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Where are We? Critical Race Theory in Education 20 Years Later

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the territory that has been covered since the publication of Ladson-Billings and Tate's 1995 article, "Toward a Critical Race Theory in Education." We organize our review of the CRT literature is organized around what we are calling CRT "boundaries." We identify six boundaries for CRT and education: 1) CRT in education argues that racial inequity in education is the logical outcome of a system of achievement presided on competition; 2) CRT in education examines the role of education policy and educational practices in the construction of racial inequity and the perpetuation of normative whiteness; 3) CRT in education rejects the dominant narrative about the inherent inferiority of people of color and the normative superiority of white people; 4) CRT in education rejects ahistoricism and examines the historical linkages between contemporary educational inequity and historical patterns of racial oppression; 5) CRT in education engages in intersectional analyses that recognize the ways that race is mediated by and interacts with other identity markers (i.e., gender, class, sexuality, linguistic background, and citizenship status); 6) CRT in education agitates and advocates for meaningful outcomes that redress racial inequity. CRT does not merely document disparities. We suggest that these core ideas provide a framework for analyzing the work that has been done in education in the past and a way to determine what might be left to do.

It has been 20 years since the publication of Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) article introducing critical race theory (CRT) to education. In "Toward a Critical Race Theory in Education," Ladson-Billings and Tate asserted that race remained a significant factor in society in general, and education in particular. Yet, according to the authors, race was under-theorized as a topic of scholarly inquiry in education. As a means to begin to address this theoretical void, they proposed that critical race theory, a framework developed by legal scholars, should be employed to examine the role of race and racism in education. In particular, drawing upon the work of legal scholar Cheryl Harris (1993), they described the intersection of race and property rights, and how the construct of whiteness as property could be used to understand inequity in schools and schooling. Their work set us on a path toward critical race theory in education. Our goal in this article is to explore the territory that has been covered since that time.

In the two decades since the publication of Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) article, the role of CRT in education scholarship has expanded significantly. Evidence of this developing role can be seen in the publication of the *Handbook of Critical Race Theory in Education* (Lynn & Dixon, 2013) as well as the growing number of sessions at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association that identify CRT as a descriptor. Yet, we submit that this growth has not necessarily followed a clear path or resulted in a well-defined body of scholarship in education. In fact, as an intellectual movement, CRT in education is arguably experiencing growing pains similar to those of CRT in legal studies.

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According to legal scholar Devon Carbado (2011), “more than twenty years after the establishment of Critical Race Theory (CRT) as a self-consciously defined intellectual movement, defining oneself as a Critical Race Theorist can still engender the question: critical what what?” (p. 1595). In seeking to address this question, Carbado asserted that one should map the boundaries of CRT. This process is important because, as he argued, “a theory without clear boundaries is hard to mobilize and describe as a theory” (p. 1602). While noting that the process of boundary-setting can be problematic, insofar as it establishes potentially exclusionary criteria, he proposes that there should be a set of ideas and frames that can be utilized with respect to CRT. Admittedly, these frames are subject to change and adjustment. However, while potentially fluid, they are available to define CRT and provide direction for scholars who seek to engage in a racial analysis that draws on CRT. We submit that in addition to the framing offered by CRT legal scholars (Matsuda, Lawrence, Delgado, & Crenshaw, 1993) and CRT scholars in education (Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Solorzano, 1997), scholars in education who endeavor to engage CRT would find Carbado’s “boundaries” informative and helpful.

Although it is beyond the scope of this article to describe these ideas in detail, we note that Carbado lists the following characteristics of CRT scholarship:

- CRT rejects the standard racial progress narrative in which the history of race relations in the United States is one of linear uplift and improvement.
- “CRT repudiates the view that status quo arrangements are the natural result of individual agency and merit. ... Racial accumulation—which is economic (shaping both our income and wealth), cultural (shaping the social capital upon which we can draw), and ideological (shaping our perceived racial worth)—structures our life chances. CRT exposes these *inter-generational transfers of racial compensation*” (p. 1608, emphasis added).
- CRT challenges the dominant narrative regarding color blindness and color consciousness.
- CRT argues that race is socially constructed, and CRT examines the role of the law in the construction of race (including whiteness).
- CRT articulates racism as a structural phenomenon as opposed to a “problem that derives from the failure on the part of individuals and institutions to treat people formally the same” (p. 1613).
- CRT views racism as endemic.
- CRT recognizes that racism interacts with other social forces (e.g., patriarchy, classism, homophobia, etc.).
- CRT highlights “the discursive frames legal and political actors have employed to disadvantage people of color” (p. 1615). These legal frames include: color blindness, reverse discrimination, merit, citizenship, and so on.
- CRT is both pragmatic and idealistic.

Based on our experiences as scholars, reviewers, and instructors utilizing CRT, we offer the following parallel “boundaries” for CRT scholarship in education. We outline these fundamental ideas to assist scholars in operationalizing ideas from the legal literature into educational research and scholarship.

- CRT in education argues that racial inequity in education is the logical outcome of a system of achievement premised on competition.
- CRT in education examines the role of education policy and educational practices in the construction of racial inequity and the perpetuation of normative whiteness.
- CRT in education rejects the dominant narrative about the inherent inferiority of people of color and the normative superiority of white people.
- CRT in education rejects ahistoricism and examines the historical linkages between contemporary educational inequity and historical patterns of racial oppression.
- CRT in education engages in intersectional analyses that recognize the ways that race is mediated by and interacts with other identity markers (i.e., gender, class, sexuality, linguistic background, and citizenship status).
- CRT in education agitates and advocates for meaningful outcomes that redress racial inequity. CRT does not merely document disparities.

As has been argued elsewhere (e.g., Ladson-Billings, 2013; Lynn & Dixson, 2013), not all scholarship that includes race necessarily engages critical race theory. We suggest that these core ideas provide a framework for analyzing the work that has been done in education in the past and a way to determine what might be left to do. We utilize these ideas to provide a targeted review of the CRT literature in education that has emerged over the past 20 years.

A map of CRT in education 20 years later

Drawing on the metaphor of CRT boundaries, we seek in the following sections to outline the landscape of CRT in education. In particular, we highlight prominent features of CRT in education, particularly as they relate to CRT scholarship in legal studies. In essence, we are attempting to create an overlay map that captures the features of CRT in education *in relation to* the features of CRT in legal studies. We begin our mapping with one of the most prominent components of the CRT landscape in education.

Counternarrative

One of the central tenets of CRT includes the “recognition of the experiential knowledge of people of color” (Matsuda et al., 1993, p. 6). CRT scholars argue that we should “shift the frame” (Crenshaw, 1989) or “look to the bottom” (Matsuda, 1995) and begin to value the knowledge of people of color. “Those who have experienced discrimination speak with a special voice to which we should listen” (Matsuda, 1995, p. 63).

One of the important functions of counternarrative in CRT scholarship is to counteract the stories of the dominant group (Delgado, 1989). The dominant group tells stories that are designed to “remind it of its identity in relation to outgroups and provide a form of shared reality in which its own superior position is seen as natural” (Delgado, 1989, p. 2240). One of the functions of counterstorytelling is to subvert that reality. According to Lawrence (1995), “we must learn to trust our own senses, feelings, and experiences, to give them authority, even (or especially) in the face of dominant accounts of social reality that claim universality” (p. 338).

Much of the literature on critical race theory in education over the past two decades has focused on offering these counterstories based on the accounts of the experiences of students of color. In fact, Solorzano and Yosso (2002) have outlined what they call a “critical race methodology”—a methodology that focuses on the stories and experiences of students of color. These accounts are presented as a “means of exposing and critiquing normalized dialogues that perpetuate racial stereotypes ... and giving voice to marginalized groups” (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004, p. 27).

Over the past two decades, several such counterstories have been presented in educational scholarship. For example, Howard (2008) recounted the counterstories of ten African American male middle and high school students. According to Howard, the use of counterstory “gives agency to African American males to offer narratives which can counter much of the rhetorical accounts of their identities that frequently describe them as culturally and socially deficient, uneducated, unmotivated, prone to violence, and anti-intellectual” (p. 975). Similarly, the study of the experiences of African American students who have been successful in mathematics have led to multiple counternarratives that pose a direct challenge to the majoritarian story (Berry, 2008; Berry, Ellis, & Hughes, 2014; Jett, 2012; Martin, 2006; Terry, 2011). According to Berry et al. (2014), “the counterstories of Black learners’ success with school mathematics speak volumes in the face of the prevailing narratives of educational failure that cast Black learners as somehow unable or unwilling to learn” (p. 564).

In addition to challenging the dominant discourse with regard to students, scholars have also utilized counternarratives to illustrate how race shapes the experiences of parents of color in their relationship to K–12 schooling (Chapman & Bhopal, 2013; Reynolds, 2010). According to Chapman and Bhopal, this process of

countering common-sense tales that pose people of color in deficit roles ... is necessary to uncover the ways in which inequitable treatment is sanctioned in society. ... The misrepresentation of people of color as uninvolved parents allows society to place the blame of failing schools within the family structures of people of color, and exonerates the systemic processes that maintain inequitable schooling. (p. 581)

Thus, these counterstories told by parents of color regarding their children's experiences with schools provide important insights into the means by which schools structure inequity and the ways that parents and children of color resist and persist.

The composite story is another form of counternarrative in education. In many cases, counternarratives are based on data (e.g., interviews, field notes, documents, etc.). The researcher analyzes the data and creates a story involving composite, fictional characters (Cook & Dixson, 2013; Smith, Yosso, & Solorzano, 2007). As with the descriptions of firsthand accounts, the purpose of the composite counterstory is to "dislocate comfortable majoritarian myths and narratives" (Smith et al., 2007). Composite counternarratives have been used to counter a variety of the majoritarian stories in education. For example, Cook and Dixson (2013) utilized composite counterstorytelling to depict black educator experiences with school reform in New Orleans. This composite counterstory revealed a racially polarized setting that often puts black educators and other critics of education reform at risk for retribution for speaking out and back against the reform and the reformers.

It is important to note that this type of composite counterstory is not simply a fictionalized narrative drawn from research data (Cook & Dixson, 2013). Nor should the composite counterstory be discounted as completely fabricated. According to Smith et al. (2007), "this method of merging data analysis with creative writing allows us to recount experiences of racism both individual and shared, thereby illuminating patterns of racialized inequality" (p. 567). Despite its fictionalized nature, the composite counterstory is grounded in real life and actual accounts of racialized experiences (Smith et al., 2007; Solorzano & Yosso, 2002).

Before leaving the topic of counternarrative, we should include a caveat—counternarratives should be combined with other elements of CRT in order to be most effective. Counternarrative is a significant landmark on the map of CRT in education, and a device that CRT scholars in legal studies have utilized quite skillfully to illustrate the ways that race and racism function in the United States. We have only included a portion of the articles and chapters that we reviewed which cited counterstorytelling as a methodological or analytical tool. Yet, although we acknowledge the significance of counterstorytelling in education CRT scholarship, we simultaneously note the danger of focusing on this method in the absence of connections to other concepts. In mapping the boundaries of CRT, Carbado does not, in fact, even include narrative as one of the key markers. He acknowledges the importance of narrative but does not view narrative as "a necessary entailment of CRT" (p. 1637). In fact, as Ladson-Billings (2013) has asserted,

Critical race theorists use storytelling as a way to illustrate and underscore broad legal principles regarding race and racial/social justice. The point of storytelling is not to vent or rant or be an exhibitionist regarding one's own struggle. Unfortunately, far too many would-be critical race theorists in education use the narrative or counter-story in just that way. There is little or no principled argument to be made. ... The story does not advance larger concerns or help us understand how law or policy is operating. (p. 42)

We found Ladson-Billings' (2013) assessment to be true in our review of CRT scholarship over the past 20 years. In our review of the literature, we discovered several examples in which the research or scholarship began and ended with the counternarrative. We would urge scholars who take up counternarrative in CRT to remain cognizant of the analytical power of the other constructs from CRT. As we mark counternarrative on our conceptual map, we simultaneously raise a warning flag to remind scholars to look beyond the story to develop and inform our understanding of how race and racism operate in education.

Color blindness

Over two decades ago, Crenshaw, Gotanda, Peller, and Thomas (1995) noted that integration, assimilation, and color blindness had become the official norms of racial enlightenment. The dominant discourse

positions color blindness as an ideal. The writings of several scholars within CRT in legal studies have sought to problematize this construction of color blindness.

CRT indicates how and why the contemporary “jurisprudence of colorblindness” is not only the expression of a particular color consciousness, but the product of a deeply politicized choice. . . . The appeal to colorblindness can thus be said to serve as part of an ideological strategy by which the current Court obscures its active role in sustaining hierarchies of racial power. (Crenshaw et al., 1995, p. xxviii)

Like Crenshaw et al., Gotanda (1991) also asserted that the color-blind ideal in the law served to maintain racial subordination. In his analysis, Gotanda proposed that the Supreme Court used the concept of race in different ways, including what Gotanda referred to as “formal-race.” Formal-race categories of “black” and “white” are disconnected from other social attributes and histories. According to Gotanda, color-blind analyses of the law use “race” to mean formal-race. Because formal-race is not connected to social realities, a color-blind analysis “often fails to recognize connections between the race of an individual and the real social conditions underlying litigation or other constitutional dispute” (Gotanda, 1991, p. 7). He noted that this lack of connection to social realities places severe limitations on the possible remedies for injustice and thereby maintains a system of white privilege. Thus, the lack of historical or social context is one of the mechanisms through which color blindness can support inequity.

One of the important roles of CRT is to challenge this lack of context. According to Carbado (2011),

By historically contextualizing existing racial inequalities, CRT is able to both confront the [color blindness/race-neutrality]/[color conscious/racial preferences] alignments and to reverse them. The theory effectuates this reversal by demonstrating how colorblindness can produce racial preferences and color consciousness can neutralize and disrupt embedded racial advantages. (p. 1609)

In this way, CRT pays close attention to the role color blindness plays in perpetuating racial inequity. Some scholars in education have taken up this critique of color blindness.

As with the literature on CRT in legal studies, this critique does not focus strictly on the “color-blind” approach of not acknowledging race. Instead, it addresses color blindness in terms of the failure to situate the meaning of race within a larger sociopolitical and historical context. Within the literature on education, for example, Taylor’s (1999) analysis of the Tennessee State University (TSU) desegregation case illustrates the impact of this type of “color-blind” legal perspective. According to Taylor, TSU was deemed a problem, with respect to desegregation, because it was almost all black (the school has always had a historically black student population), whereas the status of the predominantly white state schools was left unquestioned. He argues that this focus on TSU as the crux of the desegregation process represents a failure to consider the historical context. “By . . . refusing to act on the full ramifications of certain social and economic realities faced by blacks in Tennessee for hundreds of years, the court reveals no contextualized picture” (p. 196). Using the principles of neutrality and choice to buttress its position, the court applied the formal-race definition described by Gotanda (1991). The court did not ignore race. Rather, it treated it in a one-dimensional manner.

A similar manifestation of “formal-race” color blindness can be seen in Rousseau and Tate’s (2003) study of high school mathematics teachers. The teachers in their study demonstrated a similar acontextual view of race. In particular, the teachers refused to acknowledge race-related patterns in achievement and the potential role of racism in the underachievement of students of color. They either denied that race-related differences in achievement existed in their classrooms or asserted that the reasons for any differences were related to socioeconomic status rather than the impact of systemic racism in the school and school district. The authors argue that this color-blind stance prevented the teachers from reflecting on their own practices and their role in the production of the underachievement of their students of color.

Although we include the critique of color blindness on the map of CRT in education, we simultaneously mark it as a potentially underexplored territory. Insofar as color blindness is one of the primary discursive frames that has been utilized to maintain an inequitable status quo (Carbado, 2011) both in the law and in education, we submit that there is more work to be done to understand how this has been accomplished through curriculum, educational policy, assessment, and teacher education.

Interest convergence

Another site on our map is interest convergence (I-C). According to Bell (2004), the principle of interest convergence has two parts. First, “the interest of Blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when that interest converges with the interests of Whites in policy-making positions” (p. 69). Second, a racial remedy will be “abrogated at the point that policymakers fear the remedial policy is threatening the superior societal status of Whites” (p. 69). Bell argued that the principle of interest convergence could be utilized to understand the Supreme Court decision in *Brown vs. Board of Education*, as well as the effects of the desegregation efforts that followed the ruling.

For example, Morris (2001) has argued that the St. Louis desegregation plan illustrates the operation of I-C. African American students in St. Louis were offered the option, under the desegregation plan, to attend schools in the surrounding, predominantly white, county districts. At the same time, magnet programs in the St. Louis district were provided to white students to entice them to return to city schools. These between-district transfers were intended to provide greater racial balance in both city and county schools. However, although many African American students took advantage of the transfers offered to county schools, far fewer white students went to the magnet schools in the city.

Moreover, the St. Louis example actually provides evidence of both parts of Bell’s interest convergence principle (Morris, 2001). In particular, Morris notes that the white county schools were the primary beneficiaries of the desegregation plan, through increases in overall revenue. In this way, the self-interests of the largely white school systems were served by taking in African American students. Moreover, the relative failure of the city magnet schools to draw large numbers of white students is an illustration of the second rule of I-C—the impact of a threat to the social status of whites.

In addition to examining the effects of desegregation at the K–12 level, I-C has also been utilized to understand issues involving race at the postsecondary level. For example, Muhammad (2009) utilized the concept of interest convergence in order to examine the settlement of the Ayers’s case involving higher education institutions in Mississippi. The 1975 Ayers’s lawsuit charged that higher education institutions in the state were segregated and that the state’s three historically black universities were underfunded relative to their white peers. Muhammad asserts that, despite the fact that the 2001 settlement of the case ostensibly closed the chapter on the segregation of higher education in Mississippi, this agreement works toward the benefit of white students in the state. As such, she cites the settlement as an example of I-C. With a similar focus on higher education policy, Dorsey and Chambers (2014) have utilized the construct of interest convergence to examine the history of legal action regarding affirmative action in college admissions. Finally, Baber (2015) has employed I-C to understand the diversity efforts of institutions with regard to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), noting that such efforts are only supported to the extent that they do not interfere with other priorities of the institution and are often driven by external factors rather than egalitarian ideals.

However, as scholars in education take up I-C, it is important to highlight at least two additional ideas related to the principle of interest convergence. The first is a caveat about its use. According to Gillborn (2013), “the interest convergence principle is probably the most frequently cited concept in CRT, but it is prone to a great deal of misunderstanding” (p. 135). He notes two specific sources of misunderstanding. According to Gillborn, I-C does not describe a balanced negotiation process in which two parties come to a rational compromise; rather, it involves conflict. Whites in power decide to take action because they sense that they will experience greater loss if they fail to take action than if they do not. As a result, it is less an employable strategy than a concept that “offers a critical way of understanding the dynamics of racism and social policy at key points, especially where a landmark event appears to have advanced the cause of race equality” (Gillborn, 2013, p. 135). In addition to the historical lack of negotiation, Gillborn notes that the interest convergence principle includes consideration of class dynamics. In particular, he argues that understanding I-C requires recognition that whites are not viewed as a homogeneous group. It is the interests of middle- and upper-class whites that are engaged in interest convergence (Gillborn, 2013). The interests of lower class whites remain unaddressed (Bell, 2004). Thus, we echo Gillborn’s warnings regarding the potential over-application of I-C, particularly with respect to I-C as a strategic approach or as an analytical principle that casts white interests in a homogeneous manner.

The second point related to the application of interest convergence as an analytical tool is the importance of situating interest convergence as a piece in a dynamic system. CRT scholars have sought to debunk the myth of constant and consistent racial progress (Bell, 2004; Carbado, 2011; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). In fact, Carbado (2011) describes a pattern of reform and retrenchment that characterizes race relations in the United States. Understanding this reform and retrenchment dynamic involves recognition of both interest convergence and interest divergence (Gillborn, 2013).

In 2004, Guinier built on Bell's concept of interest convergence to explore *interest divergence* as another possible reason the Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* failed to achieve the social, educational, and political progress expected. According to Guinier, "while Bell focused on interest convergence to explain the limited reach of the Court's initiative in *Brown*, geographic, racial, and class-based interest divergences were also at work, ordering social, regional, and class conflict" (p. 99). She argued that, along with interest convergence, these interest divergences shed light on the forces at work in the post-*Brown* era and help to explain the fissures that developed. According to Gillborn (2013), "both interest convergence and divergence are wrapped together in a theory that makes sense of policy as a never ending campaign to secure ever greater control and benefit to White powerholders" (p. 138). Thus, the interplay between these two forces provides a way to understand the patterns of reform and retrenchment that are evident in the history of racial progress in the United States.

As one of the most frequently cited CRT constructs, we must certainly mark I-C on our map of CRT in education. However, as we did with counternarrative, we also raise a warning marker. In exploring the role of interest convergence in the ongoing development of scholarship in education, we assert that we need to remain aware of the potential misconceptions described by Gillborn (2013) as well as the other pieces of the conceptual puzzle around interest convergence. In other words, we caution scholars in education against advancing I-C as a viable strategy for racial equity in education.

Whiteness as property

Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) began the movement toward CRT in education by highlighting the intersection of race and property rights in education. They asserted that the property functions of whiteness (rights of disposition, rights to use and enjoyment, reputation and status property, and the absolute right to exclude) operate within schools and schooling.

Over the past two decades, several scholars within education have taken up this concept of whiteness as property. For example, Donnor (2013) explored the Supreme Court decision in *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1* (PICS). He asserted that the decision is an example of the ways through which the system operates to ensure that access to quality public education is the property of white people. According to Donnor,

The Supreme Court's application of a colorblind paradigm in *PICS v. Seattle* does nothing more than provide a protective veneer over White people, their self-interests, and their possessive investment in Whiteness. While more benign in appearance and more subtle in tone when compared to Jim Crow, the high court's "racial coding" of integration, a policy intended to foster racial equality, as a barrier to the educational opportunities of White students and their families reinforces the American racial hierarchy. (p. 201)

His analysis provides insight into the mechanisms through which the property value of whiteness is asserted through the judicial system.

The analytical value of whiteness as property in the study of K-12 schools is also illustrated in DeCuir and Dixon's (2004) study of the experiences of African American students in an elite private school. In particular, their study revealed the ways through which the school's policies and practices served to regulate the cultural expressions of black students, thereby reifying the value of whiteness. Similarly, Pollack and Zirkel's (2013) description of structural change efforts at a large, diverse public high school revealed the operation of the property functions of whiteness. The authors argued that the construct of whiteness as property lends conceptual clarity to an analysis of the conflict. Rather than viewing the conflict over curriculum change as a battle about values or ideology, the battle can be understood as one of property rights, and one group has greater power at its disposal to protect those rights. In more

concrete terms, the conflict is over how particular kinds of educational experiences and curricula (i.e., honors, gifted education, advanced placement, valedictorian, among others) are presumed to be and often reified as the property of white students and their families.

Other scholars have also applied the concept of whiteness as property to understand issues surrounding the preparation and professional development of teachers. For example, Brown's (2014) review of the literature related to the preparation of preservice teachers of color identified the salience of whiteness as property:

One of the most consistent findings across much of the literature reviewed was the overwhelming culture of Whiteness that pervades pre-service teacher education programs. ... Whiteness operates as a form of property by which preservice teachers that possess the experiences, perspectives, knowledge and dispositions aligned with and valued by the dominant White society find reinforcement and success. (p. 337)

Similarly, in their study of two anti-bias programs for in-service teachers, Vaught and Castagno (2008) identified the property value of whiteness. The authors assert that the white teachers in the two programs identified racism and white privilege as individual, isolated issues, disconnected from structural or systemic considerations. According to Vaught and Castagno, the teachers' ability to define racism in an individualistic way is an example of the property function of whiteness.

In the absence of an explicitly structural understanding of racism, many White teachers drew on the propertied right to determine meaning to construct a definition of White privilege devoid of attention to structural power. In so doing, these White teachers ironically exercised their real White privilege—the propertied right to determine racial meaning—to deny their individual participation in the collective, structural racism that perpetuates racialized student failure. This is an exclusive right only engaged by the dominant racial group. (p. 103).

Moreover, the authors note that examples from the training programs also illustrate the appearance of neutrality and the ability for constant modification that are characteristic of people treating their whiteness as property. In the light of the ideological power of whiteness as property as illustrated through the examples above, educators and educational administrators across the educational spectrum could be more conscious of how whiteness as property gets operationalized in their contexts and ensure that it does not get deployed to people of color. Educational stakeholders could be more intentional about including and valuing the perspectives, experiences, and voices of people of color when crafting and evaluating educational policies and practices. Moreover, countering whiteness as property has to be more than discursive; strategies to mitigate its impact also have to have material outcomes. For example, one intentional strategy to counter whiteness as property may include ensuring that the perspectives and voices of people of color figure prominently in policy decisions.

In summary, our review of CRT scholarship in education offered several examples of the application of the construct of whiteness as property to the study of education. This included the study of policy, schools, and teachers. As such, this is yet another marker on our conceptual map.

The road from here

In this article, our goal has been to outline a map of CRT scholarship in education. We do not claim this map to be comprehensive or exhaustive. Rather, it creates “spatial” markers based on our view of some of the significant features in the literature. We have placed these markers based on *our* interpretations of the key features of the existing scholarship. By virtue of what we have included (and what we have omitted), we acknowledge that we have implicitly defined a set of boundaries. This process establishes lines of demarcation. It also, perhaps, gives a sense of the road from here.

Based on this map, what direction(s) should CRT scholarship in education take over the next several years? In our discussion of the next steps, we refer back to the maps depicted by Carbado (2011) of the CRT scholarship in legal studies and our delineation of what we believe are some of the fundamental ideas of CRT and education. In particular, we suggest that an important step for CRT scholars in education is to continue to mark the boundaries of CRT. Carbado (2011) argues that this process is important because “failure to do so will render the idea of CRT more important than the *ideas* within CRT. ... CRT could

become (is becoming? has become?) a ‘name’ that has no clearly identifiable ‘thing’” (p. 1626). As noted at the beginning of this chapter, our review of the scholarship over the past several years has indicated a significant increase in the sheer number of chapters and articles in which the authors identify their work with CRT. Yet, in some cases, it appeared that Carbado’s warning regarding legal studies was proving true for education: CRT was a name with no clearly identifiable thing. Thus, as we move forward, we must be aware of the need to continue to mark the boundaries of CRT.

In addition, one recommendation offered by Carbado (2011) that is relevant to the discussion of CRT in education is the need to

think very carefully about how we articulate CRT’s relationship to post-racialism. ... Post-racialism is becoming, but is not yet, the rhetorical replacement for colorblindness. What do we do about that? We could engage post-racialism as though it were already the new colorblindness. ... Alternatively, we could attempt to re-claim, or “normatively turn,” the still-emerging ideological valence of post-racialism. Which approach makes the most sense? (p. 1641)

Likewise, in education, how do we conceive of our relationship, as CRT scholars, to postracialism (Dixon, Donnor, & Reynolds, 2015)? As we move forward with CRT in education, it is critical that we continue to interrogate the discursive frames that are employed against the interests of justice.

Where are we?

The first part of the title of this article (“Where are we?”) has a double meaning. On the one hand, it references the mapping metaphor that we have adopted to explore the existing literature and to “draw” boundaries around CRT scholarship in education. We encourage all scholars interested in engaging CRT in education to explore the base map of legal scholarship over which we have attempted to trace a picture of scholarship in education. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) set us on a path toward CRT in education over two decades ago. We submit that it is still important to walk that route.

However, the second meaning of the title describes a final recommendation regarding the path from here. In particular, in the midst of contemporary challenges to schools and neighborhoods, we find ourselves asking: *Where are we? Where are CRT scholars in the fight?* In describing the status of CRT in legal studies, Brown and Jackson (2013) argued that, on one level, the influence of CRT has been profound: “As an intellectual movement, CRT succeeded beyond all realistic expectations at the time of its founding. However, its ultimate impact on American jurisprudence has been limited” (Brown & Jackson, 2013, p. 20). The same can be said for CRT in education. As scholars, we (the authors) first began exploring CRT as graduate students almost 20 years ago. The growth of CRT scholarship over the past two decades has far exceeded our expectations. But what has been the impact on schools and communities of color? Notably, several CRT scholars have called for a critical race theory praxis—an engaged approach to CRT that moves from campus to community (Gillborn, 2006; Roithmayr, 1999; Stovall, 2004; Stovall, Lynn, Danley, & Martin, 2009). Thus, we submit that the question of location is not merely rhetorical. Although we have outlined recommendations for CRT scholarship to move forward, perhaps our most important recommendation is for us to collectively seek to ensure that CRT becomes more than an intellectual movement. As CRT scholars in education, we embrace this as our chosen role. With the divestment in traditional public education as reflected in the expansion of charter schools and other neoliberal education reforms, we must continue to use our voices and our praxis to positively impact schools and communities. As CRT scholars/activists, *Where are we?*

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