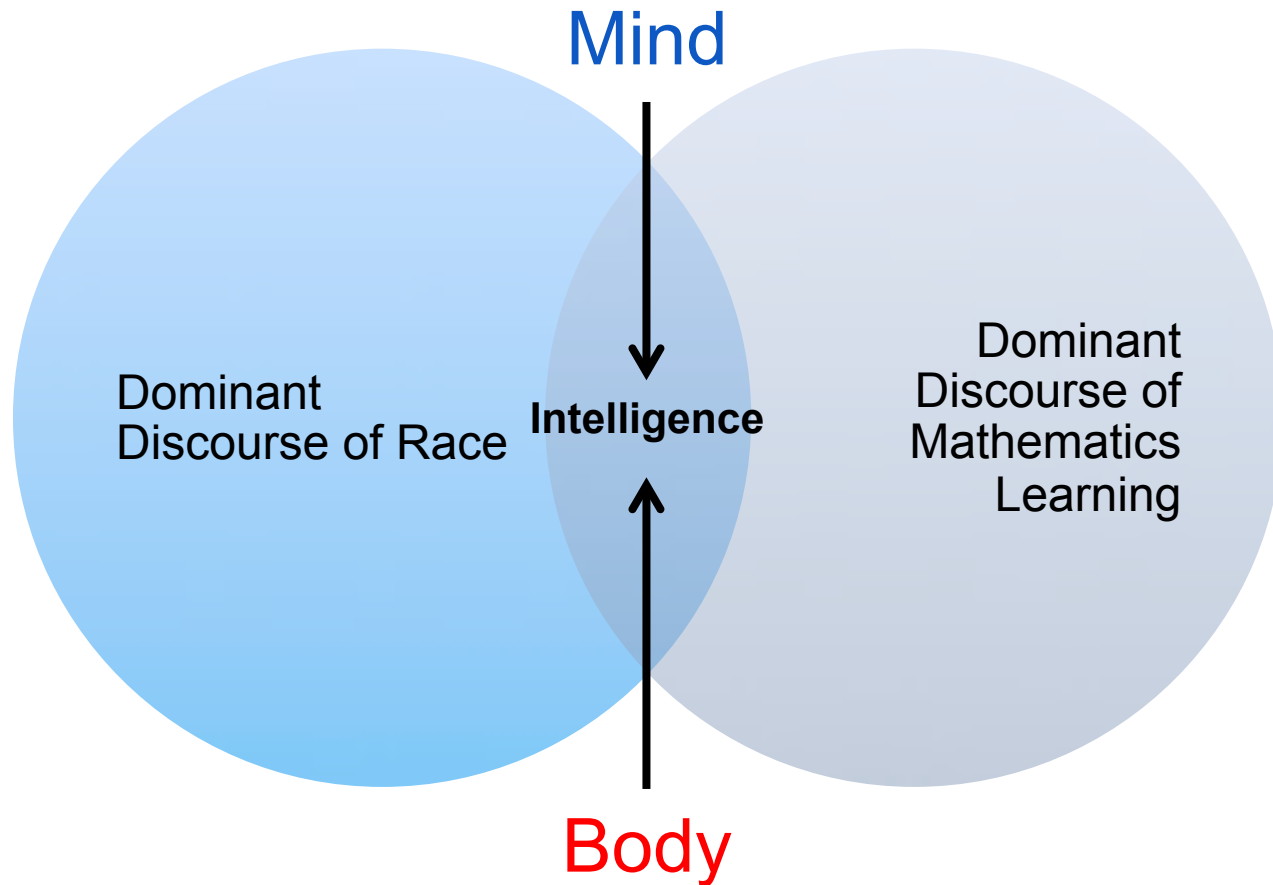
“When I grabbed him the only way I can describe it is I felt like a five-year-old holding onto Hulk Hogan...that’s just how big he felt and how small I felt just from grasping his arm.”

When they’re both out of the car, in the final moments before the killing of Michael Brown:

“At this point, it looked like he was almost bulking up to run through the shots, like it was making him mad that I’m shooting at him”



mathematics teaching/learning as a racialized practice



Thank You!

Questions & Comments

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