

# Systemic Racism in Higher Education

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**I**N THIS CHAPTER, we discuss the ways in which systemic racism shapes higher education systems and experiences within them. Specifically, we discuss how racism has influenced the development and execution of some of the most influential policies in higher education history. Then, we analyze high-profile contemporary policy issues in higher education from a race-conscious lens. In doing so, we highlight how racism and color-blind ideologies are shaping current policy discourse in postsecondary education. Next, we examine how racism shapes the experiences of faculty within institutions of higher education. Finally, we provide an overview of research on how racism shapes the lives of students of color in college.

## Manifestations of Racism in Higher Education History

As mentioned in the Introduction, higher education was originally designed to serve the White majority, and prepare White men for leadership roles in society (Karabel, 2005; Thelin, 2011). Since this genesis, racism has manifested in higher education policy at federal, state, and institutional levels. For example, the establishment of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) during the 19th century exemplifies how racism has informed seemingly objective and progressive higher education policy. These Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs)

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have served large numbers of college students of color, and it could easily be assumed that their establishment was benign or altruistic. However, scholars have argued that the establishment of these campuses reflects Whites' historical unwillingness to accommodate students of color within their own higher education systems, but readiness to help establish separate institutions for students of color that maintained a racially segregated postsecondary education system. Indeed, intentions of the founders of MSIs were sometimes characterized by racism (Gasman, 2008).

In this section, we offer examples of how racism provides important context for understanding higher education policy and responses to it in history. Specifically, we present an overview of what are arguably three of the most racially progressive policies of 20th-century higher education: (1) the Morrill Land Grant Acts, (2) the Servicemen's Readjustment Act or the G.I. Bill, and (3) affirmative action. These examples demonstrate how even the most well-intentioned policies that have been aimed at ensuring access to opportunity for all people can function to reinforce racial inequities, prompt society to reconfigure systems to ensure that such policies do not help achieve equity, or face constant challenges from the dominant majority.

The Morrill Land Grant Acts of 1862 and 1890 allocated federal land and funding for states to establish and for the expansion of preexisting and new public colleges and universities (Thelin, 2011). The 1862 Morrill Act provided federal funding for the establishment of land grant colleges in each state. Several states, however, had segregated systems and excluded students from their land grant colleges. Thus, Congress passed the second Morrill Act of 1890, which provided funding for these states to establish separate land grant colleges for Black students. Through this mass expansion, the Morrill Land Grant Acts helped make higher education more accessible to students of color who were previously denied access to learning opportunities at the nation's predominantly White colleges and universities. However, while the Morrill Acts widened the gates of opportunity for historically disenfranchised communities, the policy also helped sustain and promote racial inequality (Harper, Patton, & Wooden, 2009). For example, the 1890 Act's establishment of Black state-supported institutions facilitated the segregation of Black and White public postsecondary campuses and promoted a curricular emphasis

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on mechanics, agriculture, and industrial fields among Blacks. And, it has been argued that this model legalized the inequitable segregation of public colleges and universities and promoted the notion that Black students were inferior to Whites and deserved a distinct and lower-quality education (Harper et al., 2009). It is important to note that, in the absence of a critical and historical contextual analysis, these realities are minimized or completely dismissed.

The G.I. Bill provides another example of how higher education policy that expands opportunity for all students on the surface can prompt responses that reinscribe racial oppression and inequities. Indeed, the G.I. Bill has long been touted as one of the principal democratizing policies of the past century (Brubacher & Rudy, 1997). The G.I. Bill did prove to be monumental in expanding higher education through booming enrollments that sparked massive construction of laboratories, buildings, and dormitories (Thelin, 2011). At the same time, however, analyzing the bill from a racially conscious lens suggests that it further reified racism and racial inequities throughout higher education (Katznelson, 2005). While the G.I. Bill was intended to grant educational benefits to *all* eligible returning World War II servicemen, it proved to be less than equitable in practice. Whereas White veterans were much more likely to cash in their full benefits, veterans of color were often denied access to their subsidies. Even when veterans of color were successful in accessing their G.I. Bill benefits, they were frequently tracked into vocational programs and less-selective colleges and universities (Katznelson, 2005; Thelin, 2011). Therefore these minoritized veterans' lack of access to quality institutions undermined the positive aims of the bill (Katznelson, 2005). And, the promises of the G.I. Bill were largely illusory and intangible for a disproportionate number of veterans of color.

Among the most controversial policies in the quest for racial equity in higher education has been the use of race in admissions decisions. Affirmative action was introduced during the latter half of the 20th century. Originating with President John F. Kennedy's Executive Order 10925, affirmative action sought to facilitate an end to racial discrimination in federal contracting (Skrentny, 1996). While President Kennedy's original order was largely intended to address the business sector, the application of affirmative action in higher education was ushered in under President Lyndon Johnson's

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administration. Within the realm of higher education, affirmative action was aimed at facilitating racial integration within the nation's most selective public and private colleges and universities. Several Supreme Court cases, which we discuss in the following sections, have affirmed postsecondary institutions' right to the limited use of race in admissions processes. Race-conscious practices enable these campuses to admit larger numbers of historically underrepresented students into their institutions by using more than test scores, which evidence indicates are racially biased and disadvantage these populations in admissions processes (Jencks & Phillips, 2011).

In sum, racism has played a prominent role in higher education history. And, these historical realities provide an important background for our discussion of contemporary manifestations of racism in postsecondary education systems, to which we now turn.

### ***Racism in Higher Education Policy***

Although the ways in which racism affects contemporary higher education policy are subtler than in the past, postsecondary education policy continues to be intimately shaped by it. For example, it has been argued that the rationales that typically drive policy making are designed by the elite to shape higher education policy in ways that benefit the elite (St. John, Daun-Barnett, & Moronski-Chapman, 2013). Given that the "elite" class in the United States is disproportionately composed of members of the White majority, it could be argued that the power elite's policy rationales can and do function to preserve power, status, and opportunity for the disproportionately White elite while limiting access to these privileges among historically marginalized and minoritized populations.

In this section, we explore some of the ways in which racism might manifest in higher education policy. Specifically, we discuss some of the ways in which racism might shape policy decisions and processes in the areas of standardized testing, affirmative action, higher education finance, and other emerging policy issues. In doing so, we demonstrate how critical analysis of each of these policy issues can begin to illuminate how racism in higher education policy making continues to limit educational access and opportunity for students from minoritized populations.

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### ***Racism and Standardized Testing***

Long before students enter higher education, racism begins to shape their educational trajectories. For example, racism influences precollege educational trajectories and college opportunities through channeling minoritized students into underresourced schools, tracking students of color into remedial and vocational pathways, providing these students with limited access to college preparatory honors and advanced placement coursework, and denying these students access to quality college counseling and advising services (Oakes, 2005; Oakes, Rogers, Lipton, & Morrell, 2002; Solórzano & Ornelas, 2002, 2004). And, the imposition of inequitable admissions requirements, such as standardized test scores, exacerbates these already existing inequities.

It is important to note that standardized aptitude tests have roots in the eugenics movement (Bond, 1924; Gould, 1996; Karabel, 2005). Eugenics was founded on the belief that it is possible to distinguish between superior and inferior races, and the notion that historically oppressed racial groups are inherently less intelligent than their majoritarian White counterparts. Eugenics also served as a foundational pillar for the production of intelligence tests, which were utilized to sort racial groups, rank their intelligence, and exclude people of color from full participation in society and education.

Indeed, intelligence tests have long been used to justify the perpetuation of racism (Gould, 1996; Karabel, 2005). For example, before the Civil War, slave owners used these tests to rationalize their inhumane treatment of people of color as the appropriate way to deal with populations that they considered intellectually inferior. Likewise, early army intelligence tests were utilized to classify “Negroes, Mexicans, and Indians” as drawn from “inferior homes” and exhibiting “racial dullness” (Bond, 1924, p. 594). Similarly, the institutionalization of standardized tests within the education system, such as the SAT, was originally meant to distinguish the aristocracy from the working class (Karabel, 2005; Lemann, 2000). Thus, standardized aptitude tests were historically designed and utilized as a tool of exclusion.

Standardized tests fuel misconceptions that exam scores offer an objective measure of academic ability and that education is a meritocratic system. Unfortunately, studies have exposed how test scores are not necessarily objective measures of intelligence (Au, 2009). Atkinson and Geiser (2009) explain how

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family income and parents' educational background are largely responsible for the apparent power of standardized tests in predicting students' first-year success in college. In other words, standardized test scores primarily serve as a proxy for socioeconomic status, and aptitude tests function as a mechanism to promote the institutions' selection and admission of applicants from more affluent backgrounds and with college-educated parents.

In addition, the concept of stereotype threat calls into the question the predictive validity of standardized tests (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Stereotype threat refers to the ways in which racial stereotypes can pose an environmental threat that has harmful effects on test performance. Specifically, scholars have demonstrated that where racial stereotypes that depict students of color as intellectually inferior exist in the environment, they can create anxiety and result in lower performance among students of color who belong to the communities targeted by those stereotypes (Steele, 1999; Steele & Aronson, 1995). Therefore, a legacy of White supremacy and racism can have a significant negative impact on the standardized test performance of students of color, resulting in fewer educational opportunities.

In sum, standardized tests perpetuate false notions of meritocracy and mask existing systemic inequities in educational opportunity. They are mainly a proxy for socioeconomic status, rather than a unique measure of academic ability. And, coupled with stereotypes that some students of color cannot perform as well as their peers on these exams, standardized tests can function to further disadvantage minoritized populations in the admissions process. While a growing number of institutions are choosing to opt out of requiring standardized test scores from prospective applicants (Bidwell, 2015), the majority of colleges and universities still do require such scores for admission and consider them in admissions decisions.

### ***Racism and Affirmative Action Debates***

In 1978, in *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, the Supreme Court ruled that race-conscious admissions policies were constitutional. In the majority opinion resulting from *Bakke*, the Court concluded that diversity was a compelling state interest. The opinion noted that race-conscious admissions were necessary to enable institutions of higher education to construct

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environments characterized by diverse student bodies, which contribute to conditions that reduce students' prejudice and facilitate their learning through the exposure to different viewpoints. Since the *Bakke* ruling, many proponents of affirmative action have primarily relied on the diversity rationale to defend race-conscious policies because of their utility in producing racially diverse student bodies so that students have opportunities to interact across difference.

Since the *Bakke* (1978) decision, the issue of affirmative action in university admissions has been heard before the Supreme Court in three more cases. In the University of Michigan's 2003 affirmative action cases, *Gratz v. Bollinger* (2003) and *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003), the Court struck down Michigan's race-conscious undergraduate admissions plan in *Gratz* while upholding the legality of the Law School's race-conscious admissions practices in *Grutter*. Ten years later, in *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* (2013), the Court once again ruled in favor of the university's limited use of race in university admissions practices. In these decisions, the Court reinforced the legality of race-conscious admissions, but asserted that there must be a compelling interest and race-conscious policies must be narrowly tailored to achieve that interest. In addition, central to the Supreme Court's decisions in *Grutter* and *Fisher* were arguments emphasizing the importance of a "critical mass" for underrepresented students. The critical mass rationale is based on evidence suggesting that students are more likely to succeed when they are surrounded by a critical mass (i.e., significant numbers) of peers who share their backgrounds (Museus, Jayakumar, & Robinson, 2012). The argument suggests that, in the absence of a critical mass, minoritized students are more likely to experience racial isolation and tokenism, causing them to be at greater risk of stopping or dropping out. On the other hand, if students of color are able to foster connections with substantial numbers of institutional agents who share their backgrounds, they are more likely to succeed (Museus, 2014). Critics of affirmative action object to the critical mass argument by framing it as nothing more than a veiled smokescreen for illegal quotas.

It is important to note that the diversity rationale sometimes deemphasizes the reality that affirmative action is aimed at combatting continuing systemic racism (Jayakumar & Adamian, 2015). In the short term, legal strategy

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to focus on the diversity rationale and deemphasize antiracism as the primary defense for affirmative action has allowed race-conscious policies to survive legal scrutiny. However, in the long run, the absence of systemic racism from affirmative action discourse might make race-conscious policies more susceptible to critique. For instance, in the absence of a focus on reaffirming the role of affirmative action in combatting systemic racism, critics of race-conscious admissions policies have engaged ideological narratives that promote color blindness and post-racialism to dismiss the role of racism in shaping college opportunity and contend that policies like affirmative action are no longer necessary. These critics have also been able to argue that affirmative action perpetrates and perpetuates reverse racism because it disadvantages Whites who, they inaccurately suggest, are on a level playing field with people of color. And, opponents of affirmative action have underscored the “mismatch” hypothesis, or the view that supposed beneficiaries of race-conscious policies are actually ill served because they are often admitted to postsecondary institutions for which they are academically unprepared (Sander & Taylor, 2012; Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997). Of course, the evidence of persisting systemic racism reveals flaws in these arguments, as it (a) debunks myths that racism no longer shapes individual life chances and (b) exposes the mismatch argument as fundamentally racist because it suggests that students of color are academically ill equipped to succeed in the nation’s most competitive postsecondary institutions.

Although the diversity rationale has been the primary defense for race-conscious policies over the past 30 years, one underlying purpose of affirmative action has always been to combat systemic racism. Indeed, when President John F. Kennedy issued Executive Order 10925 in 1961, it included a provision that government contractors should take affirmative action to minimize the likelihood that employees face discrimination based on race, creed, color, or national origin. Therefore, at its origins, affirmative action was a mechanism to minimize the effects of racism and other forms of social oppression affecting marginalized populations. And, members of the Supreme Court have recently reasserted that race continues to matter in determining people’s life chances (*Schutte v. Coalition to Defend affirmative action*, 2014).

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Opponents of race-conscious policies are unrelenting in their efforts to overturn the legality of affirmative action in higher education and beyond. With the Supreme Court's recent decision to rehear *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin*, they will have another opportunity to do so. The evidence that racism still plays a prominent role in shaping the experiences and outcomes of people in society, coupled with the emergent understanding that critical mass on college campuses might be necessary to provide vital support to minoritized students who still have to navigate racist educational systems, might offer a more holistic understanding of the necessity of affirmative action policies and more comprehensive defensible argument for the continuation of race-conscious admissions practices in postsecondary education.

### ***Racism and Higher Education Finance***

Many challenges to college affordability persist. As we discuss in this section, state divestment from higher education, rising college costs, an increased reliance on loans, and for-profit colleges and predatory practices all create additional barriers to college affordability for low-income students. And, although not all students of color come from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, they are more likely to originate from economically underresourced communities (see the first chapter, "Introduction"). Thus, it could be hypothesized that the aforementioned processes that limit the affordability of postsecondary education work to disproportionately limit the capacity of students of color to pay for a college education.

While there was once a general consensus that government had a role to play in promoting social and economic progress, conservative politicians have recast social programs as too costly to justify taxpayer support over the past half-century (St. John et al., 2013). In part as a result in this recasting, over the past 25 years, state support for higher education has waned (Oliff, Palacios, Johnson, & Leachman, 2013; The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2015). The state divestment from financing postsecondary education has also arguably been precipitated by a shift in the perceived primary purpose of postsecondary education from a facilitator of a democratic society to a mechanism of social mobility, and shift in the view from higher education serving as a public good to a private good (Labaree, 1997).

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At the same time that state governments have divested from the funding of higher education institutions, average college tuition prices have continued to rise, placing an increased burden of financing higher education on students and their families (College Board, 2014). Moreover, over the past few decades, the composition of financial aid packages for college students has shifted from an emphasis on need-based grants to an increasing reliance on merit-based aid and loans. It has been argued that this shift has had a disproportionately negative impact on already disadvantaged students in higher education (e.g., low-income students and students of color) (Long & Riley, 2007). One reason that the increased reliance on loans in the composition of financial aid packages might disproportionately negatively affect the trajectories of low-income students and students of color is that they are more loan-averse than their White and more affluent peers, making it less likely for them to take advantage of the benefits of heavily loan-dependent financial aid packages. Thus, the rise in tuition coupled with an increased reliance on loans in the composition of financial aid packages and high levels of debt aversion among college students of color can serve to limit their access to higher education opportunities (Heller, 2006). This is just one example of how recent trends in higher education finance have systemically served to limit opportunities among low-income students and students of color.

Although there have been some efforts to relieve the financial burden of paying for college among students, close examination of these efforts reveals how they have limited impact on low-income students and students of color. For example, some elite institutions have adopted no-loan programs to ensure that low-income students can afford the education they provide. These no-loan programs have proven to have a positive effect on enrolling and retaining low-income students (Hillman, 2013). However, elite institutions are much more likely to be able to sponsor no-loan programs, and these institutions enroll only a small portion of students in higher education. As such, large numbers of low-income students continue to rely heavily on federal financial aid to pay for college.

Another example of efforts to relieve low-income families of the financial burden of paying for college has been moderate increases in federal Pell

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Grants. While Pell Grants have proven to be especially effective in helping low-income students subsidize their education, state governments have responded to moderate increases in these awards by decreasing their own financial support of higher education, thereby forcing state institutions to increase tuition and fees and “nullifying” federal efforts to increase aid and lower costs for financially needy students (Bok, 2013, p. 101). Thus, even as a college education becomes more and more indispensable, the affordability of quality educational opportunities continues to be inequitable, especially for low-income students and students of color.

### ***Racism and Emerging Policy Issues***

Racism can also be used to engage in the critical analysis of two emerging policy issues: performance funding and for-profit higher education. Indeed, one of the most pressing issues throughout U.S. higher education is the urgency of improving college persistence and graduation rates (Jones, 2014). As a result, many states are adopting performance funding models, in which institutional performance is evaluated using metrics that typically revolve around retention and graduation rates. In fact, over half of the states have adopted or are in the process of adopting performance-based systems (Friedel, Thornton, D’Amico, & Kantsinas, 2013).

While some performance funding models have equity measures, these policies have been critiqued for many reasons (Jones, 2014). First, critics have noted that performance funding systems are problematic because they focus too narrowly on graduation rates, which are only one of many measures of student success. Second, it has been noted that institutions can circumvent the goals of performance funding policies by simply becoming more selective. Finally, while research has yet to be conducted to see how performance-based systems affect (in)equity in higher education, performance funding systems might use comparison systems that are unfair for campuses that serve large numbers of underserved student populations, thereby potentially exacerbating systemic racial and socioeconomic inequities. In response, some have advocated for policy makers to reconsider the utility of common outcome metrics and intentionally using performance funding to intentionally address racial and ethnic inequities (Jones, 2014).

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For-profit institutions of higher education are also receiving increased attention in postsecondary education policy arenas. The for-profit sector consists of institutions that generate financial profits by providing students with knowledge and skills that fill market demands and college degrees and certificates (Deming, Claudia, & Katz, 2012; Dill, 2005; Hentschke, Lechuga, & Tierney, 2010). On one hand, advocates of for-profit institutions argue that these organizations play a critical role in providing historically underserved students with access to postsecondary opportunities, suggesting that for-profit colleges might be one mechanism to advance racial equity in higher education (Harding, 2010). On the other hand, critics of the for-profit sector have critiqued these institutions for using unethical and aggressive marketing tactics, causing students to assume larger debt levels than their nonprofit counterparts, and providing a low-quality education and fewer returns for the students whom they serve (Iloh & Toldson, 2013; Institute for Higher Education Policy, 2002; Lee, 2012). If disproportionately large numbers of college students of color are enrolling in for-profit colleges and leaving higher education with greater debt and fewer tangible skills, it could be hypothesized that these institutions might be exacerbating already-existing racial inequities in college opportunity.

In sum, it can be argued that racism continues to shape higher education policy in the 21st century. In the following sections, we delineate the ways in which racism shapes individual faculty and student experiences in higher education. It is important to note that people of color can experience each form of racism outlined herein directly or vicariously (Truong, Museus, & McGuire, 2015).

## **Racism in the Experiences of Higher Education Faculty**

Despite the espoused value of diversity in higher education, faculty of color continue to be significantly underrepresented on college campuses. For example, in 2011, only 19% of all full-time faculty members across the nation were Asian American, Black, Latina or Latino, or Pacific Islander (National

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Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2013). While small gains in the representation of persons of color among college faculty have been made in recent years, these gains have primarily been due to increases of persons of color in nontenured instructor ranks (Poloma, 2014; Snyder & Dillow, 2012).

Indeed, it is important to note that the share of faculty who are of color decreases as professorial rank increases. While faculty of color represented just over 25% of assistant professors in 2011, only approximately 21% of associate professors and 16% of full professors were people of color (NCES, 2013). While some might argue that this is a phenomenon unique to predominantly White four-year institutions, there is evidence that community colleges also struggle with maintaining a diverse faculty (Levin, Walker, Jackson-Boothby, & Haberler, 2013).

In this section, we discuss some of the ways in which racism might contribute to the underrepresentation of people of color at the professoriate. Specifically, we outline six themes that emerge from the literature on the racialized experiences of faculty of color: (1) racism in the academic pipeline, (2) racial resistance to faculty authority and expertise, (3) racial hostility in the classroom, (4) racial scrutiny of faculty research agendas, (5) racial taxation from excess faculty service, and (6) racial marginalization and isolation among faculty of color.

### ***Racism in the Academic Pipeline***

While many colleges and universities espouse a commitment to diversity, one test of whether that value is enacted at an institution is to examine their efforts at the recruitment, hiring, career development, promotion, and success of professors of color (Jackson & O'Callaghan, 2009). The chronic underrepresentation of people of color in academic positions suggests few institutions have passed this test.

Indeed, evidence points to the reality that institutions often do not make concerted efforts at recruiting, hiring, and retaining faculty of color (Carmen, 1999; Turner, 2003; Turner, Garcia, Nora, & Rendon, 1996). Moreover, it has been noted that faculty recruitment and hiring processes are permeated with racial myths about the lack of qualified applicants. Institutions often relinquish responsibility for their lack of diversity in candidate

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pools and new hires by claiming an insufficient supply of qualified candidates of color or low demand for academic jobs among candidates of color. Data and evidence, however, do not support such claims. While many graduate students of color depart the pipeline to academic careers at some stage in their trajectory (Turner, Myers, & Creswell, 1999), research suggests that many PhDs of color constitute an untapped resource. On the demand side, dominant narratives suggest that PhDs of color will be unlikely to pursue academic careers given that the accompanying salaries are incomparable to corporate earnings and the private sector may be more welcoming of diversity (Tierney & Sallee, 2008; Trower & Chait, 2002; Turner et al., 1999).

Both the supply and demand explanations of higher education institutions' inability to recruit and hire persons of color suggest that the lack of diversity among the professoriate and administration is the fault of people of color for weeding themselves out of contention for careers in academia. Such self-deterministic narratives blame the victim while insufficiently acknowledging the responsibility and culpability of institutions of higher education in perpetuating the persisting racial inequities in the academic pipeline.

It should also be noted that, once faculty of color land positions in the professoriate, there is some evidence that they may encounter a glass ceiling. Researchers, for example, have noted that White assistant professors are significantly more likely to be promoted to associate or full professor than their Asian American, Black, and Latina or Latino peers (Palepu et al., 1995). There is also some existing evidence that, when controlling for a range of variables such as other demographics and research productivity level, faculty of color are still less likely to attain tenured positions in the academy (Yan & Museum, 2013). Moreover, when controlling for a variety of variables, including faculty demographics and productivity level, faculty of color earn lower salaries than their White counterparts (Lee, 2002).

### ***Racial Resistance to Authority and Expertise***

Research suggests that faculty of color report facing covert and overt racial discrimination in the classroom. Challenges to the authority of faculty of color may begin on the first day of class with students questioning their expertise

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or refusing to call them by their titles (e.g., Professor, Dr., etc.) while simultaneously using these titles to address their White colleagues (Chesler & Young, 2007; Patton & Catching, 2009; Stanley, 2006; Tuitt, Hanna, Martinez, Salazar, & Griffin, 2009). Faculty of color sometimes contend that race plays a role in the ways in which students address them because they are not afforded the same levels of respect as their White colleagues. The following composite story illustrates the experiences of faculty of color:

*I have come to understand that I do not have the privilege of walking into a classroom and having students assume that I am a capable and credible teacher. Nor do I have the privilege of walking into a classroom and having people assume that I have earned my position through hard work and determination. I have to be deliberate in the subject matter that I teach so that others do not see me as an exception to their assumptions about who is qualified, about who has a right to be here. (Tuitt et al., p. 69)*

Many faculty of color in higher education also express having to work to avoid fitting into stereotypes and doing whatever they can to not be perceived as the “Affirmative Action hire” (Griffin, Ward, & Phillips, 2014; Trower, 2003).

When issues of racism emerged in a course, faculty of color often report that their students question their academic integrity and make assumptions that they are biased (Perry, Moore, Edwards, Acosta, & Frey, 2009; Stanley, 2006). Unsurprisingly, then, challenges to the authority of faculty of color are particularly evident when faculty of color teach courses that address racial issues. In these courses, students can resist learning from faculty of color by attempting to discredit them or by pushing back on their inclusion of diversity in the course curriculum (Perry et al., 2009; Stanley, 2006). There is some indication that this resistance could be more likely among predominantly White students who have little prior contact with people of color, particularly persons of color with authority (Perry et al., 2009; Stanley, 2006). In these situations, faculty of color can be forced to respond by asserting their authority by setting firm ground rules for the classroom, being keenly aware of their

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attire on teaching days, identifying resources outside of the classroom to bolster their credibility, and discussing their credentials for teaching the course subject matter (Chesler & Young, 2007; Perry et al., 2009).

### ***Racial Hostility in the Classroom***

While challenging the authority of faculty of color often takes the form of subtle resistance to curricula and pedagogy, some faculty of color experienced more direct and overt forms of discrimination in the classroom that manifest in blatant disrespect, disruption, hostile language, and the like. Indeed, there is some evidence that faculty of color are more likely than their White colleagues to experience disrespect from students in the classroom (Alberts, Hazen, & Theobald, 2010). For example, in a qualitative examination of student interactions with African American faculty, Neville and Parker (2014) observed White college students arriving to class late without apology, texting, and talking in class, arguing with professors, rolling their eyes, and mouthing profanities toward faculty of color. Moreover, it is important to note that White students may become particularly disruptive when they feel the instructor or curriculum challenges their personal beliefs (Collier & Powell, 1990; Jackson & Crawley, 2003; Neville & Parker, 2014).

The aforementioned racial dynamics can have real implications for the careers of faculty of color as these behaviors may further manifest in negative teaching evaluations. Existing studies show that many faculty of color are more likely than their White counterparts to receive negative evaluations (Hamermesh & Parker 2005; Vargas 2002). Moreover, faculty of color who bring more diversity into their teaching seem to be most vulnerable to more negative teaching evaluations (Vargas, 2002). One African American faculty member in Perry et al.'s (2009) investigation, for example, was so concerned about receiving low student evaluations that she decided to stop teaching diversity-related courses. In addition to formal written course evaluations, students sometimes express concerns about the teaching methods and academic integrity of faculty of color to senior faculty and administrators. Coupled with low teaching evaluations, such critiques may negatively impact people's perceptions of faculty of color and their chances of tenure and promotion.

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It is important to note that women of color are subject to hostility in the classroom that stems from both racism and sexism (Alberts et al., 2010; Pittman, 2010). As a result, women faculty of color can feel threatened and intimidated by White male students in particular. In one study, for example, Women faculty of color specifically reported that White male students often challenged their scholarly expertise and authority to evaluate them, which led to these students challenging their grades (Pittman, 2010). In that inquiry, students, who were often White males, used threatening tones with women faculty of color, threw papers at them, and in one case a student threatened to “squash” African Americans in efforts to intimidate women faculty of color by espousing White superiority over them.

### ***Racial Scrutiny of Research Agendas***

It has been noted that the legitimacy of faculty of color research agendas is also scrutinized if they include a focus on diversity. Because many mainstream journals are less amenable to scholarship on race-related research, faculty of color may choose to find a more welcoming environment to publish in less mainstream academic journals. Indeed, it has been argued that faculty of color are at the forefront of new and progressive journals, including developing new journals, that provide important publication outlets for scholarly agendas that differ from the mainstream (Turner, 2003). In many cases, however, publishing in these journals, while fitting for their scholarly interests, is likely to benefit them less than publishing in mainstream journals in the tenure and promotion process.

Because of the reality that upper ranks of the professoriate are fairly racially homogenous, faculty of color are often evaluated by predominantly White senior faculty personnel committees. When these committees review scholarship in “nonmainstream” journals as part of tenure and promotion portfolios, it may be undervalued, considered too biased to constitute real scholarship, and denigrated as nontraditional or inferior research (Delgado Bernal, 2002; Stanley, 2006; Turner et al., 1999). When personnel review committees maintain a Eurocentric epistemology in the evaluation of faculty of color scholarship, it can create “an apartheid of knowledge” that

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subordinates the knowledge of faculty of color to mainstream ways of knowing (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002, p. 175).

### ***Racial Taxation From Excess Service***

Faculty of color are often engaged in service commitments that involve mentoring students and junior faculty of color, as well as serving on diversity committees at the institutional, regional, or national levels, and serving their local communities in their educational efforts (Stanley, 2006). While research and teaching may be considered by many to be the most important parts of the three pillars of the professoriate at most institutions of higher education, service has important implications for faculty success. While too much service may negatively impact research productivity, service contributions may be one of few things that provide faculty of color with inspiration and passion, as they desire to serve the communities from which they come or of which they are a part (Turner, Gonzalez, & Wood, 2008).

Unfortunately, though, many faculty of color experience periods of cultural taxation, or what we call racial taxation herein, where they might be consistently bombarded with requests to serve the institution through participation on committees, organization of events, and so on (Padilla, 1994). At the same time, such service is rarely recognized or rewarded by senior faculty or administration during personnel reviews, especially if commitments are related to racial/ethnic diversity. Many faculty of color are therefore caught in a Catch-22 situation, in which they recognize a substantial need for service at their institutions and within their communities, yet this activity results in less time to do research that is more highly valued in promotion and tenure processes (Stanley, 2006; Turner, 2002; Turner et al., 1999). Therefore, existing evidence suggests that faculty of color are forced to balance the pressures to do disproportionately larger amounts of service than their White counterparts with maintaining a robust research agenda to attain promotion and tenure in the academy (Turner, 2002).

### ***Racial Marginalization and Isolation***

Faculty of color often experience feelings of marginalization and isolation on campus (Aguirre & Martinez, 1993; Benjamin, 1997; Hune & Chan, 1997;

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Padilla & Chavez Chavez, 1995; Smith, 2004). This reality is partly due to the fact that many campuses still employ relatively few faculty of color. Being one of few people of color on a college campus or within an academic department leaves faculty of color vulnerable to racism within their institutions (Garrison-Wade, Diggs, Estrada, & Galindo, 2012). And, racialized structures and practices can, in turn, reinforce “a cycle of exclusion” for many faculty of color (Delgado Bernal & Villalpando, 2002, p. 247).

## The Role of Racism in the Experiences of College Students

Minoritized students in college are significantly less likely than White peers to be satisfied with their respective college environments and the overall college experience (Kuh, 2005). In this section, we provide an overview of the ways in which racism shapes the experiences of college students of color. Specifically, we delineate seven themes from the literature regarding how racism shapes the experiences of minoritized college students: (1) racial hostility, (2) racial prejudice and stereotypes, (3) racial invisibility and silencing, (4) racial balkanization or segregation, (5) cultural conflict and dissonance, (6) contradictory cultural pressures, and (7) cultural marginalization and isolation.

### ***Racial Hostility***

Evidence suggests that college students of color encounter explicit and implicit forms of racial discrimination. Regarding overt forms of discrimination, this evidence indicates that students of color often encounter racial harassment in college (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Cress & Ikeda, 2003; Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996; Hurtado, 1992; Kim, Chang, & Park, 2009; Kotori & Malaney, 2003; Museus & Park, 2015; Museus & Truong, 2013; Smith et al., 2007). The literature illuminates a wide range of ways in which this hostility manifests, including in racial profiling from police, racial slurs, and racial bullying. Sometimes, this harassment can turn violent and lead to racially motivated hate crimes, such as murder (Museus, 2013a). Moreover, it is important to note that, compared to White students, students of color are more likely to

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experience racial harassment from both faculty and peers on their college campuses (Ancis et al., 2000; Kim et al., 2009; Kotori & Malaney, 2003).

### ***Racial Prejudice and Stereotypes***

The literature illuminates many examples of the ways in which students of color experience prejudicial treatment and stereotyping in college (Ancis et al., 2000; Cabrera, 2014; Feagin et al., 1996; Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001; Museus, 2008; Museus & Park, 2015; Museus & Truong, 2013; Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993; Suzuki, 1977, 2002). Academically, Asian American students are often overgeneralized as a model minority that achieves universal and unparalleled academic and occupational success (Suzuki, 1977, 2002). While this model minority myth is benign on the surface, scholars have noted how closer examination of this stereotype reveals many negative consequences for Asian American students (Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000; Museus 2013b; Museus & Park, 2015; Suzuki, 2002). For example, it masks the challenges and inequities that exist within that community, places expectations on Asian Americans not to use support services, leads to excessive pressure to achieve perfection among these students, and is used as a tool to argue that racial discrimination is something that can be overcome by hard work and is not deterministic. Asian American men are socially stereotyped as asexual, inferior, submissive, and awkward, while Asian American women are racialized as exotic and sexually submissive—both of which can have significant harmful and sometimes violent racial, social, and psychological consequences (Museus & Truong, 2013b).

Academically, Black and Latina or Latino students often encounter racial stereotypes that they are unprepared or academically inferior, do not deserve to be in college, and only were admitted to college because of affirmative action (Fries-Britt & Turner, 2001; Lewis, Chesler, & Forman, 2000; Museus, 2008; Steele, 1999). Southeast Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, who tend to come from some of the most underresourced communities and have relatively low educational attainment rates, also face these stereotypes (Museus, 2013b; Ngo & Lee, 2007). Black, Latina or Latino, Native American, Southeast Asian American, and Pacific Islander men can be socially stereotyped as deviant, dropouts, gang members, and dangerous (Feagin et al., 1996).

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These racialized stereotypes can also be harmful, and have been one of the reasons cited for the increasingly common media stories of excessive police violence toward Black men across the United States (Correll, Park, Judd, & Wittenbrink, 2007).

### ***Racial Invisibility and Silencing***

Evidence also indicates that students of color often find themselves invisible in various spaces on college campuses (Buenavista & Chen, 2013; Buenavista et al., 2009; Feagin et al., 1996; Gonzalez, 2003; Museus & Park, 2015). Given many postsecondary institutions' historical legacy of racism, it might not be surprising that college students of color sometimes report finding themselves invisible in physical structures (e.g., artwork, buildings, etc.) on campus (Brown-Nagin et al., 2015; Gonzalez, 2003). In addition, students of color often find voices from their communities silenced in mainstream curricula and pedagogy (Museus & Park, 2015). Such invisibility and silencing can be pervasive and lead to feelings of racial exclusion, isolation, and marginalization throughout the college experience.

### ***Racial Balkanization or Segregation***

There is some indication that college students of color report substantial racial segregation on their campuses (Antonio, 2004; Duster, 1991; Museus & Park, 2015). Indeed, college students of color appear to be very aware that racial segregation is prevalent at their institutions (Antonio, 2004). And, while such segregation can lead to claims that students of color are unwilling to interact outside of their own communities, there is some evidence that students of color gravitate toward peers of similar racial backgrounds in order to find a safe space within larger and less welcoming campus environments (Museus, 2013; Museus & Park, 2015).

It is also important to note that, while students of color do observe racially segregated environments on their college campuses, many White and minoritized students also experience valuable interactions across race that lead to a plethora of positive outcomes (Antonio, 2001; Antonio et al., 2004; Chang, Astin, & Kim, 2004; Chang, Denson, Saenz, & Misa, 2006; Denson, 2009; Denson & Chang, 2009; Jayakumar, 2008; Pike & Kuh, 2006). Therefore,

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it is important for higher education leaders not to overestimate the level of segregation that occurs on college campuses, because evidence suggests that balkanization prohibits fruitful interracial interactions and positive educational outcomes.

### ***Cultural Dissonance***

College students of color also discuss experiencing cultural dissonance as they adjust to and navigate postsecondary institutions. The term *cultural dissonance* refers to the tensions students of color experience as a result of the incongruence between their cultural backgrounds or meaning-making systems and the new cultures that they encounter in their college environment (Museus, 2008). Therefore, many students of color who attend postsecondary institutions with cultures that reflect the cultural values, beliefs, and perspectives of the White majority—which includes most colleges and universities throughout the nation—are likely to confront cultures that are substantially different from the cultures of their home communities and experience significant levels of cultural dissonance in college. Moreover, the levels of cultural dissonance that students experience within their respective college environments are positively associated with cultural stress and likelihood of disengaging from the dominant cultures of their campuses (Museus, 2008; Museus & Park, 2015; Museus & Quayle, 2009).

### ***Contradictory Cultural Pressures***

Racialized campus cultures can lead to contradictory pressures for students of color in higher education. Specifically, minoritized college students have reported experiencing significant pressures to assimilate into the cultures of their campuses on one hand (Duster, 1991; Lewis et al., 2000; Museus & Park, 2015), while experiencing pressure to conform to stereotypes of their racial groups that otherize them as distinctly different from the White majority on their campuses. In addition, these conflicting pressures can cause students of color to experience internal conflicts regarding whether and how they can and should conform to or resist the dominant cultures of their respective postsecondary institutions.

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### ***Cultural Marginalization and Isolation***

Minoritized college students also report experiencing cultural isolation within their respective college cultures (Lewis et al., 2000; Museus & Park, 2015; Turner, 1994). This marginalization and isolation in multiple ways on college campuses. For example, students of color express discontent with the reality that they are structurally marginalized within their campus environments (e.g., the isolation of diversity activity to a single cultural center). In addition, within the larger campus environment, minoritized college students sometimes report feeling like they are the only one on their campuses and in their classrooms. Similarly, minoritized college students sometimes report feeling isolated within mainstream campus subcultures, such as campus-wide student leadership councils or Greek life (Park, 2008).

## **Conclusion**

The scholarship reviewed in this chapter illuminates many of the ways that racism manifests in both higher education policy and the daily experiences of faculty and students of color. Knowledge of these experiences is critical in developing an understanding of the ways in which racism operates within higher education. However, we believe it is important that advocates of racial equity do not become overly focused on these daily experiences but also maintain a focus on the systemic ways in which racism operates and must be addressed. In the following chapter, we argue that racial justice advocates in higher education should focus on systemic forms of racial oppression in racial discourse and their efforts to advance toward racial equity.

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